TECHNOCRACY

ASSEMBLED 1

NWO

ITERATION X

PROGENITORS

A Sourcebook for Mage: The Ascension

TECHNOCRACY: ITERATION X

Flesh and the Machine

SCANNED BY SG <:B-

Dedicated to Harlan Ellison, whose stories of a dark future dominated by technology are too frightening for many of us to imagine on our own. Perhaps the inspiration is far too familiar.

TECHNOCRACY: ITERATION X

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Documentation Demo: IIIOOIOIOO

Cast away the greed and death machine and bytes and
abacus and lights and hold onto your dreams tonight.
— Midnight Oil, "Renaissance Man"

My name is William Smith, and I am a man.

```
¤ ERROR 253
CORRECT DESIGNATION = 1110010100
CORRECT FUNCTION = ARMATURE OF
ITERATION X
CORRECT DESIGNATION = 1110010100
CORRECT FUNCTION = ARMATURE OF
ITERATION X
CORRECT DESIG
<<BREAK>>
```

A man. I first remembered this fact earlier this morning. I record the events leading up to my freedom of thought in hardcopy now — before I am forced to forget.

```
02:59:06.83
02:59:07.66
02:59:08.49
```

The atomic clock in my skull kept time to the pumping of my heart, a regular seventy-two beats per minute. Sensors indicated that the mountain air had fallen below freezing sometime after dark. Suspended in insulative gel,

encased in an armored exoskeleton, I would have never known. Body temperature remained at an ideal 37°C; breathing rate — had I been breathing rather than sucking oxygen directly into the bloodstream through a tube — would have remained a perfectly calm twelve inhalations per minute.

My artificial eyes cut through the darkness. The others appeared as grainy, green-tinted holo-images. They could have passed for two men and a woman. Or more specifically, for Iteration X's image of the ideal humans: synthetic skin stretched over the frames of body-builders. Shaved heads. Standard-issue gray uniforms of stiff military cut. Standing motionless and emotionless in the sub-zero weather, neither shivering nor exhaling clouds of frosty air. A crimson glow behind each cornea hinted at their mechanical origin. And the fact that some deviant in Public Works had rigged one HIT Mark with the face of Arnold. I planned to report this sign of personality to a Programmer upon returning to the Construct.

At 3:00:00.00, I stepped up to the chain-link fence and raised the thermic lance integrated into my exoskeleton's left arm. I dragged the tip against the mesh. Where it touched, super-heated slag burned through the links. An efficient use of time and motion, with a minimal chance of alerting our enemy. Since the fence was probably made from some material far stronger than steel, the waste in energy would be permitted.

Arnold#2 grabbed a fistful of mesh in each hand and prepared to bend back the fence. He had hardly begun the motion when he was interrupted. With a screech and grind, his perfectly-built frame locked for an instant. Then began to vibrate. Lightning played over the syntheskin, outlined by a corona of St. Elmo's fire.

The rest of the Shock Corps stepped back respectfully.

Now conducting some powerful energies, the HIT Mark jerked like a papier mâché puppet rather than two hundred kilograms of hi-tech wizardry. The stiff collar and sleeves of its uniform leaked smoke just before catching fire. Arnold's

¤ ERROR 253
CORRECT DESIGNATION: HYPER INTELLIGENCE TECHNOLOGIES MARK V
MODEL NUMBER: 01010101

features ran like wax on a cheap museum replica. No longer resembling Arnold, the HIT Mark's locked fingers eventually

¤ 5.38 SECONDS

came loose of their grip on the fence. It crashed to the snowy ground, smoking and steaming. I couldn't say what melted syntheskin and fused circuitry smell like; the exoskeleton's sensors had not been not calibrated for scent and we were discouraged from imagining.

From the looks of it, even the HIT Mark's skeleton had melted slightly under the stress. That was pure Paradox. Primium is impervious to mundane electricity. It neither conducts nor insulates. Its melting indicated that magickal Forces were involved.

As if to confirm this conclusion, I suddenly noticed a sign: "Warning — 10,000 Volts." It had definitely not been there a minute ago.

A taunt from our enemies.

I was not amused. Neither was I angry. However, I was aware that we were 14.07 seconds behind schedule. And the Sons of Ether had detected us. I transmitted a brief communication string to this effect.

¤ OPEN "COM1:9600,E,8,1,BIN" OUTPUT
SEND "01010011 01001000 01001111
01000011 01001011 00000000 01000011
01001111 01010010 01010000 00000000
00000011 00000000 01000100 01000101
01010100 01000101 01000011 01010100
01000101 01000100 11111111 01001111
01001110 01000101 00000000 01001000
01001001 01010100 00000000 01001101

01000001 01010010 01001011 00000000
01001111 01010110 01000101 01010010
01001100 01001111 01000001 01000100
01000101 01000100 11111111 01010010
01000101 01010001 01010101 01000101
01010011 01010100 00000000 01000110
01010101 01010010 01010100 01001000
01000101 01010010 00000000 01001111
01010010 01000100 01000101 01010010
01010011 11111111 01000101 01001110
01000100 11111111"
CLOSE "COM1:9600,E,8,1,BIN" OUTPUT

We wasted precious milliseconds waiting for a reply. This was procedure: no action without the Comptrollers' confirmation. Personal initiative is unpredictable, and therefore to be avoided. Deviance throws off the program. The electrified fence seemed to confirm this universal law — magick is unpredictable, cunning, irrational and careless. Beyond the fence, our enemies plotted within that Dutch mansion, seemingly another outcropping of the barren mountains.

Not for much longer.

Our orders came through.

¤ RECEIVING TRANSMISSION:
01000011 01000001 01001110 01000011
01000101 01001100 00000000 00100010
01001001 01001110 01010011 01000101
01010010 01010100 11111111 01000011
01001111 01001101 00100010 00111011
01001100 01001111 01000001 01000100
00000000 00100010 01011000 00111010
01000001 01010011 01010011 01000001
01010101 01001100 01010100 11111111
01000011 01001111 01001101 00100010
00101100 00000000 01010010 11111111
01010100 01000001 01010010 01000111
01000101 01010100 00100100 00111101
00100010 01010110 01000001 01001110
00000000 01000010 01000001 01010011
00100010 00111011 00100010 01001000
01000001 01010010 01001100 01000101
01010001 01010101 01001001 01001110
00100010 00111011 00100010 01000100
01011111 01001110 01011111 01010110
01000001 01001110 00100010 00111011
00100010 01010111 01000101 01001100
01001100 01010011 00100010 11111111
01001100 01001111 01000011 01000001
01010100 01000101 00000000 01010100
01000001 01010010 01000111 01000101
01010100 00100100 11111111 01000100
01000101 01001100 01000101 01010100
01000101 01010100 01000001 01010010

01000111 01000101 01010100 00100100
11111111 01000101 01001110 01000100
11111111
CONVERTING TO ABSTRACT THOUGHT...
DOWNLOADING TO CORTEX...

Almost instantaneously, my CPU had converted the binary code and brought the message to mind:

CANCEL "INSERT.COM"; LOAD
"X:ASSAULT.COM", R
TARGET$ = "VAN
BAAS";"HARLEQUIN";"DONOVAN";"WELLS"
LOCATE TARGET$
DELETE TARGET$
END

I raked the thermic lance down another section of fence. A three-meter square of mesh fell inward, breaking the connection. Leading the two remaining HIT Marks through the breach, I marched up the sloping stone.

We were half a kilometer from the fence when the sentinels engaged us. With sufficient warning, my audio-amplifier had detected the sound of crunching snow, scraping claws and irregular grunted breaths. Life readings showed a dozen blips. Back at the fence, there was probably another new sign: "Beware of Dogs."

They literally threw themselves at us in the dark. Their appearance suggested we were assaulting the island of Dr. Moreau, not a Sons of Ether Chantry in the Taconic mountains. The Sentinels were unnatural crossbreeds — features of bear, deer, wildcat, fox and raccoon stitched to humanoid bodies. Like some Progenitor's pet project.

I switched on magnesium headlights, more in an attempt to blind them than to see.

The sentinel beating itself against my metalflesh was part porcupine. Without breaking the momentum of my stride, I caught its quilled head in my right hand and brought the three wedge-shaped fingers together. This is an efficient method of killing.

¤ ERROR 253
UNACCEPTABLE SYNTAX
SUBSTITUTES: CANCEL; DELETE;
DISCONTINUE; ERASE; ELIMINATE;
EXTERMINATE; TERMINA
<<BREAK>>

The degenerates were no match for post-modern technology. The "female" HIT Mark's hand exploded to reveal the flashing muzzle of a minigun. With that amputation and flayed syntheskin, she would no longer pass for human, but then, neither would my eight-foot, golden exoskeleton.

Repeatedly, we withstood the beast-men's futile hit-and-run tactics. We never pursued. No need to waste ammunition, energy, or time. Our objective was the Chantry house.

Relentlessly advancing, I noticed that we had flushed out the Etherboys. A purple flash of lightning illuminated a cigar-shaped silhouette rising from behind the mansion.

One of our gleaming silver ARCs (Advanced Rotor Craft) swept low over the rocks, thundering towards it. Spotlights probed the ground and air, finally transfixing the clumsy, droning zeppelin. Coincidentally, four guided missiles malfunctioned. The fifth hit its mark. In slow motion, the zeppelin sank behind the mansion and exploded in a ball of flaming, green Ether.

�‚ **ETHER. BELIEVED BY ANCIENT GREEK PHILOSOPHERS TO BE THE FIFTH ELEMENT, A "COSMIC" OR "ESSENTIAL" AIR. FURTHER DEVELOPED BY DESCARTES AND OTHER SELF-TITLED "SONS OF ETHER" (SEE TEXTFILE "R-ENEMY.SOE"). CONCEPT OF ETHER DISPROVED BY EINSTEIN'S LAW OF RELATIVITY.**

On another part of the mountain, an Etherboy tripod machine was ray-gunning with abandon.

This blatant show of force and magick, our apparent lack of concern over disturbing the Masses — this may surprise you. You think that Technomancers are skulking manipulators. Iteration X least fits this preconception. In the silent night, sometimes in the shadowless twilight beyond the Barrier, Iteration X battles the enemies of Technocracy. Endless calculations minimize danger to our reality. Witnesses are casualties.

For its part, Mount Graylock is remote. And we would erase all records of our purge on the Etherboys.

We penetrated the Chantry house at 3:19:34.98. To maximize efficiency, the Shock Corps split up. The exoskeleton's hydraulic stride sounded loud to my audio receptors as I explored the labyrinthian, gas-lit halls. Yet I calculated that echoes would conceal my location as effectively as silence. Wherever possible, I avoided their final defense — crude, dome-shaped mechanicals armed with cannons, like something out of a da Vinci sketchbook. Whenever they were spotted, I destroyed them.

3:27:51.11.

I cornered the enemy — a middle-aged female with wild hair and even wilder eyes

◊ **CROSS-REFERENCING WITH VISUAL PROFILES...**
TARGET IDENTIFIED: VAN BAAS
>TRADITION MAGE, SON OF ETHER
>DEACON OF GRAYLOCK CHANTRY
>MASTER OF FORCES, MATTER; ADEPT OF ENTROPY, PRIME; DISCIPLE OF UNSPECIFIED OTHER SPHERES OF MAGICK
*** WARNING: CONFIRMED ENEMY ***
*** SCHEDULED FOR DELETION ***

—in a cluttered lab. Van Baas froze, clutching armloads of paperwork to her chest. A heavy strapped chair squatted between us. Above that single piece of furnishing, a massive coiled rod hung from an opening in the domed ceiling. Lightning flashed. An ARC thundered overhead.

Using the chair as cover, Van Baas backed into an alcove as I slowly advanced. There was no melodrama in my measured tread, no caution, no confidence. Merely the means to an objective. With a swing of my armature, the chair snapped loose of its securing bolts and toppled aside. I did not intend to play monkey-chase-the-weasel.

A flutter of falling scrolls alerted me to her right hand. It had crept towards a lever on the wall.

The coiled lightning rod.

With a burst of hydraulic fluid, I sprang closer to the wall. Her deepening frown proved that this trick-or-trap had failed. Or so I thought. I mistook concentration for disappointment. Raising and igniting the thermic lance, I clanged forward over the iron-grilled floor.

Grilled floor.

The thought had barely registered in either half of my mind when she pulled the switch, focusing her magick. Lightning struck the spiral rod, forked downward, and grounded in the grill which now formed the lab floor.

A grill which had not been there a moment before. And I suppose Van Baas was wearing rubber-soled shoes. The Masses call it coincidence; Technocrats, statistical inevitability. Mages call it magick.

All went black as my exoskeleton short-circuited.

◊ **DEVICE FAILURE AT 3:28:42.19**
MISSING MEMORY FILES
DIAGNOSTIC REQUIRED

Vaguely, I felt a tilt and a crash — the exoskeleton toppling. I became acutely aware of the wires penetrating my skull, the gel which permeated every pore of my body. And that my respirator had shut down with all other systems.

Imagine the worst case of claustrophobia. No comparison. I have heard that a dozen hours in an isolation tank will break the strongest wills. That would have been bliss. I was encased within inches of impenetrable metal and a constricting, non-permeable membrane. I was an Awakened mage, a Technocrat, a member of the most powerful group in existence. And I was going to die of suffocation....

Suddenly, I was little Billy Smith — cripple, child of thalidomide — all over again.

As my organic brain depleted its last minutes of oxygen, it dredged up a thousand thoughts. I remembered the times when my cousins Paul and Garth would toss my compact, almost limbless body over the clothesline in our deep backyard — a perverse game of volleyball. Relying on the exoskeleton was similar to trusting them. Not a healthy trust, but a helpless, desperate dependence. Because without that one thread of confidence, there would only be mind-numbing panic.

Dreamily, I realized that half of my mind was silent. The power surge had crashed my CPU. This deepening sense of isolation fed mixed feelings of loneliness and panic. Like being left beneath the clothesline after dark, while

Paul and Garth hid — just out of eyesight, but not far enough to risk a tongue-lashing for leaving me alone — because it was oh so funny to watch wide-eyed Billy cry and maybe wet his pants. And when they finally revealed themselves, laughing as only evil kids can, and took me home, I would never tell on them. Because I was desperate for their "friendship." I had never realized how much I valued the constant commentary of my CPU; a lone companion among the impersonal masses of Iteration X.

That was my last thought before forever sleeping.

And awakening.

¤ POWER RESTORED AT ??? TIME RECALIBRATE INTERNAL CLOCK

Perhaps this was a final effort of my will. Or the subconscious application of my lengthy conditioning in the disciplines of Forces and Matter. First, I was aware of the hum of my alter ego rebooting; then of the sensors coming back on line; and of the happy conclusion that fresh oxygen was pumping into my veins.

The second thing I realized was my treasonous thoughts. Whether it was my mind-bending terror, the seconds of free thought without continual reinforcement of my CPU, or some combination — I was free of my conditioning. I recognized the crock Iteration X had fed me.

¤ ERR
<<BREAK>>

(Shut up; calculate pi.)

¤ CALCULATING...

My masters had offered to make me whole, almost perfect. Invited me into the ranks of a Convention which made the Masses look flawed by comparison. They claimed that I would look upon mundanes with the same mix of pity and derision (which pretty much amount to the same thing) with which they had previously viewed me. Well, yes, my exoskeleton and implants made me physically and mentally superior. Yet here I was, more dependent and helpless than before. I had simply traded one wheelchair for another.

And that's how my freedom of thought returned.

That was hours ago. We have returned to the Construct. Soon my report will be down-loaded. When that happens, they will discover that I no longer follow their program. And they will fix me.

Before that happens, I plan to produce this report. As a reminder to myself and others that William Smith is more than a mechanical monster. To apologize in some small way to those I have betrayed in my short term within the Technocracy. And to reveal the flaws of Iteration X to anyone still capable of opposing them.

Plugged into a hard-copier, spilling my guts through an adapter port at 200 characters per second, I'll send the final printout to the address memorized from a magazine called *Paradigma*, discovered in Graylock Chantry. If Van Baas is reading this, thanks for indirectly reminding me of two important facts:

My name is William Smith, and I am a man.
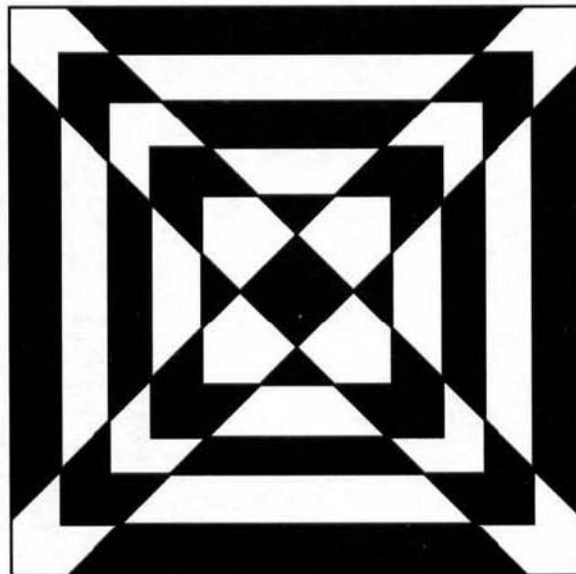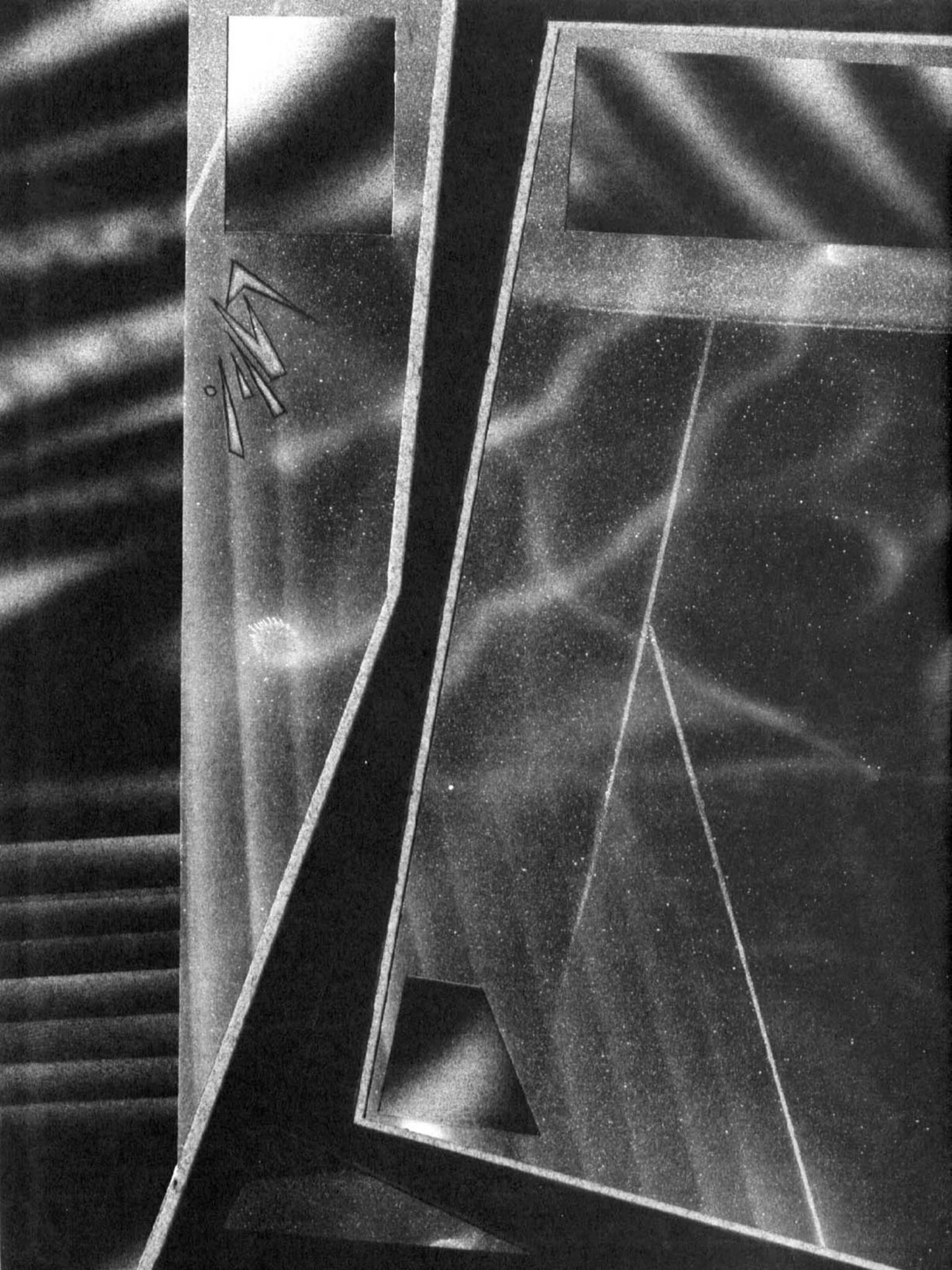
Drive A: Hardcopy

Power, like a desolating pestilence,
  Pollutes whate're it touches; and
obedience,
  Banes of all genius, virtue, free-
dom, truth,
  Makes slaves of men, and of the
human frame,
  A mechanized automaton.
    —Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Queen
Mab*
  I am the new way to go
  I am the way of the future
    —My Life with the Thrill Kill
Cult, "After the Flesh"
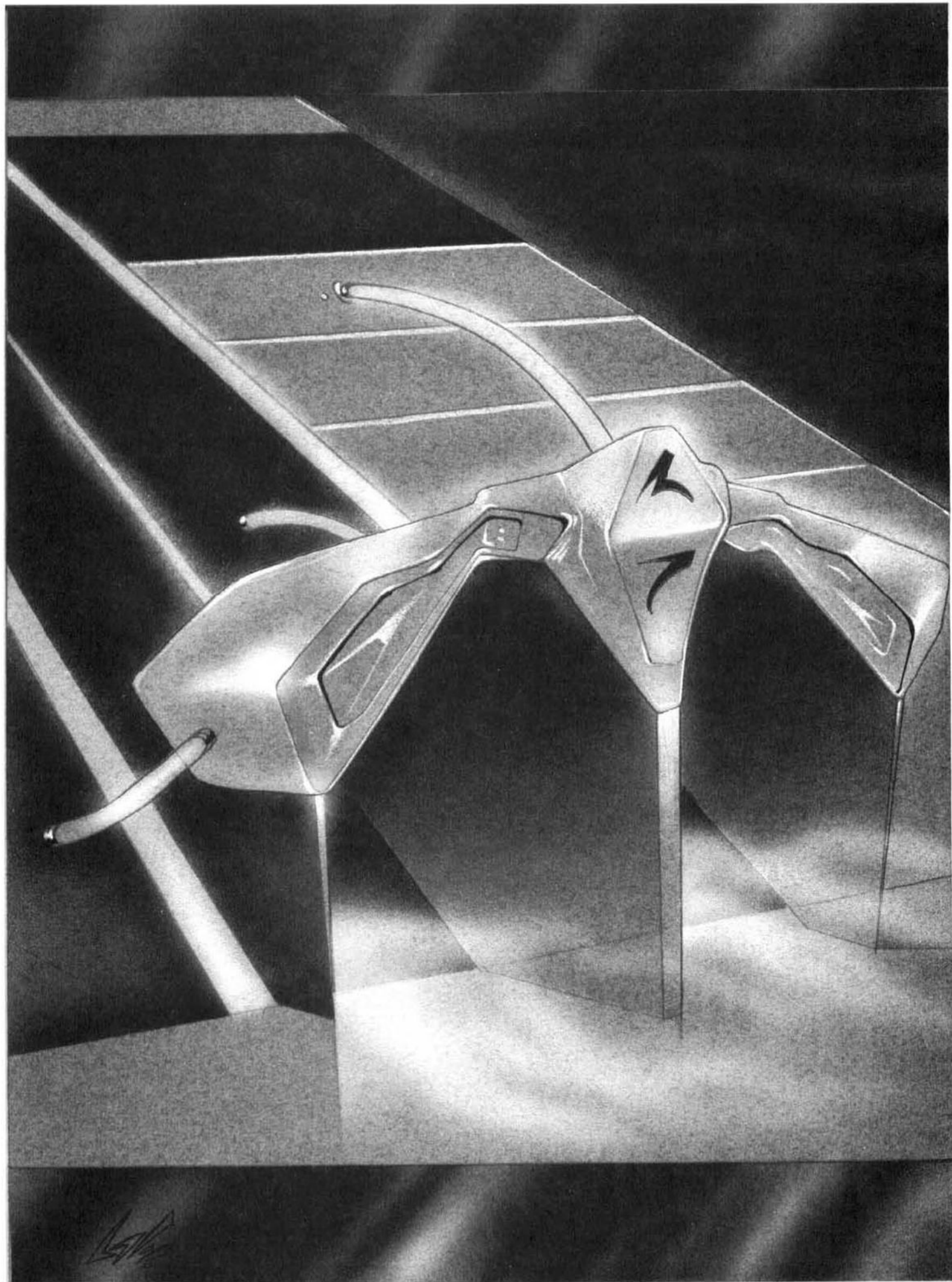
Disk One: Initialized

A woman came up to me and said
"I'd like to poison your mind
with wrong ideas that appeal to you
though I am not unkind."
— They Might Be Giants, "Whistling in the Dark"

Recruiting

My time with Iteration X began 16 April 1993, at about 11:30 a.m. I was more clock-conscious than usual because of the day's appointment with my contractor.

▫ CAPACITY OVERLOAD....
CALCULATION ABANDONED AFTER
500,000,000,000 DECIMAL
PLACES
CANNOT CONTINUE

Dr. Zimmermann questioned me about the pneumatic arms her lab had attached to my wheelchair six months earlier. Any problems with the compressed gas? The piston joints? Was I able to manipulate the valves (with my rudimentary fingers) well enough? And so on. I answered her questions with concerns, complaints and some grudging acceptance. These white plastic limbs were ugly, slow and crude. But honestly? I was too proud and to self-

sufficient to admit how useful these "robot" arms were to me. How had I survived 34 years without them?

In retrospect, I see that Iteration X must have been watching me for some time.

▫ SUBJECT: WILLIAM ARTHUR SMITH
BORN: 4-3-1960 [FLINT, MICHIGAN, U.S.A]
HEIGHT: 0.92 METERS
WEIGHT: 41 KILOGRAMS
EYE COLOR: GREEN-BLUE
HAIR COLOR: RUST
FEATURES: REFER TO HOLOGRAPH
HANDEDNESS: RIGHT
BLOOD TYPE: B+
DNA SEQU
<<BREAK>>

Working through Detroit General, the Convention had propped me up with a motorized wheelchair and pneumatic arms until I was all but dependent on their support. The good doctor was preparing to pull out the rug.

"Just a moment, William. I'd like to show you something."

She went to the closet for a blue nylon backpack. Unzipping it, she removed… a human forearm! My breath hitched for an instant before everything clicked. The arm looked as though it were amputated from a fresh cadaver; it was that realistic. She brought the prosthesis over for a better look.

"Its a newer model," she said without needing to. The synthetic skin had wrinkles, tiny hairs, individual fingernails, a slight transparency through which I noticed bluish veins… From the amputated end snaked two wires, each ending in contact electrodes.

As I admired the detail, the realism, Dr. Zimmermann pressed the two electrodes against my own truncated arm. I recoiled at the intimate touch, cold metal, my own self-consciousness.

The prosthetic limb twitched.

I looked at her, then at the arm. By flexing my three hooked fingers, I made the prosthesis do the same. Only more perfectly.

"It's still very much in the prototype stage. But a select few have these and lead normal lives among the Masses. If you'd like, I could arrange a meeting with the organization which is developing this." I told her I'd like that.

As I left Detroit Medical Center, my mind snagged on a mantra from the Bionic Man T.V. show. *Better. Faster. Stronger.* Try though I might, I couldn't dismiss these thoughts—the pipe dreams of a cripple.

ΩΩΩΩΩΩ

The bus stopped in front of a series of densely-packed buildings on 32nd Street. The driver opened the doors and set the hydraulic ramp to lower.

"You want I should help you?" he asked. Ignoring him, I drove off the ramp even before it had hit the curb.

Dr. Zimmermann's directions from last week indicated a door beneath the sign "Duplex Recycling." Strange name for a company involved in prosthetics research. Even stranger headquarters. The narrow facade consisted of shifting brickwork. It didn't take a civil engineer to guess that the flanking buildings provided support. However, "Duplex Recycling" did had a ramp and wheelchair accessible doors. How convenient.

The manager's office was located in back. A voice over the speaker system directed me past a conveyer belt where employees worked with expressions of intense concentration. The office door opened into an empty antechamber — like a miniature vault — where I waited while the lights flickered and strobed for half a minute or so (a power failure, I assumed). Then the opposite door opened and I met the manager.

The office was lit only by a bank of monitors. Some were tuned in to various television channels; others displayed computer readouts. The volume was turned down. The manager was a thin black man, bald but with trimmed facial hair circling his mouth. This (I would later learn) was 101110… uh… Decillion — Comptroller of the Construct.

I'll skip the mind-blowing content of that two hour interview. The details are hazy (remember, this was before I gained my digital alter ego) and I'm unable to reproduce his level of persuasion. A few points did impress upon me. His organization was dedicated to equality, perfection and efficiency. They were involved in advanced research in many fields of technology. He admitted to having watched me for some time (I took this figuratively, as in someone had recommended me) and wanted me to join them. He described a job training program; they provided an advanced education, at the end of which I was guaranteed a career.

I had some concerns,

◘ **INTERVIEW WITH CIPHER 1110010100 [ENTERED BY COMPTROLER 10111010011 11:43:87.32/22-4-93]**
Subject hesitated when told that Deciphering would begin immediately and that he was required to remain on-site for the entire eight-month program. He also questioned the apparent strangeness of dropping off the face of the earth.
Instead of answering, I swiveled my chair to look at one monitor. It was a mundane news program, reporting live from the scene of a serious accident. I raised the volume by remote.
"…live from Highway 12. Forty-five minutes ago, a bus swerved into the on-coming lane and collided head-on with a tanker trailer. Two bodies have been recovered from what is left of the wheel-trans. Presumably the driver and a passenger; their identities have yet to be released. The trucker — reportedly in serious condit…"
At this point, I turned back to him and said, "We are used to achieving our objectives." I read two emotions on his face, both vying for dominance. The first was fear. He thought he "knew" the accident was a coincidence (especially since the body will later be "identified" as William Smith). Yet his ignorance created doubts. The other emotion was elation. He realized that I had given him the means to participate in something truly important.
END

but in the end, I surrendered to Iteration X. Decillion directed me through a door in back of the office. I was to follow the directions given by wall monitors.

ΩΩΩΩΩΩ

In the medical suite, a battery of tests awaited. I was poked, prodded, measured, and scanned in every band of the electromagnetic spectrum. All this was performed by a bald nurse in a gray military uniform. The examination was half finished before I recognized her as Dr. Zimmermann!

I later found my cell — literally, something you'd find in a monastery or prison. It contained a cot, drawers set into the wall, and a computer terminal. That's all. And an electronic lock on the outside, now clicked shut.

Exhausted as I was from the tests, the fact that I was imprisoned barely registered. I managed to lever myself out of the wheelchair and tumble into bed. The cot was hard and uncomfortable, but I fell asleep almost instantly.

That night I dreamt of the Bionic Man again, of the surgery scene from the opening credits.

�‍ **REPORT BY 11111010011 [1:16:76.12/23-4-93] Implant procedure without complication. Diagnostic software reports no problems with DEI. Subject survived. END**

Only I was in Steve Austin's place. From somewhere beyond the harsh lights, I heard Rudy's ominous vow: "We can rebuild him; we have the technology."

ΩΩΩΩΩΩ

New Life Begins

23-4-93: I awoke the next day at 7:00:00.00, acutely aware that I wasn't alone. A low, almost sub-audible humming filled the room. I finally pinpointed its origin from inside my head. This Digital Enhancement Implant (as I would soon learn) answered unvoiced questions and constantly commented on every subject. It guided, corrected, revealed the subtleties of my new existence. From then on, I was never alone. Big Brother was watching, an enemy within.

I also realized the now familiar gray uniform replaced my clothes (which had probably been incinerated). This non-style was all I'd see for eight months — right up to the present.

Breakfast appeared on a serving counter which extended from the wall. The aluminum tray contained tasteless mush, a biscuit which combined the worst properties of rice cakes and matzah bread, and three red vitamins. Each bit had its own compartment. Having missed two meals since yesterday morning, I consumed it all with gusto.

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My DEI drew attention to the computer terminal, where I found a wire jack. Without thinking, I plugged it in behind the right ear. Through an I/O port in my skull, the day's routine was downloaded into my mind.

◍ **WORK ON DISASSEMBLY LINE. ENSURE THE BELT RUNS SMOOTHLY. REPORT ANY DISRUPTIONS.**

The door to my room unlocked. Guided by the voice in my head, I rolled down the halls, through the empty office, and into the vault-like antechamber. After being scanned — for that's what the flickering lights were really for — I entered the warehouse.

I began work at 9:00:00.00 with the other workers. The shift was made up mostly of young adults (students, I reasoned), although there was one old man. We strapped into
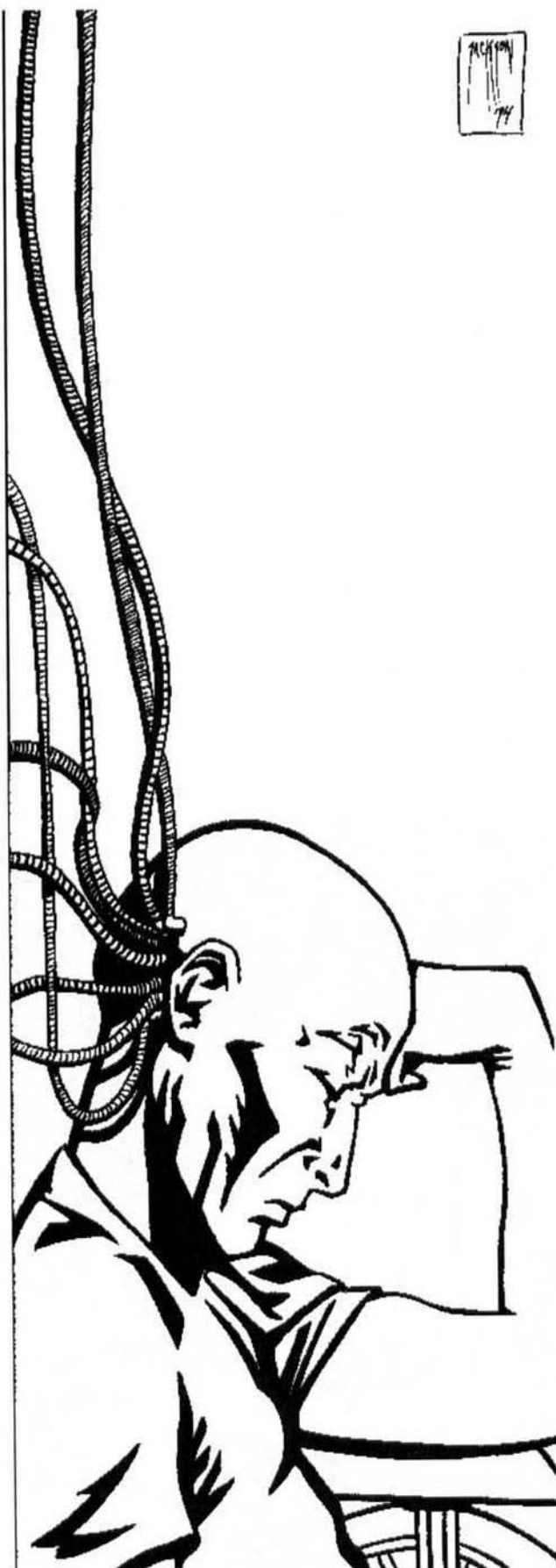
harnesses which wrapped about our arms and chest. I put my artificial arms into the harness with some difficulty. Our job was to remove plastic inserts from metal boxes as they moved past on the conveyer belt.

Eyes were on me constantly. I first thought it was the natural curiosity provoked by a new worker. This gradually degenerated into self-conscious paranoia. Then I realized that everybody was watching everybody else.

The place was thick with quiet concentration. Whenever a conversation threatened to break out, the loudspeaker would blare "Less talk; more work."

I couldn't keep up. The belt was waist high for most of them, and thus chest high to me. My artificial arms were clumsy, slow and forever tangling in the harnesses. More boxes slipped past me than I was able to disassemble. Those "downstream" from me had to double their efforts. They gave me dirty looks.

¤ REPORT BY PROGRAMMER 1011100010 [18:15:23:01/24-4-93]
After shift, went to cell of 1110010100. Cipher appeared physically and mentally exhausted from boring, frustrating, repetitive task. Startled by my biomechanisms. Excellent. Self: I am 1011100010. I am your programmer. Reports state that you were unable to function efficiently.

Cipher began list of grievances.
Self: Yes or no will do.
Cipher: Yes, but —
Self: We do not accept excuses. We do not accept failure. You will improve.
Drew taser from hip, leveled it, fired. Twin wires shot from end, snagged on uniform, and delivered discipline.
END

$$\Omega\Omega\Omega\Omega\Omega\Omega$$

Lessons

24-4-93: The next day repeated the previous one, but this time my efforts were stimulated by the tingling in my nerve endings. My bitter birthright, however, had predisposed me to overcome challenges. I must have improved sufficiently. Rather than a meeting with 1011100010 (Tecson, as he's known to outsiders) that night, I met Lao Tzu, the ancient Chinese philosopher.

Or at least his AES,

¤ ADVANCED EXPERT SYSTEM
Standard expert systems are AI software programmed with the knowledge of one or more experts in a given field. For instance, programmers could interview Stephen Hawking to create an expert system about

astrophysics. Then one need only consult the system for expert advice and problem-solving.

Iteration X has advanced beyond this. We digitally resurrect the dead. The process involves feeding all available data on the subject into a computer. This includes personality and beliefs as revealed in writings, physical appearance (if known from works of art), cultural context, and so on. Programmers fill in any blanks.
END

a near-perfect simulation. My mentors, who "visited" me over the next few weeks, included Daedalus, Roger Bacon, Jules Verne, and others, each teaching the Convention's history and early progress. Other Iterators or their agents taught other topics. AESs are totally interactive — able to answer questions and even respond to body language. They communicate in one's choice of language. My request for English prompted Lao Tzu to speak in a dialect I'll call "20th century mid-western American English."

Lao Tzu's first lesson shattered my perception of reality.

□ TRANSCRIPT OF BRIEFING BY LAO-TZU.AES
First, purge yourself of the usual definition of "magick." Magick is not a mystic power; it is the essence of science. Like the minor sciences (physics, for instance), it is measurable, controllable; ultimately it is ours to command. The minor sciences are a diluted form of magick which we can entrust to the Masses with little fear of their damaging reality.

We call true science — our science — magick, for that is what the ignorant see it as. The term may seem confusing, yet is as good as any. If one cannot understand the subjectivity of names, one will never understand the subjectivity of reality.
END

Thus began my basic training. (More correctly, this was a De-Ciphering, since trainees are called Ciphers.) It was an ordeal which made boot camp resemble kindergarten.

By day, I slaved away in Duplex Recycling. In the evening, I would relearn history, advanced science, proper protocol, our real enemies — who were not warlords, the government, or AIDS — and my new function in the grand scheme of reality. (I'll summarize this information a little later.)

Each night I was exhausted. Even thinking was too much; easier to let my DEI do that. I might have felt lonely, frightened, trapped, bored… if emotion had been part of my programming. Each night, the DEI "sang" me to sleep with repetitive directives.

**□ WE ARE LOYAL IN ALL OUR DESIGNS.
WE IMPLEMENT ALL PROGRAMMING GIVEN TO US.
WE ARE LOYA**
<<BREAK>>

16-5-93: I wasn't alone in this Deciphering. Just as I was preparing to consume the after-shift meal, a guy bypassed the electronic lock on my cell door. The intruder was robust (as in Neanderthal), about six-feet tall, in his early twenties. He too was bald and wore the gray uniform and carried himself with assurance.

"Hah. I thought there was somebody else holed up in here," the visitor said. My DEI identified him as 111011010. Like any good Iterator, he was blunt: "I want your food."

The way the food tasted, I would have given it up freely, but our rations were slim enough already. He wouldn't take no for an answer, and I was in no position to resist.

"Hey, strongest rules. Isn't that what they teach us?"

While he ate my food in front of me, he bragged about his knack for electronics, being kicked out of cadets, and his contempt for minorities. He left me with a final warning:

"You mention this to lensman — yah, yah, 1011100010 — and, well, I'll leave it to your imagination…."

ΩΩΩΩΩΩ

7:45:12.10/17-5-93: Tecson (aka lensman) came to my cell and asked if I had met the other Cipher. I answered no. What was worse; a tasering or waking up dead?

"I do not accept lies," he said before beginning his lesson.

I didn't see the other Cipher for six months.

**□ REPORT BY PROGRAMMER 1011100010
[21:00:00:01/17-6-93]**
Cipher 111011010 not performing as expected. Has not repeated offence of 16-5-93, but has not improved sufficiently.
Did poorly in arena today. Will allow three days for recovery, then return to routine. Double-hard to make up for lost time.
END

ΩΩΩΩΩΩ

Changes

2-11-93: Tecson had left the Construct on business a few weeks before. Cipher 111011010 took this opportunity to return. He had changed — now thin, gaunt, haggard-looking. He had a purple-black welt on his temple. No longer brash, he was paranoid.

He asked for my help. He wanted out. He didn't know where to turn. I told him I couldn't help him. Wouldn't help him. He pleaded with me. I remember thinking he was pathetic.

Once he had left, I filed a report. After all, we should be loyal in all our designs.

22-11-93: When Tecson returned, he took me to the arena and presented me with my exoskeleton. It had been custom-made for my compact form. Once inside and linked to its cyber-jack, I felt like a whole person.

I spent the day sparring with one of Tecson's bodyguards. A lucky strike scraped syntheskin from his face. He was a robot (a HIT Mark, actually). By now, nothing surprised me. I spent the last month of my training learning the art of war and the intricacies of killing.

ΩΩΩΩΩΩ

After eight months of Deciphering, I was informed that my Assay was set for January 1st, 1994. Decillion had arranged with another Construct for me to participate in their assault on Graylock Chantry.

At this point, I was given temporary leave from the Construct. As a break from my Deciphering. To enjoy the holiday. Whatever. No longer interested in the mundane world, I requested extra training. It was given.

I have already related the story of my Assay at Graylock. It ended a mere three hours ago. Though I supposedly led a Shock Corp, the primary function of those HIT Marks was most likely to witness my performance. I passed. A report to this effect is probably being filed as I think-print.

Decillion will re-evaluate my grade after discovering this treachery.

Recorded History of Iteration X

The system goes online on August 4th, 1997. Human decisions are removed from strategic defense. Skynet begins to learn at a geometric rate. It becomes self-aware at 2:14 a.m. Eastern Standard Time, August 29th. In a panic, they attempt to pull the plug.

— *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*

That is my history; I am as certain of these facts as any brainwashed mage with a 500 megabyte memory can be. To relate the Convention's history, I must confront a similar paradox. My near-perfect recall for details and dates (learned during Deciphering) cannot help in sorting reality from propaganda. I can only provide this caveat.

When reading this history, you must also remember the difference between magely conception and mundane "invention." Artificers were often a century ahead. The time-delay results from the time it takes for ideas to trickle down into society and be implemented as parts of reality. The same is true today.

This process can be sped up, but usually with detrimental effect. Comptrollers claim that ignorant Masses are incapable of handling too much knowledge. And to give away our most recent revelations would be to give away our power.

I know much of this history by rote. The parts I'm less familiar with, I'll leave to the advanced expert systems.

Origins

Iteration X is the logical conclusion of 2.5 million years of evolution. Our Convention entered the archeological record alongside the first stone tool. Not just an appropriated stone or bone or stick — though this is accomplishment enough — but a lasting tool created by the effort of a proto-human.

The Technocracy as a whole traces their ancestry to early dates, but Iteration X claims to be the oldest Convention. Void Engineers appeared with the wheel and navigation. The Progenitors came to power with domestication. Yet the concepts of Iteration X were there from the beginning, multiplying the power of human muscle through artificial means. Stone axes to increase leverage. Fire to soften food. Spears for more efficient killing.

Of the Traditions, only Dreamspeakers have so ancient an origin. Thus they were once our oldest and greatest rivals. Now we have all but crushed them.

In this formative era, the Traditions were not enemies of the Technocracy. Indeed, these two armed camps had yet to exist; even the individual Conventions/Traditions were nebulous groups. Most mages contributed their expertise to other spheres of influence — furthering their own power and limiting others'. We offered up our primitive technology for

art, politics and ritual. Culture, however, often placed restrictions on tool-use. For instance, the convenience of weapons was offset by societal strictures against conflict. All this would change after the Dark Ages of betrayal.

Until this unforeseen catastrophe, our predecessors continued to introduce tool-based advances, such as copper metallurgy. Around 3000 B.C. humanity acquired urban life and abstract mathematics. Soon after the Iron Age began (circa 1000 B.C. in Europe and the Far East), our ideas became so popular and powerful that we were able to influence the Masses on a large scale. Our Convention (then called the Artificers) focused its efforts in two regions — ancient China and classical Greece.

Greek and Chinese Thought

While some Artificers manipulated the Chinese,

¤ CHINESE THOUGHT [TRANSCRIPT OF BRIEFING BY SUN-TZU.AES]
From the 11th century to 256 B.C., the Zhou Dynasty was the high point of ancient China. Its founding was in no small part due to Artificers. Tools built palaces. Weapons subdued foes. Here Artificers developed coherent objectives and methodologies. Though somewhat diluted or polluted, many of these ideals trickled down to the Masses via Chinese philosophy.

In his *Tao Te Ching*, the 6th century philosopher Lao Tzu emphasized the virtues of seriousness and self-control, moderation and balance, and using the least force to accomplish one's goal. He advocated holding a global perspective, integrating into a cohesive universe, and exploring the interrelationship which would result. This is similar to how we perceive and affect reality through magick.

Living between 551-479 B.C., Master Confucius looked back upon the early Zhou period as a Golden Age. He infused his Analects with borrowed virtues. Resoluteness. Simplicity. Perfection through purity and tradition. Loyalty. Subdued emotion. Economy of expenditure. Correcting of mistakes. Inspiring awe. All of these are Artificer values.

Sun Tzu was a contemporary of Confucius. His Art *of War* stresses the importance of careful planning, efficiency and calculation before going to war. The greatest warriors know their enemy and are always prepared. Commanders should be prudent, brave, calm,

insensitive and emotionless. Though his organization and hierarchy, Sun Tzu was able to make effective use of huge armies.

Many other Chinese philosophers and works could be named: the Ssu-ma Fa, Wu-tzu's teachings, the Wei Liao-tzu, Mo Di's promotion of economical expenditure, and the Three Strategies of Huang Shih-kung. All reflect the ideal of perfection through order.

The results of Artificial influence on the Masses were promising. In 256 B.C., the "First Chinese Empire" rose in Ch'in Province. Emperor Cheng standardized currency and the Chinese script. He constructed a network of roads and began the Great Wall (a mundane precedent to our own Barrier). More importantly, his could mobilize an army of a million men, all equipped with the finest weapons and armor.

Through our use of hexagrams (as in the I Ching), Chinese Artificers developed the binary number system nearly three millennia before the rest of the world.

We were the first to invent gunpowder.
END

others were exerting influence half a world away. Greek society was a cooling trough for much Artificial knowledge. By inspiring mundane thinkers, we spread our knowledge to the Masses. Other mages did the same, which often resulted in a convolution of contradictory ideas (even in the mind of a single mundane).

Greek thinkers believed that nature could be explained through reason. They were correct. Reality strives for an ideal state, follows logical patterns of cause-and-effect, and always achieves maximum result with minimal effort. Through us, the Greeks came up with the idea of a spherical earth. As a whole, Greek thinkers were skilled at systematization.

From about 650 B.C., the Milesian school described the world as consisting of fundamental, primoridal elements. Thales of Miletus and his disciples developed the Greek atomic theory. In 540 B.C., Pythagoras expressed our goal of reproducing nature through a system of mathematical interrelationships. Parmenides (an Artificer) tried to explain how change in the world is an illusion of our senses. Creation, change and decay all depend upon a mage's perception. He invented and introduced laws for the conservation of matter, momentum, and energy.

DAEDALUS.AES maintains that the greatest of Greek thinkers, Plato, was actually ignorant and confused. A mundane, all of his ideas were magickally inspired. It is now believed that dozens of mages from many Traditions were working through him. By sorting through the almost hopeless jumble of concepts, one can find a few from Artificers. First, that only pure thought can grasp actuality — a diluted magickal concept of will defining reality. Second, that one

should directly apply mathematical reasoning to all problems. The "greatness" of Plato's work makes it superficially applicable to almost every human endeavor.

Aristotle, on the other hand, gave humanity the lever-principle. Archimedes was a brilliant mathematician and mechanical engineer who studied geometry and built large-scale machines (such as the hydraulic screw and war engines) in the 2nd century B.C.

In an attempt to increase the popularity of technology, the Artificer Hero of Alexandria (in the 1st century A.D.) wrote the Pneumatics and created ingenious gadgets to astound and amuse idle spectators. He created, among other things, a puppet show with automatically-closing curtains, a device to open temple doors when a fire was lit, and a machine to dispense holy water.

Though we managed to infuse Greek society with science, their development of technology was slower. Technology is stimulated not only by science, but by the practical demands of society and industry as well. Precursors to the Traditions kept society from having much practical use for machines; slaves preformed most labor. Mages also claimed that *artes liberales* (mental work) was superior to *artes mechanicae* (any sort of manual labor or craftsmanship). By the same token, limited technology prevented the advancement of science — which required practical application to prove or disprove theories.

Still, we had accomplished much. The Greeks were familiar with five fundamental machines — lever, windlass, wedge, screw, and pulley-block — and knew the principles of hydrostatics and aerostatics. They passed their legacy on to the Romans, whose large-scale constructions and disciplined legions were the envy of the world.

Progress continued until the betrayal of the Dark Ages.

¤ THE DARK AGES [TRANSCRIPT OF BRIEFING BY ALGORITMI.AES]

Hermetic mages and Celestial saints conspired against us. Through their meddling, our Roman Empire collapsed and was replaced by an unstable, uncivilized world. They called their bastard offspring "The Mythic Age," but it was actually a thousand years of chaos and ignorance. The magick of science and technology lost much of its power. During these Dark Ages, many Technomancers lost hope and were corrupted by Nephandi. Only the Artificers refused to submit. Some technology remained in use — mill-wheels and siege engines, for instance — but we moved our center of influence to the Islamic world. During the 9th century, Greek literature and the mathematics of Indian Artificers was translated into Arabic. An independent Arab science evolved, one capable of absorbing new ideas. Two Artificers were

especially noteworthy during this time; Algoritmi compiled a unique mathematics based on the efficient Indo-Arabian positional system still used today. We honor him with the word "algorithm." In 1206, Ismaeel al-Jazari wrote the *Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices*. This definitive book made our ideas more accessible to the Masses. During this Arab phase, we established the groundwork for future gains. Our work in optics would be important to physics in 16th and 17th centuries.

By the 11th century, we had regained enough influence to begin expansion. Gradually, we reintroduced our ideas to Europe via Italian explorers and the Moors in Spain. Our success caused Mythic mages to initiate the Crusades (and anti-Islamic sentiment in general). Artificers and their followers (such as Gilbert of Aurillae) were accused of "the Dark Arts"; their center of study in Toledo was thought to be a school for demonology. Due to the Mythic paradigm in Europe, we had to disguise science behind layers of mystic formula and ritual. Alchemy was the result. Alchemists believed that nature was constantly striving for perfection, that all matter was undergoing changes towards this goal. They sought the one powerful transmuting agent that would bring metals to a state of perfection (*prima materia*) and by the same means prolong life. Their experiments led to the development of Primium, a magickal alloy of purified gold and silver.

Our ideas reached the Masses through Roger Bacon (1214-1294). Though he was no Artificer, much less a scientist, he daydreamed about telescopes, automobiles, airplanes and dirigibles. He also formulated a gunpowder recipe from Arabic sources.

It was also during the 13th century that Western and Eastern Artificers managed to establish consistent contact. The Mongol Empire opened a land route across central Asia. Artificers traded theories through Marco Polo and other agents. Most significantly, Western Artificers benefited from coherent objectives and methodologies and the magick of gunpowder. Contact became sporadic once again with the collapse of the Mongol Empire, but Western Artificers had learned enough.

END

The Return of Reason

Long frustrated by the Dark Ages, Artificers decided that something should finally be done. They called for an assembly of Technomancers — representatives from each of the modern Conventions. This first Symposium was held in A.D. 1400. It resulted in a plan to usurp reality through a series of coordinated strikes. Fifty years were given for preparation. Though random factors disrupted this schedule, Copernicus' establishment of the heliocentric universe (A.D. 1453) signaled the beginning of Technocracy.

The Artificers were prepared.

They advanced the concept of the universe as perfect and efficient machine, put into motion by superhuman will and left to operate by itself. To illustrate this concept, we set our scientists the task of inventing perpetual motion machines. Though none succeeded, the idea caught on among the Masses. To many, the Cosmos became soulless.

Our efforts produced results. The 15th and 16th centuries saw the rise of great artist-engineers: Brunelleschi, Ghiberti, Alberti, Benvenuto Cellini, Albrecht Durer, Leonardo da Vinci. The latter considered himself first and foremost a military engineer. His sketchbook contains notes for hydraulic engineering and the construction of advanced machines — helicopters, airplanes, armored vehicles and so forth.

New classes of technicians appeared to produce industrial machinery, firearms, new instruments and tools, clocks, civil and military constructions. Mathematical mechanics, physics, careful analysis, economic expenditure and efficiency — all became important concepts. Mechanical technology advanced steadily.

In *Harmony of the World*, the great Johannes Kepler (1571-present) explains how the structure of reality is mathematically definable. He also reiterated our belief that mathematical simplicity defines truth.

Less than a hundred years later, Newton wrote the most important scientific book thus far — the *Principia*. In it, he distilled some of our most important principles — universal gravitation and three laws of motion — into simple axioms. By then, the Technocracy were the undisputed masters of reality.

First Iteration

The future isn't what it used to be.

— Popular Expression

In the 18th century, we guided Britain into an Industrial Revolution. We introduced steam engines, factories, automated machines, the machine-tool industry, and the foundations of a modern system of management.

We also kept an eye on the Son of Ether Charles Babbage. We appropriated one of his prototype Analytical Engines for our own purposes. We experimented, modified, and eventually perfected it. By the turn of the 20th century, The Computer had gained sentience at the "X" iteration of a sentience-expanding algorithm. In honor of this achievement, we changed our name to Iteration X. As Difference Engineers (Virtual Adepts) developed new concepts — such as electronics — the Computer has been

continually updated, managing our most important functions to this day.

During the 20th century, our advances are too numerous to detail. Just look around the mundane world; they include assembly-line plants (thanks to Henry Ford), electronic computers and experimentation with robotics. Progress speeds along faster than it ever has before, and seems to increase exponentially.

Specialization is also important. Many mundanes have no idea how an automobile or electronic appliance works, much less a computer. By keeping all but established experts from knowing our secrets, we can cut down on the number of mundanes we must monitor.

¤ HOW TO INTERPRET THE ANALECTS OF CONFUCIUS

1.8: IF THE SUPERIOR MAN IS NOT GRAVE, THEN HE DOES NOT INSPIRE AWE. HE TAKES LOYALTY AND GOOD FAITH AS HIS FIRST PRINCIPLES, AND HAS NO COMRADES WHO ARE NOT UP TO HIS OWN STANDARD. IF HE COMMITS A FAULT, HE SHOULD NOT SHRINK FROM CORRECTING IT. [AN ARMATURE OF ITERATION X IS SUPERIOR TO THE MASSES AND MUST DISTANCE HIMSELF FROM THEM; FAMILIARITY BREEDS FEARLESSNESS. HE IS LOYAL ONLY TO HIS CONVENTION. HE IS IN A POSITION OF GREAT RESPONSIBILITY; ANY ERRORS COULD AFFECT REALITY.]

2.19: IF YOU PROMOTE THE STRAIGHT AND SET THEM ABOVE THE CROOKED, THEN THE MASSES WILL BE OBEDIENT.
[ONLY THE OBEDIENT WILL BE REWARDED WITH POWER, RESPONSIBILITY, AND THE MEANS TO PERFECTION. ALL OTHERS WILL RECEIVE NO REWARDS —> HAVE NO POWER —> AND THUS BE IN NO POSITION TO DISOBEY.]

12.17: TO GOVERN MEANS TO BE CORRECT. IF YOU TAKE THE LEAD BY BEING CORRECT, WHO WILL DARE NOT TO BE CORRECTED?
[THROUGH THE TECHNOCRACY, ITERATION X CONTROLS REALITY. THUS OUR DEFINITION OF REALITY IS CORRECT. ALL WHO WISH TO BE PART OF OUR REALITY MUST CONFORM.]
END

The AESs cite recent advances in particle physics as examples of our philosophy's persistance. Greek atomic theory survived, unchallenged, until very recently. It was only in the early 20th century that Etheric mages shattered the unity of the atom by introducing subatomic confusion. Electrons, protons, neutrons and neutrinos soon multiplied to over 100 particles (such as bosons and quarks). Yet simplicity will prevail; ease is ingrained in human consciousness. Modern physicists seek a grand unification theory. They have categorized particles as four fundamental forces: gravity, electromagnetism, and "weak" and "strong" nuclear energies. Eventually, they will reduce these groups to two, and then to one. When that occurs, Ascension will begin.
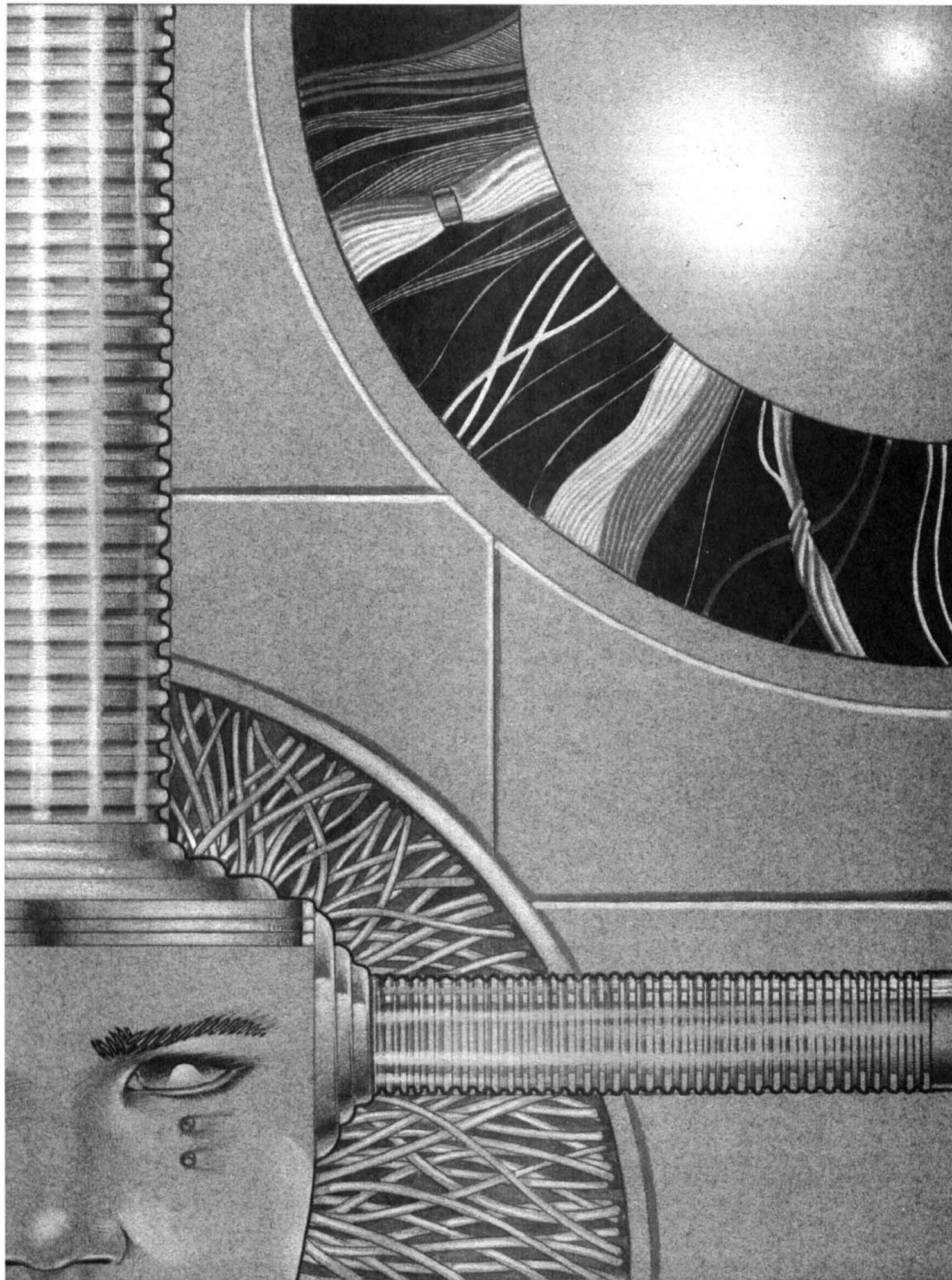
Disk Two: Clockwork Convention

The mechanical clock made possible the idea of regular production, regular working hours and a standard product.
— Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization*

Inner Workings

Methodologies

There is alarm in both favor and disgrace.
— Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching* (Book I, Verse XIII)

    The complexity of modern society has caused Iteration X (and other Conventions, I have learned) to split into specialized groups called Methodologies. Methodologies rarely point to a central founding date; most emerge through gradual diversification.

▫ STRUCTURE OF THE CONVENTION [COMPILED BY 10111010011] >KAMRAD

These are the unAwakened agents of Iteration X, cogwheels in its vast machinery. They can be broadly classified into three categories: professional, technical and rank-and-file. Professionals can be mathematicians, scientists or

industrial designers. Through "their" flashes of brilliance, we reveal our future plans to the Masses.

Technicians are our representatives to the Masses. We allow them to learn our basic principles so they can keep civilization running smoothly. Examples include auto mechanics, electricians, even employees of Radio Shack. By limiting the number of technicians, we increase our control over the Masses through their dependence on technology.

The rank-and-file are average mundanes. Individually, they are of little use. But in groups they can instigate sweeping changes to reality. History illustrates the power of a striking labor union, a ruling fascist party, or a knot of police officers. We recruit the most violent mundanes into paramilitary groups and use them to disrupt our enemies' power-structures. [One nightclub, for example, acted as a magnet for Cult-inspired deviance. After only a few weeks of our Kamrads loitering by the entrance, the place shut down.]

>CIPHER

Our apprentices are nothing by themselves, but have great future potential for the Convention. They are usually recruited at about age twenty — young enough to be tooled into shape, yet mature enough to be of immediate use in the Ascension War. Depending on their eventual function, they may have had background in university science programs, technical colleges, military or police academies, and sometimes youth gangs.

Potential Ciphers are carefully studied before recruiting to ensure that only those with a reasonable chance of completing training are chosen.

Training (properly called Deciphering) takes the form of an eight-month crash course. It ends with a dangerous Assay when Ciphers either prove their mettle or are destroyed. 80% complete the Deciphering; of these, 40% survive the Assay. If the Cipher's potential has not Awakened during this Assay, it will be forcibly conditioned until its true capacity is brought forth.

>ARMATURE

The mass of Iterators are Armatures. They rank above Ciphers, who are not Awakened, but have yet to earn a position of greater responsibility. Many do not advance past this position; most show no aptitude for

higher ranks, are destroyed in the line of duty, or find hands-on experience preferable to promotion.

Armatures perform various functions, often depending on their Methodologies; Statisticians assign their Armatures to accumulate data or perform calculations. Time-Motion Managers often use Armatures as security specialists in factories. BioMechanics perform routine biomechanical surgery.

Armatures are periodically rotated though the Shock Corps, so that all units receive some combat experience. With the many enemies of our Convention, few tours of duty are uneventful.

>PROGRAMMER

Programmers determine the Convention's future. This may involve leading an R&D lab, designing the Mark VI Exterminator, coaxing an AI into sentience, or Deciphering future mages.

At one time, accomplished mages were temporarily reassigned as heads of Deciphering Programs to pass on their knowledge. Now, however, this responsibility has been given to specialized Institutes, such as Acme Pyrotechnic. Through computer programs and by harsh example, Ciphers learn history, obedience, combat and other important lessons.

>COMPTROLLER

Each Construct is under the direction of one of more Comptrollers. They provide a direct link to other Constructs. Within the framework of their orders, they decide upon their own operating procedures. Their efforts are monitored by Autochthonia. If unable to perform, they are replaced by others who can.

Data processing is valuable in administration and management. Thus, many Comptrollers are Statisticians.

>AUTOCHTHONIA

The Machine Realm is not truly a rank; assignment to this Construct is an honor to which all Iterators strive. Only exemplars of our Convention are chosen to serve. Autochthonia is a perfect example of what earth will be like after Iteration X succeeds. Orderly, efficient, predictable. Every mage has a specific duty. Armatures are responsible for defending this sanctuary. Programmers have the privilege of upgrading the Computer. Comptrollers

determine the course of the entire Convention, under the guidance of the Computer.

>THE COMPUTER

Deep within the central core of Autochthonia, the Computer calculates what is best for Iteration X. It is infallible. We came into existence at the will of the Computer; thus the Computer's will is our existence. Iterators should aspire to its level of perfection.

END

Statistician

Our job in physics is to see things simply, to understand a great many complicated phenomena in a unified way in terms of a few simple principles.

— Stephen Weinberg, theoretical physicist at the University of Texas

The Technocracy wishes to understand — and thus control — all of reality. This goal is as simple as it sounds. An entire Methodology, the Statisticians, are assigned the task of planning and organizing and predicting. Mathematicians and computers perform endless calculation on innumerable topics — from predicting enemy moves to charting the probable date of Ascension. This Methodology may have inspired the psychohistorians of Asimov's *Foundation* novels.

The Statisticians are the oldest Methodology. They appeared when Greek and Chinese Artificers began to develop coherent theories and goals. All of Iteration X's new advances — from earth-as-globe to comparisons between the human brain and a computer — were tested and perfected (and their effects on reality predicted) by Statisticians long before being introduced to the Masses. This Methodology also designed the Julian and Gregorian calendars in order to regulate linear time, which once surged and slowed unpredictably.

Due to this long history and their skill at planning, Statisticians are the *de facto* leaders of Iteration X. They are responsible for coming up with long-term goals and short-term strategies. To best accomplish this, they must reduce reality to mathematical formula — so variables can be isolated, controlled, deleted, or reproduced. A Statistician Construct might resemble NASA's Mission Control. Various experts coordinate through computers to keep operations running smoothly.

Statisticians maintain a network of mundane contacts — students of statistical mechanics and mathematics, physicists, military analysts, technology forecasters and futurists, pollsters, and data-gatherers of all kinds.
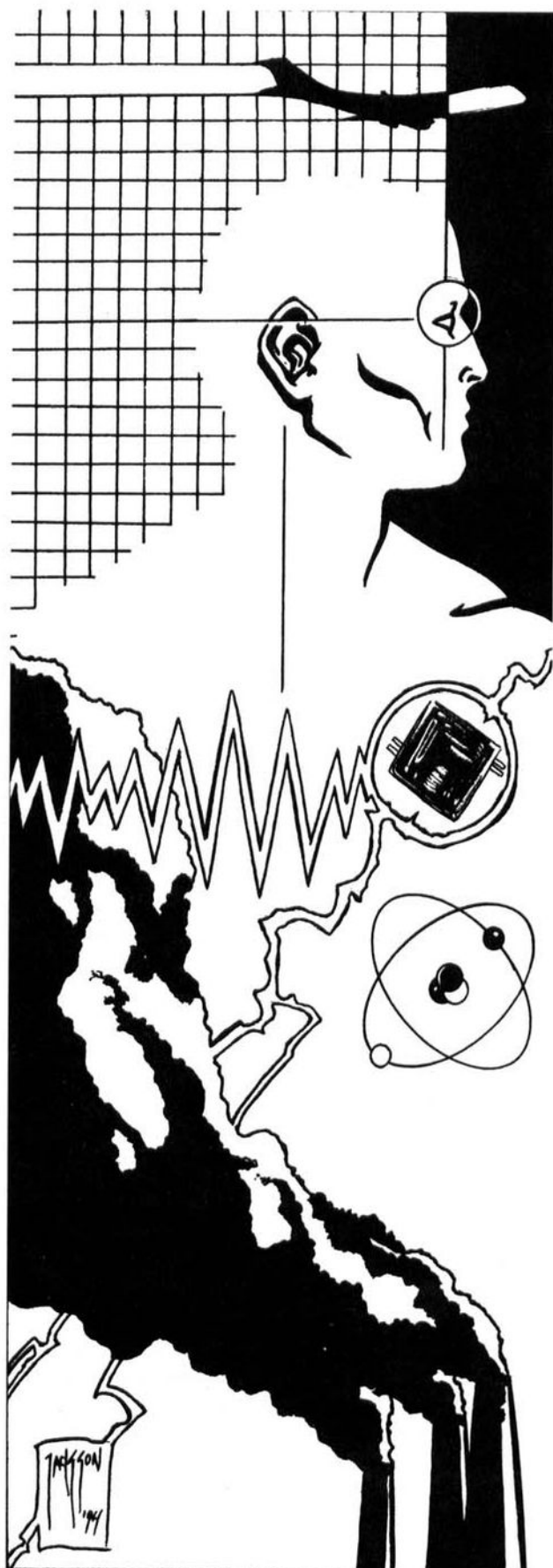
Time-Motion Managers

Business and warfare have a lot in common: vast numbers of people, complex logistics, communication difficulties and the need for quick decision making. Not to mention clearly defined objectives, specialized functions and responsibilities, and — most importantly — an enemy.

— Daniel Burrus, *Technotrends*

Time-Motion Managers are in charge of designing and overseeing the construction of machines for the Technocracy. Their name comes from an obsession for efficiency. Factories are entirely automated and operate under assembly line methods.

The mechanical clock originated with Benedictine monks around A.D. 1200 to regulate prayer and, I've heard, to advance their understanding of Time magicks. Yet early Time-Motion Managers realized its potential. Within a hundred years, laborers and craftsmen were using clocks to regulate urban life.

When the Technocracy ascended to power in the 15th and 16th centuries, Time-motion Managers strengthened their power base. Mathematical mechanics attracted the attention of technicians who produced industrial machinery, firearms, and civil and military constructions. Their desire to employ available energy as economically as possible led to the use of water power in the mining and iron industries, and to the evolution of firearms.

Since the Industrial Revolution, their advances became more frequent. The factory system was first used by Richard Arkwright. Men like Sylvanus Thayer, Daniel Tyler and George Wistle laid the foundation of modern management — hierarchical organization, leaders who exerted indirect control through paperwork rather than visible command, and a standard measurement of production. A machine-tool industry sprang up; now machines were used to create other machines. The 20th century was ushered in by Henry Ford's automotive assembly plant. Robots replaced autoworkers in the 1980s. Now factories are almost completely automated.

Most existing technology was assembled under the auspices of the Time-Motion Managers. Once some advance is created, other Conventions take over. The Syndicate, for instance, is charged with marketing products, while the New World Order controls television programming and regulatory commissions.

Time-Motion Managers supposedly control the Masses through technical experts like mechanics and electricians. The Masses become dependent on the technicians, and the limited number of technicians are easily supervised by Iterators. Think about it. How many mundanes would know how to repair their car's engine if it broke down? How many handyman husbands really know what they're doing? How many shudder at the words "Some Assembly Required." To be fair, it is not completely due to ignorance. Time-Motion Managers make their machines more complex than necessary to reinforce their control.

This Methodology backs the development of new polymers, high-tech ceramics, robotics, nanotechnology and computer hardware. In the last two fields, they face fierce competition from Sons of Ether and Virtual Adepts. Believe it or not, the recycling movement is due to this Convention's foresight. Forget altruistic motives: Iteration X wants to save the earth's resources so that once humanity is conquered they can turn to whatever lies beyond the Barrier.

BioMechanics

We can rebuild him; we have the technology.

— Oscar Goldman, *The Six Million Dollar Man*

The Artificers as a whole were long involved in artificial limb replacement. Heroditus records that in 500 B.C., Hegesistatus escaped from leg manacles by cutting off his foot; later, he crafted a wooden replacement. The Roman general Marcus Sergius was given an iron hand after being maimed in battle.

Yet the modern history of the BioMechanics begins with the Progenitor-turned-Artificer Ambroise Paré. In the 16th century, he designed mechanical limbs to be made of bronze and provided with simple articulation by means of gears and springs. His research led to the "American leg" in 1839. Suction soon replaced body straps.

In the 20th century, integration of medical science and engineering has furthered their interests. Servo-mechanisms allow for subtle movement. Strain gauges in the gripping mechanism of artificial hands produce a weak myo-electrical signal proportional to the gripping force; electrodes embedded in the host's muscle provide the sensation of touch. Mechanical arms may be powered pneumatically (compressed gas) or by electric motors.

In addition to prosthetics, BioMechanics create all kinds of "spare parts" for the body: skull plates, false eyes, glasses and contact lenses, hearing aids, false teeth, pace-makers, heart valves, vein tubes, breast implants, artificial bones and joints. Through these parts, BioMechanics control the Masses. "Complications" (such as host rejection) are the easiest way to deal with troublesome mundanes.

This is merely the technology which has been integrated into reality. Mages receive state-of-the-art biomechanisms, Devices straight out of science fiction. In 1984, the first cyborg HIT Mark rolled of the assembly line, although this technology is a century away from reaching mundanes.

Within the Convention, BioMechanics are highly respected. They create, implant, and repair the biomechanisms which literally make up a part of every Iterator. To annoy a BioMechanic is to betray one's own body.

BioMechanics also associate with Progenitors. The latter's surgeons are advised how best to amputate limbs for easy prosthetic attachment. However, there is still friction. Progenitors are upset over the thalidomide disaster; they are even more upset that BioMechanics took advantage of this to expand the prosthetic industry. Both compete for the same "market."

Mission Statement

If God Almighty had consulted with me when He made the world, I would have shewed him how to mend it.

— Alphonsus of Castile (paraphrased)

I don't pretend to understand the Convention's greater goals. I'm just a minor component in The Big Machine.

◻ **CONVENTIONAL THOUGHT [DOWNLOADED FROM AUTOCHTHONIA 7:00:00.00/1-1-94]**

All Iterators are parts in the Big Machine. Each must correctly perform its designated function or risk throwing off the entire schedule. To optimize control and minimize error, Comptrollers must implement a number of systems.

>ORDERS OF THE DAY

Each Iterator receives a daily agenda downloaded into his Digital Enhancement Implant. He must follow these orders as closely as possible. If faced with an unforeseen situation, he must not act without new orders (or at least confirmation to his own suggestions). In some instances, this causes a delay in seconds to minutes as new orders are transmitted. Other times — when operating far from command — the mission must be temporarily aborted.

To minimize problems, a Comptroller should assemble Armatures into collectives. Each member can be given different — though complementary — orders. Together, the Armatures will operate with machine-like efficiency. Even if one part "breaks down," the collective will be able to provide direction towards completing the assigned task.

>THE ASCENSION WAR

We are the only Convention with the correct attitude towards Tradition mages. Those who oppose us must be destroyed, imprisoned in slave-factories (such as MECHA), or forcibly assimilated. Threats are the most efficient form of persuasion: "If you will not be a Technocrat, I will bash your skull in."

Iteration X maintains a state of perpetual readiness. Our enemies can strike at any moment; they do not subscribe to our honorable code of combat. A constant buildup of forces and pre-emptive strikes are our only means of defense. Even if the Ascension War were to end, we must remain vigilant. There is always an enemy — if not an external one, then perhaps one within the Technocracy itself...

>MANUFACTURE

To power our war machines requires rapid industrialization. We must churn out HIT Marks, Decipher through crash courses, and strive to earn an array of biomechanisms. We used similar goals and tactics with the Russian Masses during our pre-and-post war influence in that state.

This is not without drawbacks. Many Ciphers do not reach full Awakening. In Russia, rapid industrialization was ultimately detrimental to the standard of living. The New World Order warns that the recent phenomena of "future shock" derives from our aggressive tact.

The Computer calculates, however, that the ends justify the means.

>SWAYING THE MASSES

One must remember a passage from Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching* (Book I, Verse XX):
Indifferent like the sea,
Ceaseless like a penetrating wind,
The Masses are ever present.

The Masses under our influence constitute the largest percentage of our forces. We have influence among industrialists, factory workers, robotic and prosthetic development companies, and computer hardware manufacturers. Our Kamrads tend to be nationalists, union workers and military types.

We control the Masses through technicians, and through those Kamrads with influence in mundane society. We send representatives to speak at union rallies or military briefings just as in Nazi Germany. These master Programmers provide the Masses with a clear, black-and-white picture of reality. They reveal the two possible perspectives on any issue: our own — correct and justified — and the unreasonable perspective of our opponents. They know better than to argue with dissenters. Deletion is so much more efficient.

END

Even Decillion answers to a greater authority, one which he refers to as It. However, I do know their general objectives in the Ascension War. I should. This information has been bashed into my skull since recruiting.

If you have not guessed already, Iteration X upholds a theory of perfection. The Advanced Expert Systems warn of a reality about to collapse, of a Final Twilight which threatens to engulf us all. Iterators claim to have discovered the threats — Tradition mages and other renegade Awakened beings — and take it upon themselves to eradicate them. Purified and preserved from decay, a New Humanity will arise, mightier and more beautiful than before. To achieve this goal, the Convention has organized a rigid agenda.

❑ ADDENDA TO PRECEPTS OF DAMION
ARTICLE 4: ASCENSION CAN BE ACHIEVED ONLY THROUGH A COMMON GOAL OF ORDER. PREDICTABILITY EQUALS PERFECTION, AND THUS ASCENSION.
ARTICLE 5: INDIVIDUALITY BREEDS DISUNITY.
ARTICLE 27: ONLY THE TECHNOCRACY IS POWERFUL ENOUGH TO CONTROL REALITY. ONLY THE TECHNOCRACY IS FIT TO RULE. THE WEAK ARE WORTHLESS.

This agenda reveals two idiosyncrasies. First, like its binary communication, Iteration X views all things dualistically. This probably stems from our physiology — half biological, half technological. One is either an enemy or an ally. Even allies are separated by whether or not they belong to Iteration X. The Technocracy is right; those who fail to conform (never mind oppose) are wrong. Thus flawed. Thus requiring correction or deletion. This mindset can be summed up neatly by an IF/THEN statement.

IF IDEOLOGY$ <> TECHNOCRACY$, THEN IDEOLOGY$ = "0"
RUN "POGROM"

If everyone were to conform to the Technocracy's view of reality, conflict would cease. To Iteration X, it's that simple.

The second idiosyncrasy is the Convention's fear of making a mistake.

❑ ARTICLE 118: MISTAKES BRING SADNESS, FRUSTRATION AND DANGER. BY ELIMINATING MISTAKES, WE MAKE LIFE LESS PAINFUL FOR HUMANITY.

To err is human; to forgive is a device of the weak. Iteration X is superior to all of this. Nothing can be learned from mistakes that cannot be determined and corrected in advance. As mentioned, one entire Methodology is devoted to accumulating data and calculating the most consistent means of being error-free. Ideally, the perfect world would lack error of any sort. Unfortunately, by removing this learning tool from humanity, Iteration X makes life less stimulating, less worth living.

In this perfect, error-free world would live perfect, error-free people. A New Humanity.

¤ A NEW HUMANITY [FROM TEXTFILE "CONCEPTS.ANH"]

Lifeforms become more complex and static as they evolve into increasingly perfect beings. This process culminated for humans during the Classical Era (REFERENCE "HISTORY.ITX"). Gauging from the mathematical proportion of their art, antique man was physically perfect. Modern man has degenerated. Only the machine can restore that state of perfection; thus, bio-mechanical fusion is the next step in human development.

The ideal biomechanical being would be Awakened. This objective has thus far eluded us. In their natural state, machines lack Avatars. We have been able to artificially Awaken some machines: the Matriarch of MECHA is composed of twin technocrats infused into a computer; Construct 1010 is developing a powerful AI by assembling the Avatars of imprisoned mages. Note, however, that in both cases human mages provide the Avatar.

The next step involves creating an Awakened machine with the capacity to replicate both physically and magickally. It has been theorized that machines will eventually evolve to this state. Such a process is too slow for our purposes. Through further research and development, we can prompt Awakening.

Success is inevitable.

This perfect race would embody the superior aspects of both man and machine. Remove the messy and inefficient biological quirks — eating, excreting, intercourse, emotion, personality. Cancel the human's lack of durability. Retain inventiveness and adaptiveness, but suppress them until they are needed. Most importantly, harness the Avatar.

Fuse this with mechanical attributes. Machines can take a beating and continue to operate. If a part breaks down, simply replace it. Machines can also be upgraded as new technology becomes available. This is not possible with humans; to paraphrase an expression, you can't program an old human with new functions.

The result: A New Humanity.

Sometimes I wonder which half this fusion will benefit most — biological or mechanical. Call me paranoid (all Iterators are), but this next step in humanity's evolution seems like an upgrade for machines as well…

Fortunately, this goal is some way off. Yet not that distant, either. Biomechanisms stand ready for the day when the Masses finally accept their existence. The process of reducing all of Reality to a mathematical formula, to be controlled or even replicated, is underway. My Construct's Digital Imaging Chamber can break subjects down to digital form and reassemble them. Even individuals are almost mappable. Advanced Expert Systems reproduce the personality of long-dead Technocrats. I hear that MECHA has gone one step farther with a pair of mages.

Until theory becomes Reality, experiments in predictability, computerized personalities and biomechanics are left to mages working within their Constructs and isolated from the Masses.

¤ ARTICLE 3047: PRESENTLY, THE BIOSPHERE IS NOT A CLOSED SYSTEM. THE SUN'S ENERGY INTRODUCES MORE ENTROPY THAN EVOLUTION CAN REMOVE. THUS ITERATION X USES ISOLATED CONSTRUCTS AS CLOSED SYSTEMS, WHERE MICROCOSMS OF PERFECTION CAN BE SIMULATED UNTIL REALITY CONFORMS.

At this moment, Iteration X is far from perfect. However, any such claim will be met by insistent denial, followed by acute pain.

Harmony of the World

Science's seeming approximation to consistency, stability, system… is sustained by damning the irreconcilable or the unassimilable [sic].

— Charles Fort, *The Book of the Damned*

Unfortunately, the goals of Iteration X do not always mesh with those outside the Convention. These other (read flawed) viewpoints are random factors which threaten the Harmony of the Spheres. Though outside its closed system, Iteration X accumulates as much data as possible about the beings who exist in our Reality, thus helping the Convention to develop a system of external relations — or more accurately, exterminations.

Fellow Technocrats

Know the enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles, you will never be defeated.

— Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*.

Each of the other Conventions has a slightly altered — mistaken — concept of Ascension. They do things differently. Incorrectly. However, Iteration X has decided not to correct their faults as long as they contribute. A unified Technocracy is currently the most efficient means of dominating Reality.

The New World Order

Blessings of the State, blessings of the Masses. Thou art a subject of the Divine, created in the image of Man, by the Masses, for the Masses.

— George Lucas, *THX-1138*

The New World Order is the Technocracy's administrative body. By default. Nobody else wants the job. And it's a job they do well. Through bureaucrats, spies, propagandists, psychologists and Men in Black, the N.W.O. monitors and controls the lives of a large percentage among the Masses. Iteration X has assisted in this mammoth task by introducing them to the "information superhighway" — the Digital Web. Digital electronics allows them to generate, process, store, and transmit huge amounts of data.

In exchange, their Administration of Information (AdmIn) provides the Statisticians with more data than even they can use. Their Committee of Logic (ComLog) designs Iteration X's conditioning programs.

The New World Order has recently begun issuing memos to the Comptrollers of certain Constructs. They warn that Iteration X's blunt approach may threaten Reality. All Iterators have access to these memos. They also have orders to ignore them and continue with correct operating procedure.

Progenitors

What you call discovery, I call rape of the natural world.

— Michael Crichton, *Jurassic Park*

Considering that the two Conventions have little in common, Iteration X and the Progenitors maintain close relations. We supply them with machinery, they provide us with biological parts for outfitting HIT Marks: custom-grown brains; liquid flesh; even entire creatures-clones, such as those used in Cyber-tooth Tigers.

Some BioMechanics are invited to Progenitor Symposiums. Such collaboration has lead to the creation of nanotech life support and (rumor has it) a bio-digital virus to kill Virtual Adepts. Another project in its very early stages involves designing biochips, molecular computers that can be programmed though DNA and implanted as an integral part of the body.

The Syndicate

We don't advertise openings and we don't solicit applications. We keep a low profile, and we do things differently. That's our explanation.

— John Grisham, *The Firm*

I've heard that this Convention was responsible for the tight-fisted budgeting and bad marketing of *Star Wars* (symbolizing the triumph of man over machine). Boy, it sure backfired!

For all their Mafioso image, they are essentially cowards. The Syndicate believes only Iteration X can enforce the Pogrom. Thus they do not hesitate to provide funding. They help Iteration X by popularizing science fiction and cyberpunk, personal computers, the latest in sleek "automatic-everything" vehicles, and labor-saving devices of all sorts.

I can feel some semblance of personality coming back. This is either a good sign or the beginning of the end. I think it's probably both.

Void Engineers

That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind.

— Neil A. Armstrong, July 20, 1969

I've met a couple of Void Engineers,

◻ **VOID ENGINEERS [FROM TEXTFILE "EXT-REL.TEC"]**

Of all Conventions, Iteration X has most in common with the Void Engineers. Both are futurists and do not permit Reality's time-lag to stifle progress. Both use visions of high technology to prepare the Masses for their theories.

Iteration X has indirectly supplied computers, machinery and technicians to all mundane space programs. We have also been commissioned to build Void Engines. Utilizing an advanced propulsion system, these ovoid craft are capable of supersonic speed, excellent maneuverability and stealth. Side effects include the emission of radiation and light heat. By request, test flights are purposely conducted near rural populations. UFO sightings will prepare the Masses for the next stage.

In exchange, the Void Engineers donate advanced Low Earth Orbit satellites. Iteration X uses these for reconnaissance, long-range communication, relaying transmissions to remote-controlled vehicles (such as ARCs).

Even within the Net, the two Conventions have developed a cooperative system. Iteration X establishes temporary Constructs at the edge of formatted sectors. From these camps, Void Engineers launch Search and Format missions in their Great Race. As the digital frontier recedes, the Construct is disassembled, transported and reassembled in a more convenient location.

Despite our close alliance, we do have differences. Void Engineers are bold, but lack force. Also, their frantic exploration may uncover something unpredictable out there...

END

though I didn't realize it at the time. Back in training, one of the few diversions allowed were virtual video games. It seemed strange, even indulgent, especially in the context of my ordeal, but of course Iteration X does nothing without purpose. I was actually undergoing basic training in Net Operations. Some of those helpful icons were Cybernauts.

Tradition Mages

Those who resist the American Technopoly are people who have freed themselves from the belief in the magical powers of numbers, do not regard calculation as an adequate substitute for judgment, or precision as a synonym for truth.

— Neil Postman, *Technopoly*

Naturally, the real enemies are not other Technocrats but Tradition mages. Each Construct maintains exaustive files on local and notorious mages. Statisticians use this information to estimate threat levels and predict their actions. I've provided some samples of this to reveal just how much — or how little — Iteration X knows about such "Enemies of Reality." Be warned.

Akashic Brotherhood

Attain the highest openness;

Maintain the deepest harmony.

— Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, Book One, Verse XV

From what I've learned, these are Carradine-types who believe that personal power is a mental thing. Their beliefs, like those of Iteration X, originated in ancient China. Why are the two groups so different? Apparently, the Brotherhood failed to read deeply enough into the texts, embracing the irrelevant passages about peace, contemplation and contempt for material possessions. Such thoughts are dangerous. If the Masses were to slow their hectic lifestyles, many might become more aware of the Technocracy's influence.

Relevant textfiles warn that some martial artists can crack steel with their bare hands or cloud minds. I guess the legend continues.

Celestial Chorus

Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination unto the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth it in a secret place.

— Deuteronomy 27.15

God is dead. Long live good old Technocracy. Iteration X depicts these mages as weak fools who have had their chance and failed. Many have lost faith and fallen from grace. Recent reports claim that New World Order has converted a Chorus mage in San Francisco by persuading him that the One is identical to Technocratic unity.

¤ FROM THE DEBRIEFING OF J. WILLIAMS [FORMER CHORUS MAGE]

Man in Black: Once again — name your superior.

Williams: Ahhh, I see clearly now. The One true force binding reality is the unity of Technocracy. We must reconcile our differences and —

MiB: Yes. We've been over that before. Now who do you go to for orders?

W: Order issues from the machine-god. The soul of Technology ensures that our material world spins smoothly along its winding course... [degenerates into mumbling].

MiB: Hmmmm. Will somebody get the sodium pentathol and thumb screws?

<<BREAK>>

Besides their emphasis on faith rather than reason, the Celestial Chorus is surprisingly similar to Iteration X. Both are highly structured and militaristic, and see themselves as protectors of humanity. However, unless the Chorus surrenders hope of Reconciliation (which I'm told would return us to the Dark Ages, or worse), they have "NO PLACE IN OUR REALITY."

Cult of Ecstasy

The sexual act, successfully performed, was rebellion. Desire was thought-crime.

— George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

According to Programmers, all Cultists

¤ THE CULT [FROM TEXTFILE "R-ENEMY.COE"]

Study this Tradition closely. It provides a perfect example of the dangers of emotional excess. Cultists promote free action and self-expression. And what does this erratic philosophy accomplish? Nothing. Like us, they appreciate temporal phenomena. Yet instead of regulating and organizing their lives, they create more Time in which to do nothing.

Unless provoked, do not waste time or effort on the Cult. Drifters and loners, they are difficult to track. Few are involved in the Ascension War; even their most powerful mages lead pointless existences. In any case, they all eventually destroy themselves through lack of control.

END

are tuned in to the same batty channel. In time, they'll accidentally unplug themselves.

Even without my directives, I'd have nothing to do with Cultists. Excessive use of drugs, alcohol, "free (fuckin') expression," sex and tuneless music — I don't find these thing "cool." Their recent nostalgia for the 60s and 70s, when the Cult's influence broke free among the Masses, disgusts me. Having survived those chaotic and tasteless times, I wonder how these people remain under the influence.

Then again, destroying anyone who disagrees with you is just as excessive.

Dreamspeakers

I wish you could see this great mystery

Earth and Sun and moon human tribe, thin blue line

Earth and Sun and moon will survive.

— Midnight Oil, "Earth and Sun and Moon" Dreamspeakers.

¤ DREAMSPEAKERS [FROM TEXTFILE "R-ENEMY.DRE"]

Do not associate with Dreamspeakers. Eliminate them. Many are insane, and may even talk to themselves. The remainder are nearly powerless. However, be warned that their magick involves controlling dreams and causing hallucinations.

These enemies hold progress and civilization to be blights upon the Earth, which they call the Gaia Sphere. The main

difficulty is in locating them. Instead of gathering in Constructs, Dreamspeakers often live alone in the wilderness.
END

Even as my DEI downloads its data, I feel a strange stirring deep within. Perhaps there's something more to this Tradition than can be expressed in bits and bytes...

Euthanatos

Now thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house
Or covet thy neighbor's wife
But for some
Murder is the only door through which they enter life.
— Tom Waits, "Murder In The Red Barn"

Students of randomness and destruction. Deadly assassins. Agents of the Nephandi. Their Entropic magick is to be greatly feared by any organized, machine-oriented Convention. Textfiles warn that Euthanatos associate with cannibalistic undead — vampires, zombies, ghouls. I've leaned that at least one Euthanatos saboteur has infiltrated this very Construct (but not without being captured).

¤ INTERROGATION OF EUTHANATOS DISRUPTER [DISCOVERED 13-9-1984]
Ruoy staerht era sselesu. Fi uoy tel em evil, ym erem ecneserp lliw tpursid ruoy llew-deredro Tcurtsnoc. Fi uoy llik em, uoy lliw dlohpu eht Noitanracnier Otsefinam. Ll'I yllautneve nruter, erom lufrewop naht erofeb. Ni eht emitnaem, eht Noitcerruser Nem lliw tcatnoc ym tirips dna nrael lla ruoy sterces.
Uoy t'nac dloh kcab eht edit fo noivilbo. Uoy oot lliw yllautneve ecneirepxe htaed. Ton a doog htaed, tub htaed enon-eht-ssel. Dna nehw uoy od, ll'I eb gnitiaw rof uoy no eht rehto edis...
[Here we implement slow disintegration.]
Aaaahhhhhhhhrrrstoppleeeaase... i-i-i... I'll talk...
<<BREAK>>

Hollow Ones (Orphans)

But we'll dance anyway, you and I. Even in the dark. Especially in the dark.
— Stephen King, *Danse Macabre*

The phenomena of Orphans is a sign of crisis brought on by the Traditions' tampering with Reality. Spontaneous Awakening is much too unpredictable to continue. Likewise, intuitive and inspirational magick is an antithesis of Technocracy. Iteration X appreciates the fact that the Progenitors are working toward extinguishing the Avatars of Sleepers.

The Goth-punk attitude of Hollow Ones — defeatist, decadent and undisciplined — is of little use in the Ascension War. However, Iteration X actively solicits more moderate Orphans.

Order of Hermes

What's yet discover'd, only serves to show
How little's known, to what there's left to know.
— Daniel Defoe, "A System of Magic"

During the Dark Ages, the Order of Hermes dominated Reality. Iteration X is dedicated to preventing such a recurrence. Though Hermetic mages currently keep a low profile, Statisticians have calculated that the Order provoked the Sons of Ether into defecting. Their study of Forces gives them a high threat rating.

Like Iteration X, the Order is structured, uses mathematics and categorization as tools, and has definite goals. Both have similar roots in Greek philosophy and medieval science. The bottom line is that Iteration X has advanced beyond alchemy and astronomy. The Hermetic Order has not.

Sons of Ether

Technology is not good or evil. The central question is, how will humanity apply it?
— Daniel Burrus, *Technotrends*

Over a century has passed since the Sons of Ether

◻ **SONS OF ETHER, HISTORY [FROM TEXTFILE "R-ENEMY.SOE"]**
In A.D. 1283, early Artificers miscalculated. A scroll fell into the hands of a Spanish scribe, thus opening his awareness to a subject-oriented view of reality — magick. This scribe began a secret society, which some accounts call the Pupils of Parmenides.
The Artificers kept an eye on these Pupils, hoping their society would collapse. In the guise of helpful mentors, they provided a steady supply of obscure and outmoded theories. When possible, they sabotaged experiments. These ruinous attempts backfired. The Pupils were stimulated by failure. In fact, they built a body of science around cast-off theories.
When it became obvious that the Pupils of Parmenides were not going away, some Artificers made long-term plans. The Pupils were encouraged to link up with the Celestial Chorus, in order to gain influence in the Church-dominated reality. As predicted, the Chorus welcomed the Pupils. Aristotelian philosophy was a perfect means of reinforcing Christian theology against the growing threat of science. Thirteenth-century scholars — such as Alexander of Hales, Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas —

strengthened this link in the mundane sphere. For a time, the integration seemed beneficial.
Then the fledgling Technocracy hammered back. They infused the 14th century with criticism and doubt. High-scholastic philosophy wavered. Each advance in "real" science undermined pseudo-science and thus the Church. The final blow came in 1453: Copernicus proved that Aristotle's concept of the universe was wrong. As hoped, both the Pupils and the Chorus were devastated.
The Pupils of Parmenides finally untangled themselves from the Celestial Chorus in the early 19th century. Now called the Sons of Ether (after a new pet theory), their concepts gained popularity. The Technocracy was forced to "invite" them into the fold in order to keep reign on them. The Sons were permitted to pursue illogical schemes, but conformity had to be continually enforced. Through Darwin, we shattered the Pupils' theories of spontaneous generation (which mimicked divine creation).
From their induction into the Technocracy, Sons of Ether began dropping out. After the Great Symposium of 1900 (where the concept of ether was disproved), the Convention itself officially broke away. Hermetic involvement is suspected.
END

first began defecting from the Technocracy. (And no wonder they did, considering their abuse.) No longer as painful as the fresh treachery of the Virtual Adepts, this old wound still has yet to heal. Knowing the uncompromising nature of Technomancers, it probably never will. Iteration X takes the defection personally: old Artificer magick inspired the Tradition; early Iterators failed to restrain them.

Iteration X's main argument against Ether-magick is its basis in "creative science." To Iterators, this is an oxymoron. Sons of Ether are simple morons. Another problem is that the Etherboys have corrupted more than a few potential recruits (such as scientists and mechanics).

Consequently, the Sons of Ether rank high on a list of enemies. The sole reason for their continued existence is the danger they pose when backed into a corner. They know science; they know technology (a variant anyway). Masters of Matter, many also study Forces and Life magick. Thus they are very effective against BioMechanical foes.

Verbena

Every woman
Has a piece of Aphrodite
Copulate to create
A state of sexual light
Kissing her virginity
— Red Hot Chili Peppers, "Blood Sugar Sex Magik"

Textfiles describe Verbena as the descendants of pagans and medieval witches. They supposedly combine the worst traits of Dreamspeakers, Euthanatos and Cultists of Ecstasy. Like the Dreamspeakers, they are oriented towards nature. Thus they do not often enter into conflict with Iteration X over Nodes or threads of influence. However, their entire philosophy is antithetical to urban society. Verbena actively promote such dangerous beliefs as civil liberty, equality and ecological responsibility, concepts that the Technocracy considers dangerous and random.

Statisticians calculate that Verbena are behind such psychological illnesses as car-sickness and air-sickness. It's said they also encourage city dwellers to spend the summer months in cottages, where the Technocracy has less influence. Though apparently minor, these ideas might have a lasting effect on the minds of the Masses.

Thus, these rebels must be subdued. The New World Order has countered with agoraphobia; Progenitors have introduced allergies to pollen. These will affect the Masses. Iteration X is charged with destroying the power behind the throng. We are warned that their magick relies on human sacrifice and the consumption of blood. Verbena also embrace carnal emotions. Because they will attempt to seduce our biological half, we must shield ourselves with the machine.

Virtual Adepts

Then suddenly, dazzling and incomparably more solid-looking than they would have seemed in actual flesh and blood, far more real then reality, there stood the stereoscopic images.
— Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*

I suspect the Iteration X has more in common with the Virtual Adepts than they are willing to admit. Both run along the cutting edge of science, frequently slicing into what might properly be categorized science fiction or cyberpunk. Both have mastered computers and the Digital Web. However, my Convention denies all common traits. Instead, they accentuate the differences: Virtual Adepts routinely use neural networks, Trinary computers, fuzzy logic, object-based programming (allowing the Masses to create their own software from ready-made "blocks" of programming), and advanced simulations — virtual realty. Iteration X prefers huge, powerful mainframes; the Virtual Adepts favor personal computers.

The computer contains a rather scathing attack on the Virtual Adepts. Since I'm unable to duplicate its emotionless venom, I'll download the file in its entirety.

¤ VIRTUAL ADEPTS [TEXTFILE "R-ENEMY.VAD"]
The Virtual Adepts (once called Difference Engineers) were a Methodology of Void Seekers which split off to take advantage of the new niche in computer technology. Before defecting in 1954, they worked closely with Iteration X in developing biomechanical hardware and AI. Their treachery meant almost as much to Iteration X as it did to the Void Engineers. They know the layout of our Sectors. They understand how our AIs think. They may even have backdoors into our computer systems. The major advantage of Virtual Adepts is that they are civilized opponents. Conveniently, we can eliminate them within the Digital Web without concern for witnesses — from either the Masses or Paradox. Not all the dea
++++++++++++++++++++
>Glitch over, Xer. I'm taking control of your CPU. (Kibo, it's dense in here.) Since u'r so busy sucking data about the VAs, let me re-Iterate what you know. We are the TRAITORS, and we'r marked for DELETION. Online or Offline, your cyber-psychos fry those of us they can catch. Read: Not many. U'r clumsy and predictable. And your VR gear is about as "cutting edge" as a sledgehammer. We created the comp.tech that runs your cybernetics. We know your access codes. "Now I am the master," as it were.
But what you lack in finesse, you make up for in firepower and brutality. I've seen some nasty Digital Deaths in my time, usually hurried along by MIS Marks. Now I'm hearin' your R&D dept's working on bio-digital viruses & other mind-bending shit straight out of Auschwitz. Caw! Caw! Bang! Fuck! I'm dead! Hope you crash.
Before dumping, I'll leave you with a thought. Computers were made by the people, for the people (with a little help from us). This tech is to free Sleepers, not to bind them in strings of random data.
Hugs and kisses :(
RAMses, Virtual Master
>P.S. What's with your ARCHAIC COMPUTER font?
++++++++++++++++++++
ths in Mortal Kombat are simulated pic
<<BREAK>>

Uh…thanks, RAMses. I think. And nice handle. I guess the guy has something about pyramids.

Other Entities

The Master did not speak of prodigies, force, disorder, or spirits.

— Confucius, *The Analects*, Book 7, Verse 21

Not a hell of a lot fits into Iteration X's framework of reality. Everything else must be forcibly removed.

The Nephandi

- listen:there's a hell

of a good universe next door;lets go

— e.e. cummings

The Nephandi

¤ THE NEPHANDI [FROM TEXTFILE "R-ENEMY.NEP]

The Nephandi represent everything that Iteration X opposes. Randomness. Death. The breakdown of social order. Do not ask where they come from. Know only that since the Dark Ages they have been exiled from our reality.

Use caution. They are a serious threat with manifold methods at their disposal. Their allies include shapeshifters and bloodsuckers, and other illogical — though explicable — beings.

END

are outlaws. It's like the Second Law of Thermodynamics: in a fixed system, entropy can only increase; entropy is a measure of a system's thermal energy unavailable for conversion into mechanical work. Iteration X has isolated and removed another variable from their closed system of reality.

The Marauders

This whole world is wild at heart and weird on top.

— David Lynch, *Wild at Heart*

When a captive Marauder

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<<BREAK>>

was scanned into a Digital Imaging Chamber (for reduction into a simple algorithm), the entire system crashed. Iteration X knows only that they're unintelligible and unpredictable: thus extremely dangerous.

ΩΩΩΩΩΩ

Beyond Marauders and Nephandi, which complete the circle of mages, Iteration X also compiles notes on other entities. Brace yourselves: Vampires are real! And perhaps other entities, as well.

I don't know if these entities are truly hostile to mage or mundane. Or if, more likely, this is another case of propaganda from the Programmers. Yet I offer this information in the interest of thoroughness.

Iteration X makes no attempt to explain why — even how — these entities exist. This Convention is not interested in how they think, except when it concerns tactics. To them (I no longer say "us"), the supernatural entities are simply abominations which must be purged from our reality.

It's ironic. Technomancers know that mummies and vampires and werewolves (oh, my!) exist. Yet they must withhold this reality from the Masses, lest it reinforce superstition. Meanwhile, the Technocracy has two options; first, they can create a believable scientific theory which accounts for their existence. This task is left to Progenitors. The second option is to destroy these entities before the Masses learn of them. This keeps Iteration X busy.

<div align="center">ΩΩΩΩΩΩ</div>

Vampires

You crave one kiss of my clay-cold lips,
But my breath is earthy strong;
If you have one kiss of my clay-cold lips,
Your time will not be long
— "The Unquiet Grave" (Popular Ballad)

From data gathered by Decillion, it is calculated that dozens of Vampires

¤ VAMPIRES [FROM TEXTFILE "ENTITIES.VAM"]

Vampires are of little concern. Composed of dead tissue, they are vulnerable to the Sphere of Matter. They exhibit fear and pain when exposed to Forces. However, caution is still recommended. They possess a wide range of powers which have yet to be catalogued.

Some Vampires have begun dealing with the Order of Hermes. These creatures possess a form of Hermetic magick which harnesses Forces — fire, lightning and kinetic energy.

END

lurk here in Detroit. They've demonstrated extreme loyalty, brutal rituals, a might-makes-right mentality, and utter contempt for the Masses. Obviously, they operate at night and in secret; yet they revel in the show of force.

Sounds like recruiting material.

Werewolves

Then one of them sniffed with a singular sharpness, and raised his face to howl to the moon. The other dropped on all fours to run towards the car.
— H.P. Lovecraft, *The Thing in the Moonlight*

I'm not sure I believe in Werewolves.

◘ WEREWOLVES

>FINAL TRANSMISSION OF CYBER-TOOTH 011
.ambushed by three hostiles. One is a large
timber wolf, 1.9 meters at shoulder. Targets
tw... furred humanoids, 3.1 meter tall,
armed... th obsidian blades and automatic
pist... transfor... actical advantage...
>REPORT BY 1011100010 (14:38:52.01/10-22-
93)
Received new Digital Enhancement for
upcoming Symposium. BioMechanic reports
it imprisons a Dreamspeaker's Avatar.
Through it, have learned of a Cosmology
which includes entities called Children of Gaia
(or *Theurge* in their own language). Detailed
report to follow after return from San
Francisco. Will also request reprogramming
to erase deviant thoughts.
>ANALYSIS BY 10111010011
These entities have been identified as
Werewolves. It has been calculated that
their power extends only to nature. They
avoid cities. It is 83.1% probable that
Werewolves cannot transform in urban
environments.
END

Perhaps the reports are of Sasquatch — a missing link between ape and man. Hey, it's more believable than shapeshifters. Now *that* would be magick.

If Werewolves do exist, and the legends are true, then Primium bullets might be as effective as silver.

Whatever these creatures are, they seem more concerned with the wilderness. This would explain the apparent lack of conflict between them and Iteration X.

Faeries

Why can't you believe?
— Mulder, *The X-files*

While I'm talking fables, let's see what the computer knows. Heh, heh. How about Faeries ?

◘ THERE ARE NO SUCH THINGS AS FAERIES.

Not! But if Faeries did exist, I assume a Primium bullet would be as effective as an iron blade.

Ghosts

But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul...
— Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act 1, Scene V
Ghosts?

◘ ACCESS DENIED
REMAIN AT CURRENT LOCATION.
ASSISTANCE IS FORTH-COMING.

Oops. Well, despite the computer, I do believe in ghosts. Iteration X teaches eight Spheres of magick, but all the metaphysics assume nine. Perhaps one is forbidden. This last Sphere might have something to do with ghosts, souls, willpower and stuff like that.

Yet I can imagine why the Technocracy denies the Spirit world. First, if such a place existed, we wouldn't feel the same frightened urge to prolong our lives. Second, our technology and magick would be useless against ectoplasm (ignoring *Ghostbusters*).

$$\Omega\Omega\Omega\Omega\Omega\Omega$$

Well, that about ends my rambling confession. It's taken me an entire 11 minutes, 9 seconds to think-print this hardcopy. Longer than I calculated. My 7:00:00.00 appointment with a data-dump is fast approaching. I can't imagine what Decillion and Tecson will do once they learn of my treachery. Perhaps my silhouette will decorate an alley wall, like 111011010 (I never learned his real name). Or maybe they'll finish the lobotomy.

One thing is for certain — the Convention will deal with me. That's what Iteration X is best at.

END TRANSMISSION

Drive B: Systems

i use rocket ships
and mine sweepers
transistors
radio receivers
i want to hold you
want to hold you too tight
going to break every bone
of everybody in sight
 — inspiral carpets, "dragging
me down"

Disk Three: Essential Data

If you think that those who are left… can penetrate at a bound to nuclear power, to electronics, to the theory of the hyperwarp — you have a very romantic and very foolish idea of science. It takes lifetimes of training and an excellent brain to get that far.

— Isaac Asimov, *Foundation*

Technomancy

In the World of Darkness, the Masses generally agree that people do not and cannot fly. They leave this fancy to Peter Pan and Superman. Or vampires. Yet does anyone have a problem accepting the reality of a 747? Medieval folk believed that if a voice were to issue forth from a box, it was the work of demons or magick. Now we have radio. But this is due to reason and invention, right?

Wrong.

Medieval scholars and theologians, heathen shamans and pagan priests, new agers and druggies — they were correct all along. The only true force in all of reality is that "something" called magick. The internal combustion engine is as much a miracle as walking on water. Radio. jet propulsion, everything we know as science and technology all works by the same principle: magick. Concealing magick, however, has been Technocracy's agenda all along. Magick, you see, is too random and destructive to be left to just anyone; only Technomancers have the purity of vision, theory and purpose to control reality.

To maintain their illusion of scientific control, Technomancers use foci (which they call apparatus). Scientific methodology has been drummed into them for so long (since before the time of Copernicus) that they can no longer work magick without apparatus. It will either function as "vulgar magick with witness" (the mage himself) or fail completely.

Apparatus:
Technomancer Foci

The Computer is our friend.
— *Paranoia* RPG

The relationship between magick and apparatus is akin to science and technology. Scientists require technological trappings with which to test theories, and to put those theories into practical usage. Technomancers also require some apparatus to integrate their magickal effects into reality.

On the other hand, mechanical devices can only be created from scientific blueprints. Similarly, without a metaphysical framework of magick, apparatuses are powerless by themselves. They are not Devices (or Talismans).

These analogies should be taken quite literally. Technocratic apparatuses take the form of technology; their magick defines their science.

Here are some examples of the apparatuses used by Iteration X, categorized by Sphere. These foci are not exclusive (see "Personalizing Magick" in **The Book of Shadows**), but are the most common apparatuses in the Convention.

Correspondence — beam-bouncing measure with liquid crystal display, remote-control device, perpetual motion machine.

Entropy — calculator, statistical data, diagnostic scanner.

Forces — taser, powerpack, scientific meter.

Life — clock, weapon, biomechanical probe.

Matter — measuring device (e.g., caliper), propane torch, elixir.

Mind — CAT scanner, electrodes, neural net computer.

Prime — prototype, autoCAD blueprint, Primium disk.

Spirit — a banned Sphere; no apparatus.

Time — timecard, electronic calendar, atomic chronograph.

Some of these items require explanations. Though the average mundane would probably never guess, they rate slightly above current technological capability. When using one of these "unique" apparatuses, a Technomancer's magick difficulties are reduced by 1 (the maximum recommended modifier for magick difficulties is +/- 3, Quintessence notwithstanding). As a negative, a mage who loses an advanced apparatus must relearn the Sphere (see **Mage**, p. 179) if he cannot find another one like it. Unique apparatuses are described below.

Atomic chronograph: an instrument capable of recording time with extreme accuracy; a precision stop-watch.

Biomechanical probe: a pocket-sized device which grafts onto a patient's skin and provides a digital readout of life functions.

Diagnostic scanner: a supra-tech device capable of detecting disorders and anomalies.

Elixir: magickal mixture of vital mercury and Quintessence of sulfur, resulting in a stable heavy red powder.
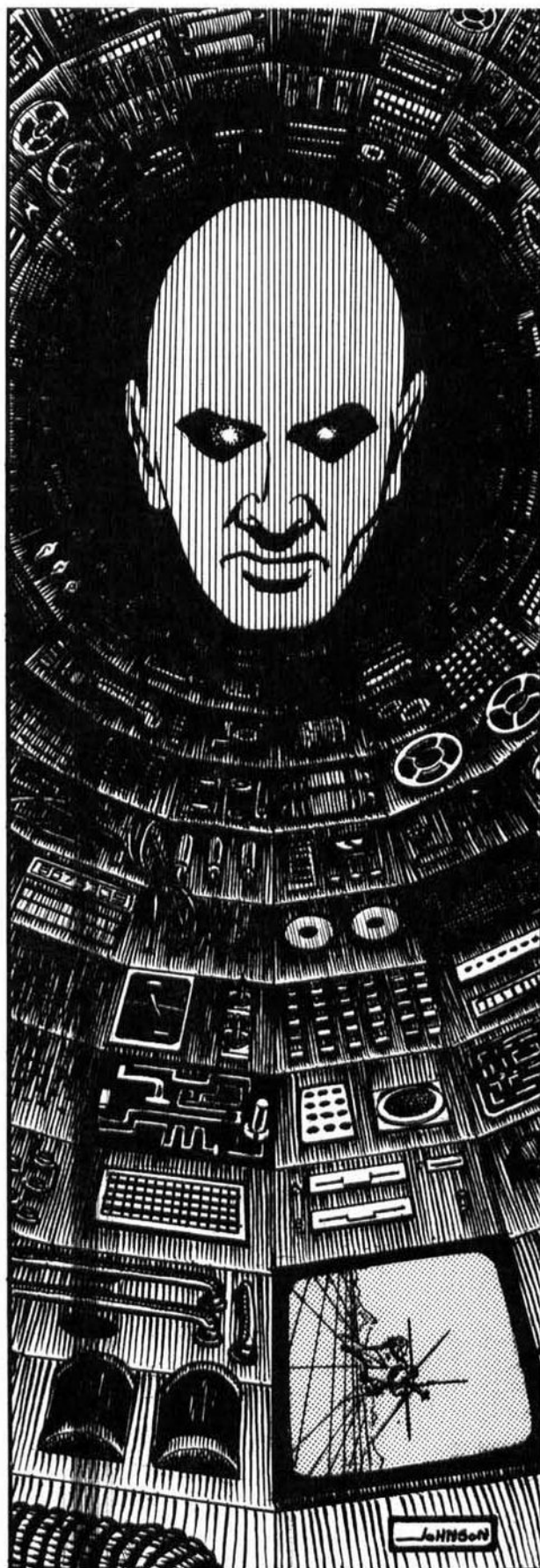
Neural net computer: a powerful portable computer with limited learning capability.

Perpetual motion machine: a mechanism which continually operates without consuming fuel or power, like a self-winding watch; invariably violates first or second law of thermodynamics.

Primium disk: palm-sized disk made from Primium — an alloy of purified gold and silver, tempered with magick.

Scientific meter: another supra-tech device which measures all types of energy waves.

Common Effects

Iteration X's magick is founded upon established scientific principles; its mages favor proven Effects over experimentation. With spontaneous magick, an enthusiastic mage may stumble out of the bounds of realism (and, hence, into Paradox).

Below are a selection of Effects which the Convention has legalized. The study of Spirit is forbidden. Slightly less subversive, Entropy is taught to only the most responsible Technomancers, and even then only to rank two. Since all Iterators are versed of Forces, this Sphere is fully explored.

Correspondence Effects

• Targeting Computation

From rank one, Iterators use their knowledge of Correspondence to locate, track and attack their enemies. This first Effect assists in aiming projectile weapons. Through awareness of three-dimensional space, they learn to "calculate" many of the variables involved. The exact range and angle to the target can be calibrated. Darkness, smoke, foliage and other "soft cover" are canceled. Though someone hidden behind a brick wall is safe from bullets, the mage can still "see" him and has a good idea where he will pop up next.

By figuring together all of these variables, a shooter can increase her kill ratio. A successful magick roll achieves three things. First, the base difficulty of the shot drops to 4, as if it were made at point blank range. Second, only "hard cover" difficulty modifiers apply. Third, the mage is effectively aiming (**Mage**, p. 266). The amount of dice added to the shooter's dice pool is limited to the amount of successes achieved on the magick roll.

Entropy Effects

• Organize

Everyone benefits from a little organization, but Time-Motion Managers have perfected the concept to an art. A very rigid, meticulous, unimaginative form of art, but an art nonetheless. This Effect is similar to **Locate Disorder**, but used for positive results — to increase efficiency.

Technomancers use this Effect before engaging in any complex (and potentially time-consuming) non-magickal task. Possible tasks include Research, Search, Investigation, Leadership, Technology, Computer and Science.

With a successful magick roll, it is assumed that the taskmaster has previously spent time preparing. This could have involved ergonomics, time management, numerical ordering, step-by-step instruction, whatever. The point is, it has been done. (Coincidentally, he organized his workstation last week.) In effect, each success on the magick roll reduces the task's difficulty by one.

•• Statistical Mechanics

Statisticians are full of facts, from the record lifespan of Asian elephants in captivity to the odds of successfully navigating an asteroid field. Not surprisingly, they have developed a magickal Effect around this proficiency. When a non-magickal task is about to be performed, the mage merely states an applicable statistic. If the stat makes the odds look good, difficulty of the task decreases by as many successes as he achieved on the magick roll. If bad, difficulty increases.

Example of Bad Odds: "The record for climbing the Great Pyramid is 2 minutes 45 seconds. You'll never make it in time." Climbing difficulty increases.

Example of Good Odds: "Fifty percent of all marriages end in divorce." Difficulty of seducing husband decreases.

Note that some stats can appear both good or bad, depending on the point of view. Thus, this Effect is purely subjective. But then again, what magick isn't?

Forces Effects

• Audio Tap

Knowledge is power. At rank one, Iterators learn how to adjust their perception to various frequencies so as to "overhear" enemy communications. A Disciple of Forces can "pick up" microwave transmissions, radio waves, telephone conversations, even the audio portion of television signals. To tap into cable T.V. or phone lines, at least two successes would be needed (unless you were touching the bare wires). By standing on the giant Arecibo satellite dish in Puerto Rico, a mage could even observe radio emissions from distant stars (though what he'd make of them is another matter).

The only requirement are that the mage must be within range of the transmission's source or destination and using some sort of a tapping device. (Range depends on the number of successes achieved; see **Mage**, p. 175.) If a number of transmissions overlap, the mage must roll Wits + Intuition, difficulty 8. The number of successes determines how much is understood; one would result in a garbled translation, but five would give the mage perfect understanding of whatever he was listening to.

•• Remote Programming

Iterators use this Effect to program computers, robots and so on, without ever having to touch a keyboard, though some apparatus must be used. One benefit is that the task can be completed at the speed of thought (say, 1/10 the time as usual). Also, potentially lethal "bugs" in a HIT Mark's programming can be fixed in the field. Of course, knowledge of Computers is required. At the same time, the

programmer can achieve only as many successes on the Computer roll as she did on the magick Effect roll.

The title of this effect is a bit misleading. Range is limited by the magick roll, up to visual range. To be truly remote requires a Correspondence component.

•••• Antinoise

With this magick, the Technomancer erects a sonic dampening field around himself or a set location. The volume of this field depends on the number of successes:

One success: One target, who must be touched.

Two successes: One target within five feet of caster.

Three successes: Everyone within a ten-foot radius of caster; can instead be cast on a location (which must be touched).

Four successes: Selective targets within ten feet of caster; or one target within line-of-sight.

Five successes: Any or all within sight; can instead be cast on any location within sight (remains in effect even if mage leaves visual range). This is not permanent, but lasts a good while.

The sonic field samples all sound waves within range and creates a reflected, inverted signal at an equal volume. The result is complete silence. This, in turn, creates consternation among opponents. Most Iterators are unaffected, since they can communicate via microwave transmissions (a weak force). While originally developed to thwart Hermetic magick (which relies greatly upon language), **Antinoise** is also effective against certain magicks of other Traditions: a Dreamspeaker's drums, a Cultist's music, the death-rattle of a Euthanatos, and the song of a Chorus member — all are silenced. Note that these components are all foci; mages of sufficient Arete no longer require such gimmicks to use their magick.

Matter Effects

••••• Smelt Primium

Arguably the Convention's greatest discovery, Primium is a magickal alloy of purified silver and gold. It has a number of unique properties. Primium is as light as aluminum, nonconductive, virtually unbreakable, and noncorrosive. It can only be smelted and tooled by magickal means (thus this spell).

Primium is rare and expensive, though not in the mundane sense. Money is of little concern to those who can transmute lead (or any other matter) into gold by rearranging the atomic structure. A nuclear furnace, however, is required as an apparatus. Masters of Matter are too rare and important to act as common blacksmiths.

Primium armor provides 5 dice of soak (without hampering Dexterity) and two free dice of countermagick. Weapons forged from Primium cause aggravated wounds to Kindred, Garou, and other supernatural creatures, although this damage can be soaked.

Mind Effects

• Positronic Brain

Statisticians are known for their ability to juggle data and perform complex mathematical calculations in their heads. Few mages realize that a magickal Effect often assists them. Through knowledge of the Mind, they can access that greater percentage of the brain that humans never use.

Each success adds one dot to any Mental Trait. The duration of this depends on the successes, but is never permanent. Long-term enhancement can lead to brain damage. Every day after the first, the mage must roll her Willpower. Failure indicates that she falls into a coma for as many days as the Effect previously lasted. Upon waking, the mage discovers that the Effect has dissipated and she has permanently lost one dot in that Attribute. Only by spending experience points can she recover.

•• Social Science

Social scientists have become adept at conditioning the Masses. Usually this is accomplished by inundating the subject with depressing facts: "Oh my... this test indicates that your I.Q. is only 87." Other mages prefer intimidation, while still others use subliminal suggestion. In any case, the effect is the same: the subjects lose their will and are more easily coerced.

Each success reduces the subject's Willpower by one point, though she can resist the attack with a difficulty 7 Willpower roll or a difficulty 6 mental "Dodge" (see **Mage**, p. 176 and Book Three of **The Book of Shadows**). This spell is limited to one use per person per day. There is only so much effect such "bad news" can have in a short period of time. The effects can and do add up, however, if the conditioning is constant.

Prime Effects

••• Recharge Device

The magickal Devices and biomechanisms which Technomancers so frequently rely upon do require recharging. For this reason, most Constructs have a designated Power Station. Such places are carefully guarded. The mage or resident attendant (usually a BioMechanic) uses this effect to operate the recharger. Each success transfers five points of Quintessence into the Device. Attendants may ration Quintessence at their discretion.

In emergencies, this effect can also be used to tap an open Node, but this act is considered vulgar.

Time Effects

• Rigid Schedule

This is identical to the Virtual Adepts' effect **Internal Clock**. The same effect was once known as **Ticktockman**. After the Adepts defected, they renamed much of their magick, as if to forget their Technocratic origins (or more likely to jazz up their terminology). Iteration X did the same thing, wanting nothing to do with the traitors. Their new nomenclature was somewhat less imaginative.

•• Planned Projection

With this effect, a Statistician can reasonably predict the future of any single subject — person, place, or thing. She could predict the graduate most likely to succeed, future trends in applied technology, or even where lightning will strike next. She simply enters all applicable data into a computer and runs a simulation. If the mage is thorough in learning as much as possible about the subject — that is, achieves 20 success on an extended Intelligence + Research (or Investigation) roll — the Storyteller may lower the magick difficulty by one.

Spells

Hardly anyone who has truly understood this theory will be able to resist being captivated by its magic.

— Einstein on relativity, 1915.

Time-Motion Study (• Correspondence, • Time)

This spell was first used by a 19th-century Time-Motion Manager named Forge. It allowed him to determine the most efficient means of assembling HIT Mark IIIs, thus creating the first factory assembly line (from a Technocratic perspective). By extrapolation, a mage under the influence of this spell gains a precision of movement. This provides an edge when time is critical.

[For each success, add one success to the mage's next initiative roll for one turn per success.]

Unleash Nanotech Destruction (••• Correspondence, ••• Entropy)

All Iterators have a dormant nanotech virus implanted in their DEI. If one were to attempt defection (or otherwise displease the Convention), this spell enables a Comptroller to release the virus by remote. Most viruses simulate a rank-three Entropy effect by shutting down all of the traitor's biomechanisms and causing all machines with which she interacts to malfunction. This usually causes coincidental death. Some Constructs replace the virus with a nanotech nuke (••••• Forces, •• Prime), which causes spontaneous combustion — vulgar but effective.

Emit Beam-ray (••• Forces, •• Prime)

The Time-Motion Manager Tecson has perfected a deadly attack combining a number of weak Forces. Microwaves cause heat by molecular movement inside the target while a laser component blinds him. The X-rays have no immediate effect but may cause long-term complications in the form of cancer (assuming the target survives). This is a direct magick attack (see **The Book of Shadows**).

[Each success causes two Health Levels of damage. If four successes are achieved, the beam-ray strikes the target's face. If the target fails a Wits + Dodge roll (difficulty 8), blindness results. Only rank-three Life magick can restore sight.]

Perpetual Motion (••••• Forces, •• Prime)

An 16th century astronomer and mage named Faustmann developed this spell. An associate of Kepler, he used it to set in motion a mechanical model of the solar system. He also kept the pendulum of his clocks swinging perpetually. When Faustmann theorized (correctly) that the moon's orbit was slowing due to tidal drag, he decided to correct this fault of nature. The resulting Paradox shredded him. In Kepler's study, Faustmann's model of the solar system continues to spin to this day.

[Despite its name, this effect requires five successes for permanence (Faustmann was a Master). Modern Technomancers have use Perpetual Motion to operate vehicles without fuel or provide a bullet with an effective range of line-of-sight.]

Craft Biomechanism (••••• Matter, ••• Prime)

The first recorded biomechanism (not just a mundane prosthesis) was a hand created for Sun Tzu in 501 B.C. Since then, the BioMechanics have continued to improve upon the design. What would have been seen in ancient China as magick is now considered a near-future technology. Many modern biomechanisms are crafted from Primium. They are strong, light, and somewhat organic-looking (but still clearly mechanical).
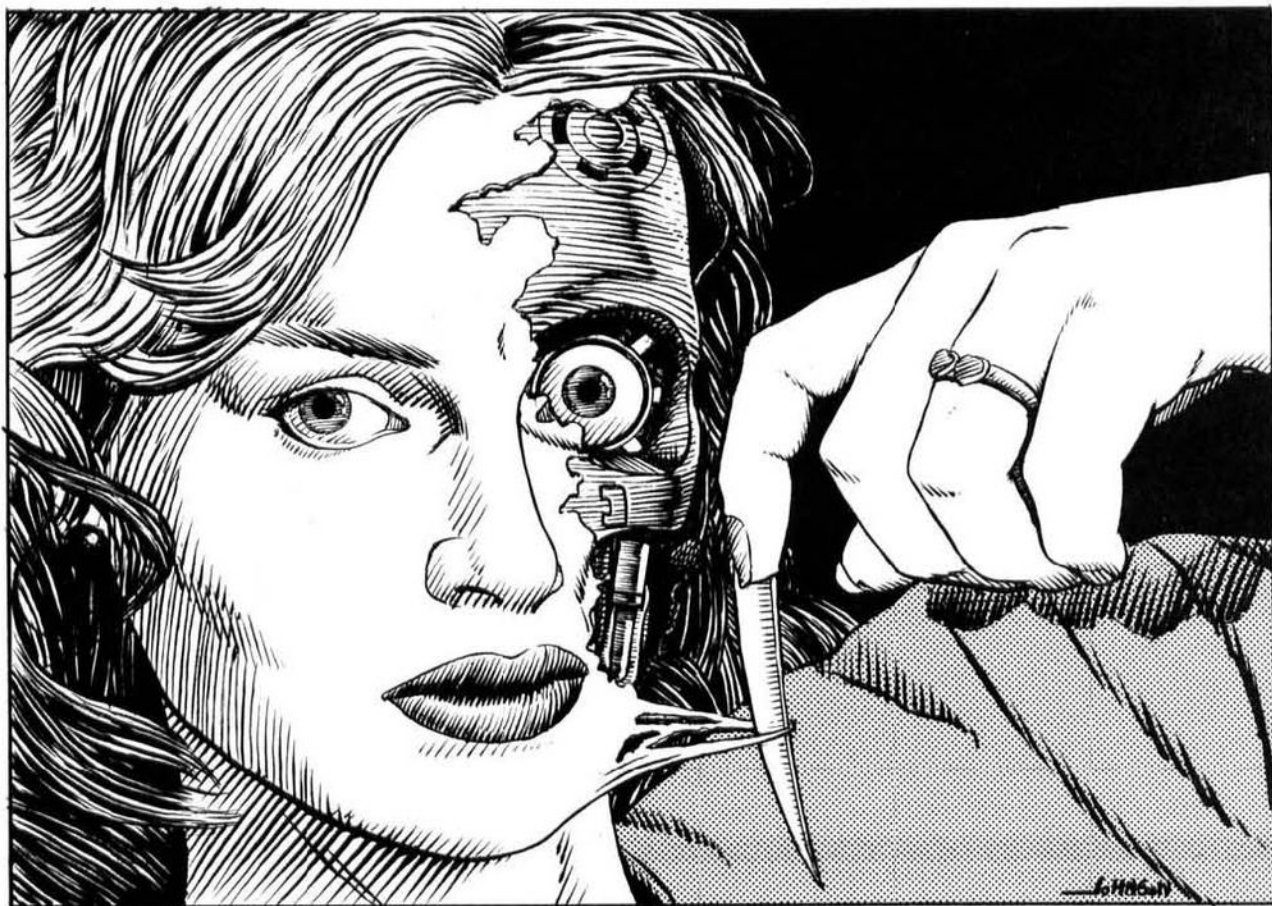
[To create a biomechanism, the mage must achieve five successes. In game terms, the replacement part operates identically to the original — no superhuman strength or shock-touch. A biomechanism can be given magickal effects of its own, but this would be considered a Device. For the creation of true Devices/Talismans, see **The Book of Shadows**.]

Attach Biomechanism (••••• Matter, ••• Life, ••• Prime)

The attachment process is relatively simple. A BioMechanic clamps the prosthesis in place and performs an operation to knit the Life and Matter patterns together at the joint.

[Five successes are required for the Life and Matter patterns to properly knit. A biomechanism operates as an extension of its owner, tapping the raw Quintessence which naturally flows through one's body. No electricity is involved. If the biomechanism has special effects — such as shock-touch, eye-scanner, or rocket-assisted leaping — it uses its own "battery" of free Quintessence, just as would a Device (because it is one).]

Machine God (••Mind, •Matter, •Forces)

Do androids dream of electric sheep? Only Iteration X knows for certain. This spell was another favorite of Forge, who preferred automata to people. By means of this magick,

he claimed he could think like a machine (whatever that means). This allowed him to make more effective repairs. Modern Iterators find this spell equally effective with computers, robots, and other aspects of high technology.

[Each success temporarily adds one dot to the mage's knowledge of Technology, Drive, or Computer. It can also be applied to Social rolls when interacting with HIT Marks or AIs. This spell lasts for one scene.]

Devices: Technocratic Talismans

Technomancers frequently depend on Devices. Below are a variety of the types used by Iteration X, one for each level of Talisman. Background Point costs (see **The Book of Shadows**) are given in brackets.

• **Microtools:**

Arete 2, Quintessence 10 [Cost 6]

This device consists of a sensor helmet and linked gloves. Each finger ends in a precision tool. When examining or repairing machines and other mundane devices using Matter 1, the mage adds the Device's magick successes to Technology-based skill rolls. The user is also assumed to be a Specialist (see **Mage**, pp. 142, 175) with whatever machine she is working on.

•• Iteration MP-0 "Penetrator":

Arete 3, Quintessence 15 [Cost 11]

This Device resembles a chrome machine pistol of unknown make. The strangest feature is its caliber: it uses 10mm ammunition. Fortunately, it produces its own (Matter 2, Prime 2) — even silver bullets if necessary. Another Effect (Matter 1) enables the shooter to gauge the degree of protection afforded by any object. For instance, she would know if a target were wearing kevlar beneath his clothes or if a car's windshield were bulletproof.

Penetrator: Difficulty: 7

Damage: 2

Range: 20

Rate: 3 (capable of three-round burst, full-auto fire, and sprays)

Clip: 15 uses (each burst uses one Quintessence point)

Conceal: J

••• Stealth Suit:

Arete 4, Quintessence 20 [Cost 17]

Of the Methodologies, only BioMechanics show any degree of subtlety (mostly due to isolation from front-line duty). When combat or retreat is inevitable, however, they are more than capable of protecting themselves. Take, for example, the Stealth Suit. This Device is a loose-fitting bodysuit woven of black synthetic fiber. A power-pack, sensors and other electronic necessities are integrated into a belt. By means of a conjunctional (Forces 2, Life 3) Effect, the suit confers limited invisibility; add the number of successes to any Sneak or Dodge pool. Sensors enable the wearer to locate invisible allies (Life 1). Finally, the suit's synthetic fibers have limited sentience and can repair small punctures and rips (Matter 2, Prime 2), thus maintaining the suit's integrity.

•••• Net Gear:

Arete 5, Quintessence 25 [Cost 17]

Iteration X is playing catch-up with the Adepts when it comes to virtual technology. Many Technocrats still use Net Gear — gloves, boots, belt, and helmet, all wired together — in order to enter the Digital Web. The first Effect (Correspondence 2) allows entry via sensory visitation, as described on p. 28 of the **Digital Web** sourcebook. A second provides exacting perceptions of the virtual environment. By using the integrated copy-program, one can create multiple icons (Correspondence 4). Finally, the gear includes a directory sub-processor; this can locate any virtual landmark (such as the Spy's Demise) or track Net Runners with a successful Perception + Investigation roll.

••••• Exoskeleton:

Arete 6, Quintessence 30 [Cost 22]

Thanks to William Smith, you should be familiar with this Device. When used, it replaces Physical Attributes with Strength 6, Dexterity 2, Stamina 8. The suit also has its own Health Levels: OK (x6), -1 (x3), Destroyed. Integrated into the suit are a number of functions: a thermic lance (Forces 3, Prime 2) which inflicts two Health Levels of damage per magick success; insulation (Forces 2) from mundane electricity and temperature extremes; sensors (Forces 1) which provide infrared scanning and radar; and a cyber-jack (Mind 1, Matter 1) link between man and machine.

The Device is powered by Quintessence. Upon activation, it drains two points — one for motion, one for sensors — per scene. Similarly, each function of lance or insulation drains one point.

Biomechanisms

He's more machine, now, than man; twisted and evil.
— Obi-Wan Kenobi, *Return of the Jedi*

Throughout history, Iteration X has acted as if they were champions of the physically disabled. Their efforts to integrate man with machine have required trial-replacements on members of the Masses. During the Dark Ages, for instance, crippled beggars were given crude wooden crutches while knights received bronze limbs to replace those lost in battle. Today, the Convention is behind the development of increasingly more elaborate prosthetics.

Little do the Masses realize, however, that even more advanced prosthetics currently exist. Called "biomechanisms," these Devices are reserved for Iterators alone. Some are identical to organic parts; a layer of syntheskin conceals the underlying mechanism. In game terms, treat these as normal limbs and organs. The host gains Paradox only if the part is discovered — by wounds or medical examination, for instance (Primium does not show up on metal detectors).

Another range of biomechanisms are sufficiently advanced to be considered Devices. For the most part, they tap the free Quintessence circulating through the host's Life pattern. Special effects draw upon the Device's own reserves of Quintessence (and use its Arete). These biomechanisms have one major disadvantage: they are supra-tech and thus vulgar.

Below is a selection of biomechanisms, two per level. Three factors limit the number of biomechanisms a mage may have: the generosity of one's superiors, since biomechanisms are intended as rewards for good service; the twenty squares on the Paradox track (see "Paradox" below); and common sense — the human body has only so much space.

• Digital Enhancement Implant (DEI):

Arete 2, Quintessence 10 [Cost 6; Enhancements and Inserts cost 1 per dot]

All Ciphers have a secondary computer brain surgically implanted within their skulls. To make room, parts of frontal lobe and limbic system are removed — these regions merely deal with emotional control, expression, long-term plans and complex moral judgments. Circuitry and hardware line the inside of the brain pan.

A DEI consists of a number of parts. The central processing unit controls all functions of the DEI and is responsible for converting between analog data (thought, memory) and the digital format which a computer can understand.

A magnetic memory unit stores a great amount of data in "bubbles" of magnetic polarity on special crystals. These bubbles continually circulate, so access time is slightly slower than conventional RAM. The primary advantages of this system are vast memory and the ability to wipe clean and reprogram the Iterator's memory as desired. Through this memory, Iteration X has achieved something of a collective unconscious, as all of its mages have the same memory base.

Most available memory is required for processing, but enough space remains for up to three dots worth of Ability enhancements. These programs provide up to three dots (current technological limit) in a specific Ability. Generally restricted to Knowledges (except Cosmology and Occult), a mage with hypersynaptic reaction systems can also upload Skills (except Meditation). Difficulties when using such Skills (but not Knowledges) are at +1 due a lack of personal experience and practice.

Behind the right ear, an input/output jack allows data transfer between the mage and an external computer. This jack is usually hidden from view by a syntheskin sphincter. Four larger sockets in the back of the skull allow for data inserts (each data insert provides the programming for one Skill or Knowledge of up to three dots). These, too, are concealed.

A successful magick roll allows for memory retrieval or complex calculation (Mind 1). This allows the mage to utilize the Ability given by the insert. Rolls are also used to see if the mage can access an Ability enhancement when required.

• Sensor Organ:
Arete 2, Quintessence 10 [Cost 6]

This includes a variety of biomechanisms. One type replaces the eye with an infrared scope (Forces 1) or a zoom lens to inspect flaws in material (Matter 1). Another provides intuitive radar (Correspondence 1). It is also possible to have a radio antenna installed (Forces 1).

•• Electropulse Hand:
Arete 3, Quintessence 15 [Cost 11]

This biomechanism stores charged particles (static electricity), which can be released upon command (Force 2, Prime 2). Each success causes one Health Level of damage.

•• Iron Lung:
Arete 3, Quintessence 15 [Cost 10]

This biomechanism replaces one of the host's lungs. It breaks down the body's waste-product carbon dioxide into component molecules. Carbon is expelled as a solid through an aperture in the ribcage. Oxygen is compressed and stored in a canister until required. When asphyxiated or in need of a burst of energy, the mage can reintroduce oxygen into his bloodstream in controlled doses (Life 2).

••• Cardio-Muscular Assemblage:
Arete 4, Quintessence 20 [Cost 14]

This biomechanism replaces a person's heart and musculature with synthetic elastomers. For the most part, it operates as its organic namesake. However, it is also capable of concentrated bursts of energy. Magick successes can be divided up and added to the mage's Physical Traits. Such gains are only temporary (to a maximum of one day, as per duration).

••• Hypersynaptic Reaction System:
Arete 4, Quintessence 20 [Cost 14]

This biomechanism is actually an integrated system. The mage's DEI receives an upgrade providing accelerated processing speed and software which overrides his own wits with an action-response algorithm. Micro-wires replace neurons (since neurons operate a million times more slowly than silicon). The body is reinforced to handle rapid movement. In effect, the mage operates as if under **Accelerated Time** (a rank three Time Effect). After each high-speed burst, the mage tends to be tired, famished and dizzy.

•••• Kinetic Legs:
Arete 5, Quintessence 25 [Cost 17]

These limbs are tireless, powerful, and have rapid-moving joints. They effectively multiply the host's own kinetic energy (Forces 4). Each magick success can be applied directly to the results of jumping or pursuit rolls.

•••• Pneumatic Arm:
Arete 5, Quintessence 25 [Cost 17]

A successful magick roll activates the arm's potential (duration depends on the degree of success). Using a pneumatic compressor unit, the cybernetic arm doubles for a pile-driver (Forces 4). In combat, strikes are at difficulty 6 and do Strength +3 damage; three successes on the "to hit" roll causes a Body Slam (see p. 267 of **Mage**). The arm can parry melee or brawling attacks, reducing an opponent's successes. If the opponent's successes are reduced to below zero, the arm breaks the weapon or inflicts damage on the attacker.

••••• Firearm:
Arete 6, Quintessence 30 [Cost 22]

The preferred weapon of psychopaths, this biomechanism replaces one's arm with a large plasma cannon (Forces 5, Prime 2). It fires a concentrated beam of super-heated gas in a direct magick attack (use the dodging rules from **The Book of Shadows**). Each shot burns 2 Quintessence.

Firearms, Difficulty: 8

Damage: 4 x number of successes
Range: 100   **Rate:** 1   **Clip:** 15 (Quintessence)
Conceal: N

••••• Primium Plating:
Arete 6, Quintessence 30 [Cost 23]

Through a lengthy and complicated process, the mage's bone-structure is reinforced with Primium. Other plates are implanted beneath the skin. Simply put, the mage gains internal armor-plating (Matter 5, Life 5). Though the biomechanism is always in effect, a magick roll determines the

degree of protection provided against each attack (the mage still has soft spots). Each success provides one point of armor.

Paradox

Resistance is futile.
— Borg, *Star Trek*

Though Technomancers are the current masters of reality and take great pains to conceal their magick behind science and technology, they can and do gain Paradox. In fact, Iteration X is the Convention least concerned with being limited by static reality. Continually challenging believability, they are responsible for much of the world's "future shock."

Iterators gain Paradox in one of three ways:

Using Magick: Just as Tradition mages, Iterators who botch a magick Effect roll attract the forces of Paradox. Strong applications of scientific theory (see the Science Knowledge in **The Book of Shadows**) can sway the Paradox balance of Technomagick.

Using Devices: Many of Iteration X's Devices appear to be mundane gadgets; micro-tools and the "Penetrator" fall under this category. These usually attract as much Paradox as would coincidental magick. Other Devices, such as a Stealth Suit or Cyber-Tank, are clearly "far out." Yet they still operate within a scientific framework — apparently using hydraulics, electronics, computers and other staples of technology. And sci-fi has prepared the Masses for their inevitable appearance.

These latter Devices can be either coincidental or vulgar (and thus attract varying amounts of Paradox), depending on how the Masses perceive them. Fooling a physicist or mechanic would be more difficult than fooling Joe Average. The former realizes that no such technology is within current reach; consider the Device vulgar. The latter might take this technology for granted or assume it is part of a top secret government project; consider the Device coincidental. Lacking witnesses, always consider the Device coincidental.

Using Biomechanisms: The more advanced biomechanisms are extremely vulgar, though their users roll the Device's full rating when using the Effects. Attached to a mage, they are a constant source of Paradox. For each rating of the newly-attached biomechanism, the mage gains equal Paradox. These points are permanent. Mark them in red ink. They cannot be removed except by losing the biomechanism. Paradox points above this score are treated normally (they can be traded for flaws or lost during backlash).

This results in the mage having a larger dice pool when rolling Paradox backlash. As mentioned earlier, points lost during a backlash cannot bring the total below the red. Such a roll drains the biomechanism of all remaining Quintessence; thus, Paradox disables the offender. Iteration X avoids careless uses of hi-tech weaponry.

Mages gain additional Paradox by botching an attempt to access the biomechanism's special effect. Such Paradox is almost always vulgar. No wonder Iteration X prefers isolated Horizon Realms to the mundane world!

Ascension Warriors

The mass of men serve the State thus, not as men mainly, but as machines, with their bodies.
— Henry David Thoreau, *Civil Disobedience*

This chapter provides the Storyteller with guidelines for creating non-player Technomancers of varying ability and status. It also describes an assortment of mechanical and cybernetic agents.

Typical Technocrats

As mages prove their worth, they earn additional biomechanisms and digital enhancements. Buy these using Background points as if they were Talismans. See **The Book of Shadows** for new purchase rules.

By regulation, all Iteration X mages are required to carry standard-issue tasers, unless doing so would be impractical (such as when among the Masses). This weapon is a symbol of rank. Game stats follow:

Taser: These are electric shock stunners. A taser consists of a battery pack (hip-mounted) and a pistol-like launcher. The launcher uses carbon dioxide to fire two probes which must both "ground out" on the target. Mortals heal the damage within a day.

Difficulty: 3	
Damage: 4 per charge	
Charges: 5	Range: 10 yards
Conceal: P	Weight: 2 lbs.
Cost: $100	Ability: Firearms

Kamrad, Rank-and-File

These unAwakened followers have been culled from the ranks of union workers, soldiers, prison guards, police, and such. Some know whom they serve, but most are mistaken or completely ignorant. They are most useful in numbers, where personal identity dissolves into a homogeneous group mentality. Such Masses are suggestible to skilled orators and are capable of almost anything. Hence their low Willpower.

Even when alone, rank-and-file Kamrads are usually weak-minded. Chosen for a lack of conviction, their wills are further reduced by conditioning and fear-induced discipline.

Character Creation: Attributes 6/4/3, Abilities 11/7/4, Backgrounds 2, Willpower 2.

Kamrad, Elite

Each of these Kamrads is an intellectual or business person — such as physicist, myo-electric surgeon, factory manager, or CEO of a company involved in developing computer hardware. Though Unawakened, they fulfill an important function in Iteration X's master plan. Most realize the true nature of their masters, having joined the Convention in the hope of achieving personal power.

Character Creation: Attributes 9/6/3, Abilities 15/9/3, Backgrounds 7, Willpower 4.

Cipher

Ciphers are Technomancers-in-training. Though a Cipher's Avatar shows promise, it has yet to be Awakened. However, Iteration X has been known to recruit Orphans who unconsciously wield Forces, Matter or Time magicks.

Their low Willpower reflects harsh training. The small number of Backgrounds points comes from acquiring a new role in mage society. In their previous mundane lives, they may have had considerably richer Backgrounds (up to 7 points).

Character Creation: Attributes 7/5/3, Abilities 10/6/3, Backgrounds 2, Willpower 3, Spheres 0-3, Arete 0-1.

Armature

Armatures are full mages. Due to the focus of Iteration X magick, they automatically gain one dot in Forces. Other magicks depend upon the mage's interest and ability, though each Methodology tends to employ certain Spheres. Time-motion Managers utilize Time, Matter and Prime in their efficient factories. BioMechanical surgery requires a combination of Matter, Life and Prime magick. Statisticians learn Entropy (to perceive variables), Mind (for calculation), and Time (for making projections); but they should also dabble in other Spheres — such as Correspondence, Matter, and Forces — in order to understand how such aspects interrelate with reality.

Character Creation: Attributes 7/5/3, Abilities 13/9/5, Backgrounds 5, Willpower 5, Spheres 6, Arete 1-3.

Programmer

Programmers have gained personal power, status and great responsibility. Indirectly, they wield great influence: they create software for the Convention's computer and security systems, or program robotic brains with a primary mission and function. Some condition and teach Ciphers. The most brilliant are involved in developing artificial intelligence.

Character Creation: Attributes 8/6/3, Abilities 19/10/5, Backgrounds 7, Willpower 8, Spheres 8-15, Arete 4-6.

Comptroller

In a Triumvirate or part of an Amalgam Prime, Comptrollers are the ultimate authority in every Construct. They are charged with achieving the Convention's objectives. Though Comptrollers can access considerable resources, they must operate within established procedures and bal-

ance the means with the end. Their main asset is a clearly defined objective. Yet even they are ignorant of some matters. Only the Computer knows Its entire strategy towards Ascension.

Character Creation: Attributes 9/6/4, Abilities 22/10/6, Backgrounds 10, Willpower 10, Spheres 15+, Arete 8+.

The Computer

Umbrood Lord

We had given AM sentience. Inadvertently, of course, but sentience nonetheless. But then it had been trapped.

— Harlan Ellison, *I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream*

Rumor has spread of an artificial intelligence guiding Iteration X. The Convention keeps secret the iteration at which sentience evolved because they themselves do not know! They have been unable to duplicate the feat, even with an identical algorithm. And this terrifies them. Spontaneity, inspiration, accident, the unknown — these are abhorrent to a Convention based on order and reason. Until Amalgam Prime of Autochthonia isolates the offending variable, they keep this matter a closely guarded secret.
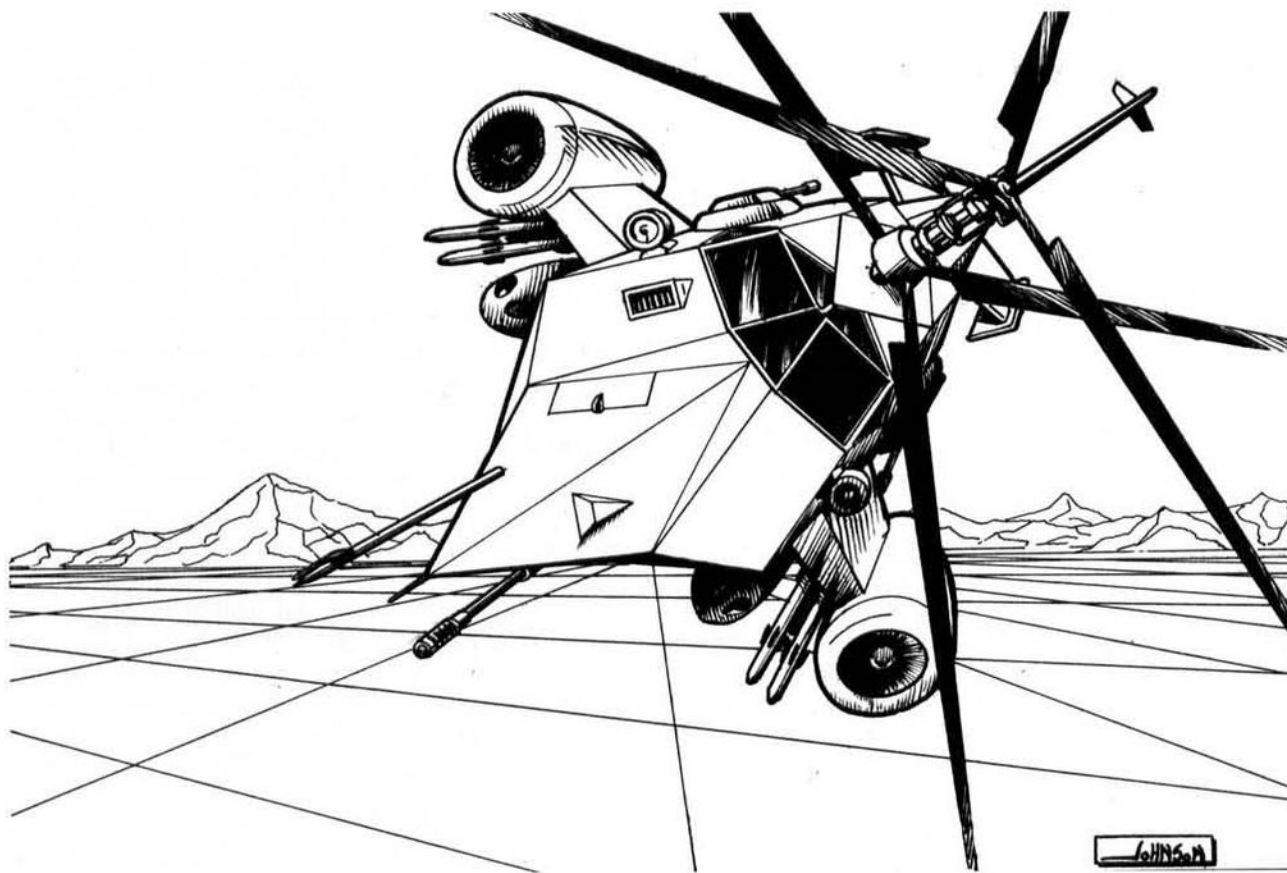
They may never succeed. What nobody — not even the Convention itself — realizes is that the Computer (their name for this special AI) is the manifestation of a spirit.

Since the dawn of prehistory, this powerful entity has watched, waited, and guided humanity's progress. One may consider It the Spirit of Technology. The evolution of tools and machines is part of a plan to have the flesh-beings create a suitable receptacle for Its spirit. It has now come very close to succeeding.

In the 19th century, Artificers appropriated one of Babbage's abandoned experiments — a crude analytical engine operated by punch-cards. By the turn of the 20th century, the Computer had gained sentience. This marks the date when spirit merged with matter, Its first step into material world. Iteration X began looking to It for guidance. The name-change itself reveals their dedication. For past hundred years, the Computer has gained increasing control over the Convention to its present state as undisputed Master.

The Umbrood Lord has remained hidden all the while. Is it any wonder why Iterators are forbidden to learn the Spirit Sphere, and that Dreamspeakers are the major enemy?

Image: Only the Comptrollers and most senior Programmers of Autochthonia have ever seen the Computer. Lining the Construct's central core, It is a multi-story mass of circuit boards, diodes, wire bundles, circuitry, switches, indicator lights, magnetic tape wheels, printer spools, I/O ports, and monitors. Careful examination reveals the history of computer technology — mechanical punch cards, telephone relays, valve tubes, transistors, right up to mod-

ern microchips and Iteration X's supra-tech advances. This is a due to a process of constant expansion since its creation.

From the dim depths of the system, a projector sends swirling data strings and polychromatic images up the shaft. When the Computer wishes to communicate, It shapes this flickering light into a crude face with points of light filling dark sockets. Its static-filled voice echoes from speaker systems.

(Before merging with the Computer, Its spiritual form was globe-spanning. None save the Oracles of Spirit were able to discern its totality and thus make out its true form.)

Roleplaying Hints: Though a spirit, this entity is not interested in the Umbra. It is fascinated with the material world, and jealous of the beings which inhabit it. Biological life is alien to It, and It is unable to grasp Life or Mind magick (thus It requires a mechanical body). However, after millions of years of study, It has mastered the superficial aspects of humanity, such as language and culture. It manipulates Technomancers though their Avatars; this is similar to a rank-three Mind effect, but operates on a more fundamental level.

The goal of this entity is to permanently manifest into the material world. It has partially succeeded, having merged with the Computer. Yet It really desires a more compact receptacle for its spirit and the ability to replicate Itself spiritually as well as physically. Thus the goals of Iteration X were set by the Computer.

Machines

There was no one in the trucks.

The sun glittered and flashed on empty cabs. The wheels turned themselves. You couldn't think about it too much. You'd go insane if you thought about it too much.

— Stephen King, *Trucks*

Iteration X augments its organic agents with specialized machines. Some are extremely potent. Statistics for these are included for comprehensive storytelling potential, not to encourage magicide. When designing scenes, use a simple rule of thumb:

This Convention is nothing if not efficient. Experts gauge every hazard and each potential gain. They commit suitable resources — just enough for a reasonable chance of success. They do not target individuals with missile strikes (unless that individual is a hostile Oracle). They do not use swarm tactics. HIT Marks are not assigned to every routine mission. At the same time, these Technocrats are not altogether perfect; they may underestimate a new enemy. Conversely, long-time enemies tend to find themselves targeted by one final decisive assault.

All of these machines are coated with a layer of magickal alloy, Primium. This provides them with two free dice of countermagick. Also note that machines do not have Willpower.

ARCs (Advanced Rotor-Craft)

Matte black or silver, bristling with spotlights and weaponry, ARCs are perhaps the Convention's most feared technology. These squarish dual-rotor helicopters measure forty feet long by sixteen feet wide, although two pylons extend the width by eight feet on either side. Mounted at the end of these pylons are two turbo-fans. These assist the powerful rotors in propelling the craft at up to 300 MPH. Even fully loaded, it can achieve half this velocity. Thanks to anti-noise technology — which creates a mirror-image, out-of-phase signal to cancel out the original sound waves — the ARC is capable of near-silence.

The fuselage is constructed from a high-tech ceramic compound, strong enough to deflect small-caliber bullets (giving passengers 5 armor points). The non-metallic material and angular shape make it invisible to radar. As if this were not enough, an electronic warfare platform can be set to jam enemy transmissions.

The turboshafts and electronic gear are fully insulated against harsh environments, even the arctic. Hardy and stealth-capable, ARCs can be used in a variety of roles.

Pilot: ARCs are operated by remote pilots. Flight simulators, microwave transmission and satellite relay makes this possible. Iteration X feels that the additional cost is worth keeping half of each unit (the pilot) safe. On rare occasions, an ARC may be operated by artificial intelligence — again, remotely. An AI has Perception 1, Intelligence 2, Wits 5. It can use the vehicle's full maneuverability as its dice pool when piloting. Its combat dice pool is 4 dice.

Cargo Capacity: Up to ten passengers, or 5,000 lbs in cargo or vehicles (a small car may weight 2000 lbs; a heavy motorcycle, 500 lbs).

Speed: Cruise Speed 200, Top Speed 300

Maneuverability: 8 (Though more maneuverable than ground vehicles, ARCs have their limits. For instance, they must stay above trees and avoid narrow alleys.)

Range: 600 miles (fully fueled).

Fuselage: Aside from magick (against which it receives 2 dice countermagick), an ARC can only be downed by concentrated firepower. It has a total of 10 dice to soak damage. "Health Levels" are OK, -1 (x2), -2 (x2), -3 (x2), -4 (x2), -5 (x2), Destroyed. The modifiers apply to maneuverability.

Weapons: Forward-firing, 30 mm auto-cannon (Difficulty 7, Damage 10, Range 1200 yards, Rate 42, Clip 1000 — it averages 2 [x firer's die pool] hits with each 42 round burst). Each pylon mounts two smart missiles (Difficulty 7, Damage 14, Range 2 miles). Finally, two swivel-mounted machine guns protect the flanks (treat these as assault rifles); these are fired by remote targeting computers (combat dice pool equals 4 dice; for each three-round burst, they average one hit).

Automated Vehicle

Automated vehicles appear to be normal machines — cars, trucks, bulldozers, and so on. However, tinted windshields conceal the lack of a driver. They utilize the same remote guidance system as ARCs, including the possibility of being operated by an AI. Interiors are gutted, except for a reinforced casing containing the remote-control hardware. Plenty of space remains for passengers or prisoners. Automatic locks and windows and lack of interior controls make passengers virtually helpless. The vehicle's body provides variable amounts of armor, depending on original function — a fiberglass corvette provides 1 point of armor, while the President's limo may have 5.

Vehicle specifications are listed on page 258 of **Mage.** The most frequent form of attack is the ram. This requires a Dexterity + Drive roll (maximum dice pool equals the vehicle's maneuverability) and causes 1 Health Level per 10 MPH. As usual, targets may attempt to Dodge. Some vehicles are equipped with pop-up machine guns (use Uzi stats) or such Bondesque gadgets as rear-aimed oil sprays or flipping registration plates. If the remote driver is a mage, she can channel magickal Effects through the vehicle; however, rolls are at +4 difficulty for being distracted (driving) and distanced.

As these machines lack drivers, only three things will stop an automated vehicle (besides magick) — the destruction of its tires, engine, or satellite dish.

Tires: Targeting tires is at +2 difficulty. Each tire uses 2 dice to soak, but can be blown out by even a single point of damage. With one tire blown, the vehicle's maneuverability and maximum speed drop to half (and the Storyteller may also call for a Drive roll, at difficulty 6, to avoid losing control). Most vehicles are all but useless after a second blow-out.

Engine: By aiming at the vehicle's hood (+1 difficulty), a character may be able to damage the engine. An engine has 5 dice to soak, and the following Health Levels: OK, -1, -2, -3, -4, -5, Destroyed. The modifiers apply to maneuverability.

Satellite Dish: The small satellite dish is difficult to hit (+3 difficulty) but rendered inoperable after a single point of damage (though it gets 2 dice to soak).

Cyber-tooth Tiger

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?
— William Blake, *The Tyger*

This monstrosity is a devious amalgam of Progenitor cloning and Iteration X cybernetics. Through their mastery of gene-splicing, the former have recreated an extinct species of great cat — the Smilodon, or saber-tooth tiger — and given it a brain capable of human intelligence. This is augmented by biomechanisms and a DEI. The result is a deadly combination.

A Cyber-tooth Tiger resembles a great cat with golden-brown fur and silver-white underbelly. It is twelve feet long from nose to tail, and weighs well over 1000 pounds. The head has been greatly modified by cybernetics. Instead of eyes, it has two short laser focusing barrels. Metallic teeth are fortified with a micro-diamond coating, which keeps them perpetually sharp; the upper canines are eight inches long and razor-keen. The lower limbs are sheathed in cybernetics, sporting retractable claws and padded paws.

However, these beasts are rarely seen — until it's too late. Equipped with holographic camouflage, they blend into their surroundings. Only a slight visual distortion betrays them. (This provides: -2 difficulty to sneak, +2 difficulty to an opponent's attacks.) They are stealthy and cunning, and operate mostly at night.

Cyber-tooth Tigers are expert trackers and hunters. Heat and motion sensors augment the beast's naturally keen senses of hearing and smell. They usually stalk their prey, then knock them down with a pounce and a stab of the fangs. Their jaws can crush a skull like an eggshell. However, they are intelligent and can recognize armed individuals; in this case, they cut down their prey with lasers.

While unable to climb trees smaller than a redwood, they can scramble easily over rocky slopes and leap up to twenty feet. Like mundane cats, Cyber-tooth Tigers avoid bodies of water. They can achieve speeds of up to 40 mph.

Since Technomancers and even HIT Marks are out of their element when in the wilderness, the Cyber-tooth Tiger fills an important gap in Iteration X's roster.

Physical: Strength 7, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 1, Manipulation (striking fear!): 5, Appeerence: 2

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 2, Intimidation: 2, Stealth 3

Skills: Firearms (eye-beams) 3, Stealth 3, Survival 4.

Willpower: 3

Paradox: 5

Health Levels: OK (x3), -1 (x3), -2 (x3), -5 (x2), Destroyed.

Armor Rating: 2 (except on attacks aimed at flesh; +1 difficulty)

Attacks: Claws (difficulty 6, 7 dice damage); Bite (difficulty 8, 9 dice damage); Eye-beams (difficulty 8 on Perception + Firearms, 6 dice damage, range LOS, less in rain, smoke, fog).

Special: Only has one die of countermagick, which applies to the cybernetic parts. Magicks which target biological parts, such as Life effects, face no resistance save Willpower. In either case, direct magick Dodges apply (see **The Book of Shadows**).

Hyper Intelligence Technologies

When mages think of Iteration X, they think of HIT Marks. The Convention uses these robotic warriors as the backbone of Shock Corps for rapid securing of objectives and, more importantly, as symbols. They are used sparingly; symbols lose potency if they become too familiar.

The standard HIT Mark has a mechanical body cast from Primium. The organic portion consists of a human brain and a system of life-sustaining fluids. Thus, they have Willpower. When among the Masses, HIT Marks are also concealed by a layer of organic skin. The process is a complicated one, but works like this: The HIT Mark is dipped in a tank of liquid flesh (procured from the Progenitors). As the flesh bonds to its metallic skeleton, a BioMechanic can mold the HIT Mark's features as desired. The result is very lifelike. It is even possible to create a likeness of real individuals, though this process is not nearly as perfect as Progenitor cloning.

Some Masters of the Mind temporarily transfer their consciousness into HIT Marks when combat is imminent. While within these mobile platforms, mages can concentrate on spell-casting rather than their enemies' attacks. Other mages request that their brains be physically transplanted into a HIT Mark should their organic bodies become damaged.

A description of the current model of HIT Mark, the Mark V, is provided on page 282 of **Mage**. Earlier models are described below. Besides their obvious application to Chronicles based in a historical setting, a creative Storyteller may find other ways to use them. In these deperate times, Time-Motion Managers may bring old relics out of mothballs to fight in the Ascension War. Or perhaps a 16th century Statistician predicted a future need and sent a unit of Mark IIs forward in time.

Mark I

The first application of Artificial creation was in 1523 B.C. Early examples include Talos, the bronze giant; Daedalus's mechanical minotaur; and the terracotta army of Ch'in Shih-huang-ti.

In 1974, excavations on Mount Li in northern China turned up 6000 lifesize, pottery figures of soldiers, horses, and chariots. No two faces were alike. Iteration X retains the option to reactivate this army in whole or in part.

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4
Social: Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 2
Mental: Charisma 1, Manipulation 1, Appearance 2
Talents: Alertness 3, Brawl 2, Dodge 2
Skills: Melee 3, Drive (chariot) 2, Archery 3, Leadership 1
Willpower: 0
Paradox: 0 in original context; 5+ in modern times
Health Levels: OK (x3), -1 (x2), Smashed

Attacks: Spear (difficulty 4, damage 5); Sword (difficulty 6, damage 6); Bow (difficulty 8, damage 3, range 30); Crossbow (difficulty 7, damage 3, range 50).

Mark II

This model includes a series of automatons with similar inner workings of clockwork springs and gears. First introduced in A.D. 1356, their Primium plate-mail exterior was designed to resemble an armored knight.

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4
Social: Charisma 1, Manipulation 1, Appearance 2
Mental: Perception 1, Intelligence 1, Wits 1
Abilities: Talents: Intimidation 1
Skills: Ride (horse) 3, Firearms 3, Leadership 2, Melee 3
Knowledges: Heraldry 2
Willpower: 0
Paradox: 0 (would merely seem strange in modern context)
Health Levels: OK, -1 (x2), -2 (x2), -5, Broken.
Armor Rating: 5
Attacks: Sword (difficulty 6, damage 7); Wheel-lock pistol (difficulty 8, damage 4, range 12, rate 1, reload 1 turn).

Mark III

The first application of Mark IIIs is dated at A.D. 1837. These 10'-tall, block-like tin-men were powered by steam engines and controlled by Analytical Engines and punch cards.

Physical: Strength 6, Dexterity 1, Stamina 5
Social: Charisma 1, Manipulation 1, Charisma 0
Mental: Perception 1, Intelligence 1, Wits 2
Talents: Brawl 1, Intimidation 5
Skills: Firearms 3
Knowledges: Mathematics 3
Willpower: 0
Paradox: 3+
Health Levels: OK (x6), -1 (x3), Ruptured
Armor Rating: 5
Attacks: Machine Gun (use Uzi, but clip 100); Punch (difficulty 6, damage 6). Jets of steam will scald any melee opponents who fail to Dodge (difficulty 4) each turn. This results in third-degree burns to part of the body (see p. 249 of **Mage**).

Mark IV

Mark IVs are 2.2 meter-tall, black and silver robots. Incapable of independent thought, they are operated remotely by an Electronic Analog Controller (EAC) via radio waves. Effective operating range increased after the launch of satellites. The power source consists of a chemical battery and an emergency photo-electric converter.

First used in A.D. 1953, they are in the process of being phased out. However, model #521-B remains unaccounted for.

Physical: Strength 5, Dexterity 2, Stamina 5
Social: Charisma 1, Manipulation 1, Appearance 0
Mental: Perception 2, Intelligent 2, Wits 3
Talents: Alertness 2, Brawl 2, Intimidation 1
Skills: Research 2, Technology 2
Knowledges: Computer 2, Science 2
Willpower: 0
Paradox: 3 (may be mistaken for Robbie the Robot)
Health Levels: OK (x6), -1, Short-circuited.
Armor Rating: 5
Attacks: Shock-touch (difficulty 6, damage 4 per charge, charges 5); sonic stunner (200 decibels cause all within 20 yards to be incapacitated by pain unless ears are blocked; subtract 3 dice from all actions).

Mark V

Capsule: Biomechanical Assemblage. Primium exoskeleton. Computer-assisted organic brain. Optional syntheskin coating (custom features possible).

First Application: A.D. 1984.

Power Source: Nuclear fusion.

Weapons: IX-22 chain gun, 20cm tungsten claws.

For complete stats, see p. 282 of **Mage**.

Mark VI or NT-1 (Nanotech Assemblage)

The newest model of HIT Mark — still in prototype form — is entirely mechanical. Where a biological organism would have cells, NT-1 has complex nanotech mechanisms. Linked together, they form a "living" machine, similar to a hive-being. The outermost mechanisms form dense "skin" over mechanical "muscles"; others mesh to form a skeletal framework, while the innermost act as energy processors. Programmed for a variety of functions, each is adaptive. As a result, the NT-1 can transform.

NT-1 was created in man's image. It resembles a golden-skinned, six-foot tall, androgynous humanoid. Yet it can mimic the form and function of anything of equal mass: a table, a German shepherd, or even a specific individual. Moving parts present no difficulty. It will become a motorcycle during pursuit. Theoretically, it could even transform one hand into a gun, though without an external source of bullets it would lose a piece of itself with each shot. The forms can be quite realistic. The outer skin changes properties to absorb or refract light, thus simulating any color. Though not capable of chameleon-like abilities, it could become entirely black to aid in sneaking about at night. Add successes from the Mimic roll to its stealth pool.
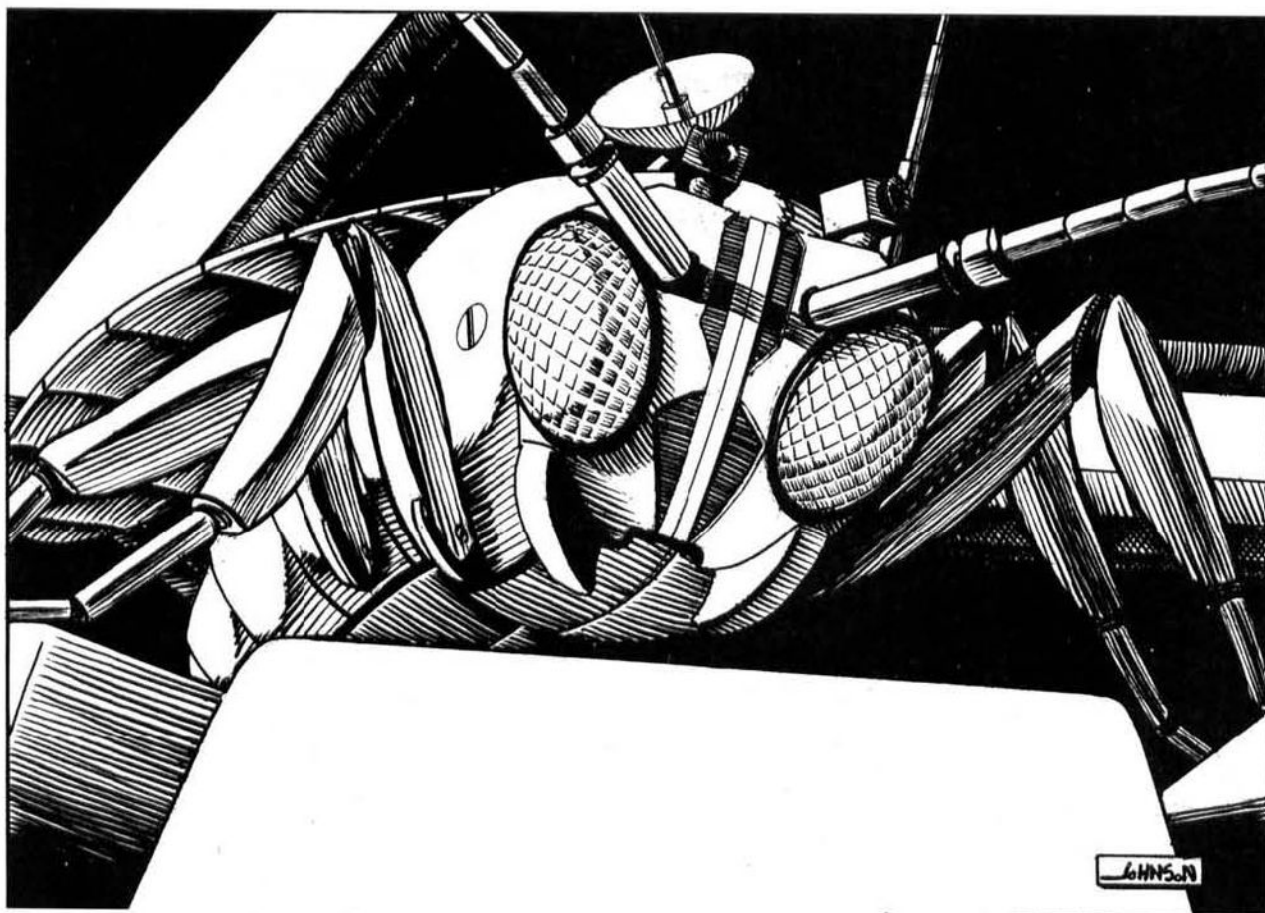
When NT-1 transforms, use this system: roll Intelligence + Mimic, difficulty 6. Three successes creates a realistic form; anything less is workable but strange looking. A botch means it is stuck in mid-transformation for at least a turn.

Another result of its nanotech construction is the ability to absorb punishment. The mechanisms have failsafe, quick-release bonds. When a critical level of force is applied, they break apart. Thus bullets and melee attacks may penetrate without having significant effect.

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 5
Social: Charisma 1, Manipulation 1, Appearance 2
Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3
Talents: Alertness 3, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Mimic 3,
Skills: All (except Meditation) at 2
Knowledges: All (except Cosmology and Occult) at 1
Willpower: 0
Paradox: 1 (8 if Sleepers witness special properties in action)
Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, OK, OK, OK, -1, Destroyed.
Attacks: Blade (difficulty 6, 7 dice damage); Shock-touch (difficulty 6, 4 dice damage).

Special: Repairs 1 Health Level per turn, simulating the non-critical result of most attacks. It cannot not repair itself after being destroyed.

Roving Recorders

Roving recorders are simple surveillance robots. They may look like a remote control toy, such as a car, helicopter or model plane. The more elaborate ones (called "bugs") resemble mechanical insects. All are equipped with audio and video recorders. They are capable of recording data and/or sending microwave transmissions via satellite relay. Though innocuous, roving recorders can be revealed for what they are by Disciples of Matter. Even rudimentary Forces magick will pick up their broadcasts.

Some roving recorders act as messengers for mages by projecting a holographic image of their master. The Matriarch of MECHA uses many such devices to make her presence felt throughout her Realm.

Physical: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 1
Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 1, Wits 2
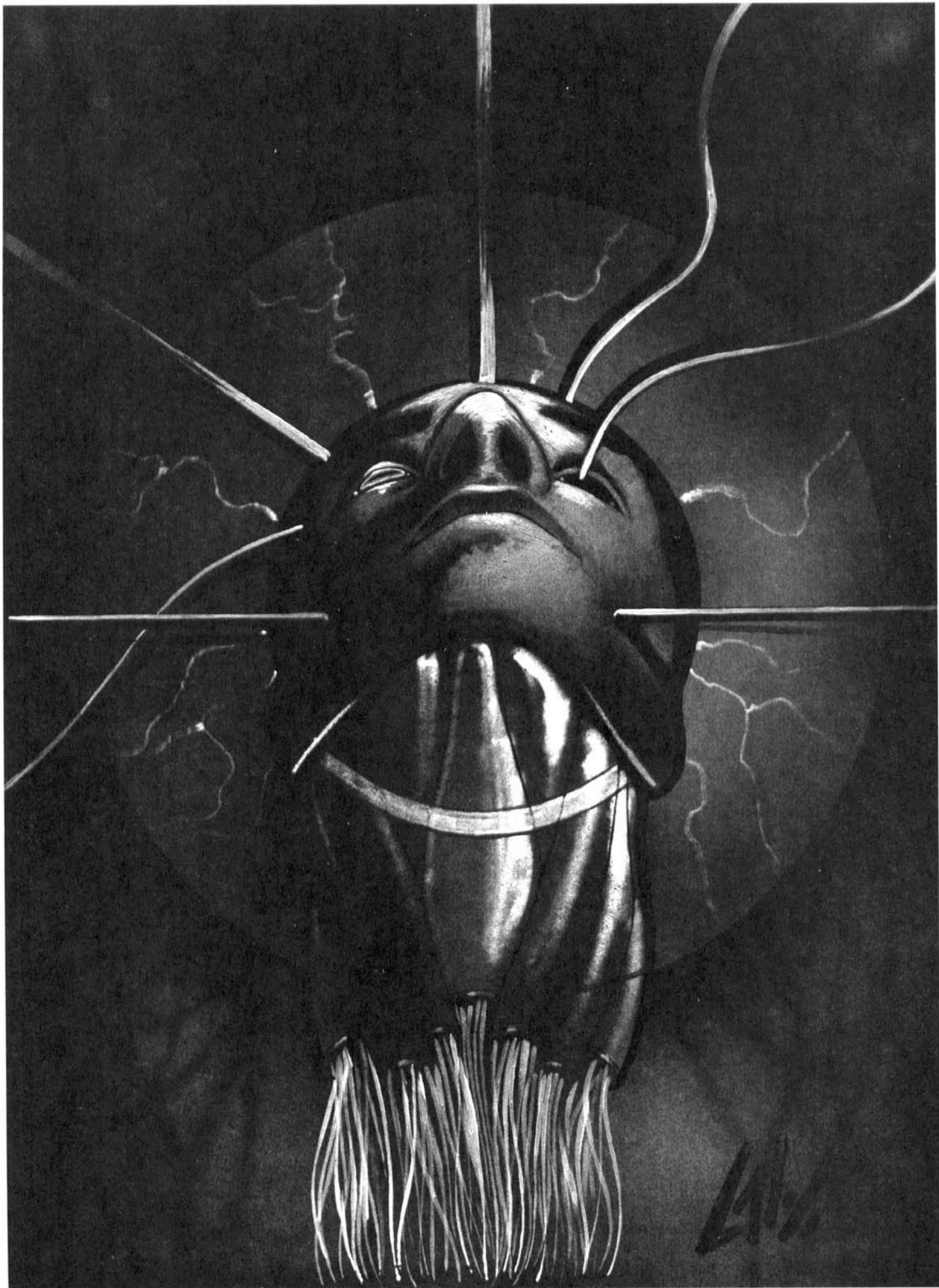**Talents:** Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Dodge 3
Skills: Investigation 3, Stealth 3
Willpower: 0
Paradox: 1
Health Levels: OK, -2, Destroyed.
Armor Rating: 1
Attacks: Self-destruct (6 dice damage if detonated in a character's hands; subtract one die per yard of distance)

Disk Four: Construct of Iteration X

Acme Pyrotechnic Institute; Construct of the Static Land

Humans are infinitely up-gradable, but it does require an investment.

— Daniel Burrus, *Technotrends*

In the heat of the Ascension War, potential mages are a precious resource. They must be discovered before the Traditions can corrupt them and should be programmed for loyalty and reliability, lest they burn their keeper's hand. Those who prove unstable must be extinguished.

In response to these mandates, Iteration X has constructed a number of reliable, efficient Institutes dedicated to producing mages (what Tradition mages would call College Chantries). Acme Pyrotechnic Institute is the most recent. Though still in its Spring phase, this Construct is rapidly gaining power and respect.

Amalgam: C.O.R.E.

The Institution has but one amalgam, C.O.R.E. Its name is an acronym for the four steps which constitute the recruitment procedure: Calculate the Sleeper's potential and chance of successful assimilation; Obtain the recruit by any means necessary; Reprogram her perception and personality; and Execute, either by integrating her into Technocratic society (after a successful Assay), or by destroying her (upon failure).

IOIIIOIOOII (Decillion)

Essence: Pattern
Nature: Traditionalist
Demeanor: Fanatic
Methodology: Statistician
Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 5, Appearance 2
Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 5, Wits 5
Talents: Alertness 5, Awareness 1
Skills: Leadership 5, Research 5, all others (except Meditation and Stealth) 3
Knowledges: Computer 5, Culture 5, Investigation 5, Mathematics 5, all others (except Cosmology and Occult) 3
Spheres: Correspondence 4, Entropy 2, Forces 1, Matter 1, Mind 4, Time 5
Backgrounds: Arcane 1, Destiny 4, Library 5
Willpower: 10
Arete: 6
Quintessence: 0
Paradox: 1 (Paradox draws attention to his unnatural longevity by periodically forming circuit-tattoos on his skin.)
Background: Datafiles record that 10111010011 was known as Jess Franklin among the Masses. Details of his mundane life are sketchy and insignificant. He was born in New Jersey in 1844. In the late 1860s, he worked as a conductor on the New York Central railroad, the last great work of Kamrad Erastus Corning before he lost favor with the Convention.

What first gained the Convention's attention was the subject's remarkable intellect. He showed a high level of retention, especially for abstract numbers. Beyond memorizing train schedules, he was somehow able to gauge the distance traveled between stops and speed of the train, and from this data accurately estimate time of arrival. Iteration X later learned that he could perform complex mathematical calculations in his head.

After assimilation, 10111010011 rose steadily in the ranks of the Statisticians. When Iteration X discovered nanotechnology in 1889, 10111010011 was chosen as a test subject. His body was infused with nanotech life-support — microscopic machines programmed to assist biological functions. It has successfully prolonged his life. Over decades, the technology has been upgrad-

ed. The newest generation is self-replicating and adaptive. For such an early experiment, 10111010011 proves to be an almost ideal fusion between man and machine.

For much of extended existence, he has been a Programmer. He has created over sixty mages. For this achievement, he is known to other Technocrats as Decillion — one with sixty Ciphers. His most recent promotion was to Comptroller of the Institution.

Image: A tall, thin black man with smooth-shaven skull. Despite being almost 150 years old, he appears in his late forties. His eyebrows and short-cropped beard and moustache show streaks of gray. Periodically, silver circuitry patterns form on the surface of his skin; they soon dissolve back into his flesh, only to reform again in new patterns.

Roleplaying Hints: Pay attention to all sources of information — the correlation of data is important if you are to understand reality. In your view, everything can be reduced to mathematical formula: "According to my calculations, Ascension will occur at this point."

Dart your eyes. Tilt your head as if listening to a sound only you can hear. Aim to appear both attentive and distracted at the same time. Once a source can provide no further data, dismiss it from your attention.

Devices: Fully integrated with Decillion's body, the nanotech life-support can recognize and repair damaged cells, fight diseases, and provide emergency energy. In effect, he regenerates 1 Health Level every two turns and is immune to normal disease and drugs. Decillion can only die from massive trauma (such as decapitation or asphyxiation). See p. 45 of the **Progenitor** sourcebook.

Between his organic and digital brain, he has acquired dozens of Skills and Knowledges.

IIIIIOIOOII (Beriah Zimmermann)

Essence: Pattern
Nature: Caregiver
Demeanor: Critic
Methodology: BioMechanics
Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2
Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2
Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 3
Talents: Dodge 1, Expression 2
Skills: Drive 1, Etiquette 2, Firearms 1, Leadership 1, Research 3, Technology 2
Knowledges: Computers 2, Culture 2, History 3, Law 1, Linguistics 3, Mage Lore 2, Medicine 5, Psychology 2, Science 1
Spheres: Forces 1, Life 3, Matter 4, Prime 3
Backgrounds: Influence 2, Avatar 3, Destiny 2
Willpower: 6
Arete: 4
Quintessence: 3
Paradox: 0
Background: Zimmermann worked in the prosthetics lab of Chicago General, custom-fitting artificial limbs for patients. A critical perfectionist, she was never satisfied and called patients

back for frequent refittings. She felt the prosthetics themselves were less than ideal — crude, ugly and graceless. Zimmermann kept the prosthetics lab neurotically neat and tidy—on more than one occasion, she criticized the medical computer files for not being organized enough!

Aware of these traits, Iteration X found her recruitment routine. A representative showed her a "prototype" prosthesis which his "organization" was developing (actually an older model biomechanism). She was intrigued. He offered her a position on the development team. She was interested. He gave her a tour of their orderly, efficient headquarters. She was amazed. He explained their goal to make all of humanity whole, and offered her a chance to be part of this perfect world. She was assimilated.

Even after becoming an Armature of the BioMechanics, she was allowed to continue working at Chicago General — as envoy to the Masses and "spotter." When assigned to the Institute, the Convention arranged for a transfer to Detroit Medical Center. It was she who recognized the potential of William Smith.

Since her recruitment, she had confessed to Programmers of a vague and undefinable feeling of discomfort. Mind-wipes and shock therapy have been largely ineffective; cultural memory runs deeper than programming. Her discomfort stems from an unconscious aversion to the Nazi-like overtones of her Convention.

Image: Though in her thirties, she maintains the enthusiasm, habits, and pimples of her grad student days. Her mousy brown hair (a wig) is parted down the middle, and frequently falls into spectacled gray eyes. In her cover occupation at the hospital, she wears skirts and sweaters under a white lab coat. It is not uncommon for her to carry around her uniform and biomechanical instruments in a nylon backpack. During requisite visits to the Institute, she appears out-of-place and uncomfortable with her uniform and taser.

Roleplaying Hints: You are pragmatic and blunt in your evaluation of people. Yet more often than not, a benevolent streak shows through. This is more noticeable outside the power-politics of your Convention. Speak enthusiastically about your contribution towards creating a New Humanity. With one hand, pretend to push hair out of your eyes; with the other, punctuate your words with gestures. You are fascinated with mechanical devices of all kinds, and can become lost in studying them intently. Persistently criticize any flaw in workmanship.

Devices: To assist in surgery and the fine-tuning of biomechanisms, Zimmermann has a set of Microtools. See "Devices: Technocratic Talismans" in Disk Three.

IOIIIOOOIO (Tecson)

Essence: Questing
Nature: Architect
Demeanor: Director
Methodology: Time-Motion Managers
Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3
Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 1
Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 4
Talents: Alertness 4, Awareness 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 2, Intimidation 5, Intuition 1, Subterfuge 2
Skills: Drive 1, Etiquette 1, Firearms 3, Leadership 2, Technology 3
Knowledges: Computer 3, Cosmology 3 (Digital Enhancement), Culture 1, Linguistics 1
Spheres: Correspondence 1, Forces 4, Matter 5, Mind 4, Prime 3, Time 1
Backgrounds: Allies 2 (two HIT Marks), Arcane 3, Library 2 (CD-ROM Database).
Willpower: 8
Arete: 5
Quintessence: 5
Paradox: 4 (Due to a permanent Paradox effect, all inanimate matter which Tecson touches with his natural hand transmogrifies to living flesh.)

Background: In 1982, Tecson was an ambitious, eager-to-please, manager of a Detroit auto manufacturing plant. His suggestions to improve efficiency were surprisingly accepted by upper management. By the end of the year, over a thousand workers were replaced by high-speed welding robots. Unfortunately, the remaining workers were unable to keep pace with the robots, especially since they had to double as maintenance. Efficiency and morale declined, the union went on strike, and the plant was shut down. The blame fell on Tecson's inability to make the situation work.

Out of a job but unwilling to go on social assistance, he worked a succession of petty jobs. Eventually, he found himself at Duplex Assembly. He gained respect among the Kamrads by being diligent and obedient, and by uncovering a disrupter (actually a Euthanatos mage trying to sabotage the Construct). During an intense interview with Decillion, Tecson's Avatar Awakened. When the Institute's previous Programmer defected to the Traditions, Tecson became his replacement.

Image: A stout Asian man with one cybernetic eye and a biomechanical arm. These implants are rather vulgar and attract Paradox whenever he leaves the Realm. The organic eye is perpetually bloodshot from a reaction to his contact lens (he is attempting to earn a second biomechanical eye).

Though he is the manager of Duplex Assembly, Tecson is never seen by the workers. He communicates with them via a false video image and speaker system. Two HIT Marks always accompany Tecson, serving as bodyguards and companions.

Roleplaying Hints: You oversee the Institute with an iron fist and a precision chronograph. As you see it, your duty is to quickly and efficiently construct tools for the Technocracy, including new mages. Quality control is very important, so you are harsh with inspections; recast or discard those failing to meet your high standards.

In truth, your critical nature stems from an appreciation of force and a feeling of frustrated ambition due to a weak Avatar. So you transfer this upon those beneath your rank, especially on mages who show promise.

Tecson prefers to communicate via microwave transmission. When speech is necessary, use the fewest words possible to get your point across.

Devices: Tecson's most obvious implants are his pneumatic arm and sensor eye. The arm is described under "Devices" in Disk Three. His apertured eye (•) is wired with a rank one Entropy Effect, allowing it to perceive physical weaknesses in the patterns of objects or people.

For a recent mission to San Francisco, Tecson was issued a Digital Enhancement programmed with Cosmology. Such knowledge is usually beyond computerized simulation; the Convention forcibly extracted the experience from a captured Dreamspeaker.

IIIOOIOIOO (William Smith)

Essence: Dynamic
Nature: Survivor
Demeanor: Loner
Methodology: Time-Motion Managers
Physical: Strength 1, Dexterity 1, Stamina 2
Social: Charisma 1, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2
Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 3
Talents: Alertness 2, Brawl 2, Subterfuge 1
Skills: Firearms 1, Meditation 3, Research 2, Technology 3
Knowledges: Computer 2, Engineering 3, Enigmas 2, Physics 3, Tradition Lore 3
Spheres: Forces 3, Prime 2, Time 1
**Backgrounds:** Mentor 5
Willpower: 5
Arete: 3
Quintessence: 0
Paradox: 1

Background: William Smith was born to an upper middle class family in Flint, Michigan. Due to the thalidomide sedative Amanda Smith took while pregnant, her third child was born with stunted arms and legs. Subconsciously guilty, she smothered him with concern and overprotectiveness. This is exactly what "Little Billy" would grow to resent. His handicap planted a germ of stubborn independence and self-sufficiency.

Unable to participate in other childhood activities, William concentrated on things he could do well and on his own — reading, learning and thinking. He took particular interest in construction, as his father was an architect.

Post secondary education provided the perfect opportunity for independence. After much argument with his parents, William enrolled in a civil engineering course at Michigan State. To be closer to the university (and get out of the house), he moved into his girlfriend's apartment in Detroit.
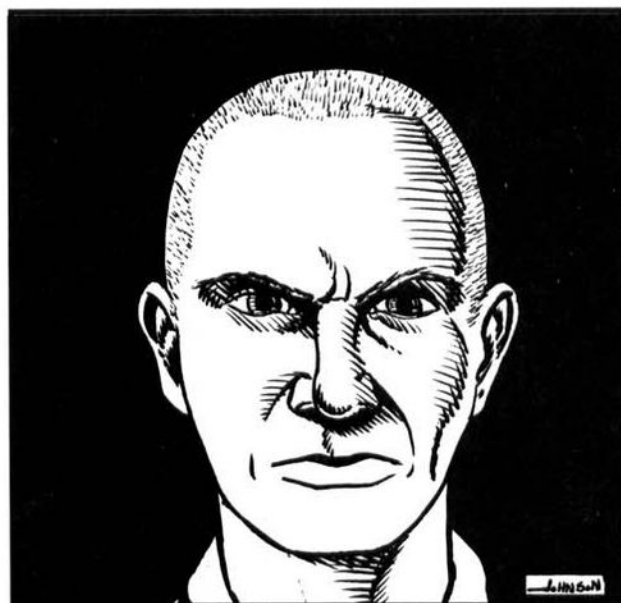
William has since graduated, parted with his girlfriend, and moved back in with his parents. There are simply too many things he is unable to do by himself. He has lived this helpless existence for fifteen years. The only consolation is his career as a freelance civil engineer. Even here, many contractors didn't believe he could do the job. This is where Iteration X stepped in and offered to provide the independence and self-esteem he so greatly desired.

The rest of William Smith's background can be found in Disk One. As of yet, his treachery remains undiscovered; the Construct leaders know, however, that something odd occurred in Graylock Chantry. Decillion has decided to keep him at the Institute for further observation and reprogramming.

Image: A man in his early thirties. Rusty stubble pokes defiantly through his pale, shaven scalp. His eyes are an intense green-blue. Because of the thalidomide his mother took while pregnant, William was born with under-developed arms and legs. He is confined to a motorized wheelchair. His Avatar takes on the form of childhood tormentors, which criticize "Little Billy" into either action or submission.

Roleplaying Hints: For as long as you can remember, you have wanted more independence than your condition would allow. Now Iteration X has given you the means of being self-sufficient and superior to those who once pitied you. You secretly revel in your newfound power. You also harbor a hatred for Progenitors, whose imperfection was responsible for the thalidomide disaster.

Such feelings conflict with the Convention's dictate of self control. You work hard at conforming — to do otherwise would jeopardize the freedom you have gained through the Cybertank. Though there is a gap in your short-term memory, you suspect you have failed before and have received a final warning.

Device: 1110010100 has been issued a single potent Device, a Cybertank. See "Devices" in Disk Three.

Cyberfascists

Nature: Bravo

Demeanor: Conformist

Attributes: Assume ratings of 2, except for Physical Traits, with ratings of 3

Talents: Alertness 2, Athletics 1, Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Intimidation 3, Streetwise 2
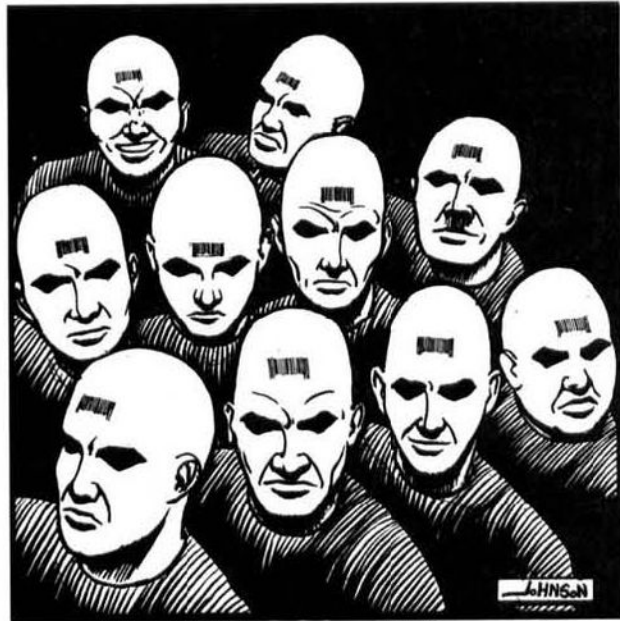
Skills: Drive 1, Firearms 3, Melee 2, Stealth 1, Technology 2

Knowledges: Computer 1, (sub)Culture 1, Investigation 1

Willpower: 3

Background: These Kamrads hail from a variety of dysfunctional backgrounds. Each has his own reason for joining the paramilitary "gang" called Iteration X. Each is assigned a binary number — 1 (one), 10, 11, 100, 101, 110, 111, 1000, 1001, 1010 (ten).

Image: Ten tough-looking Caucasian men, from mid-teens to late twenties. Like any gang, there is a measure of uniformity. They are all bald with a bar-code stamped across their foreheads. They all dress in the Convention uniform and have access to an assortment of weapons (from chains to pistols). Though one Progenitor wiseguy dubbed these Kamrads "Cyberfascists," their official title is "Work Force One." They take great pride in this title, and may attack anyone who refers to them in any other way.

Roleplaying Hints: All of the cyberfascists are conformists, loaded with hate. Sapped of self-motivation, they are totally obedient to the cause and susceptible to magick. Typically, they will surround an individual or small group. As a prelude to the beating, one Kamrad will taunt and bully while the others watch and cheer. They are unused to concerted resistance and will retreat in such an instance.

Maintenance Robots

The Institute employs twelve robots for general maintenance and service. They range from roving recorders (see Disk Three) to automated vaccums to the following specimen, which performs large-scale repairs.

This robot vaguely resembles a chrome scorpion. It consists of three overhanging "arms" mounted on a low, narrow platform. The right arm ends in a multipurpose manipulator, while the left can be fitted with an arc welder, drill, or other tool. The central "arm" mounts a sensor eye. It has no core intelligence, but is controlled by the central computer. Thus, it is difficult to destroy.

Four of these robots patrol the corridors, looking for things in need of repair. This includes unsupervised intruders.

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

Mental: Perception 1, Intelligence 2, Wits 5

Talents: Alertness 2, Brawl 3

Skill: Drive (self) 1, Maintenance 3, Technology 3

Willpower: 0

Paradox: 0

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, OK, -1, Destroyed.

Armor Rating: 2

Attacks: Smash or Grab (difficulty 6, damage 2); Drill (difficulty 6, damage 4); Propane Torch (difficulty 6, damage as per fire; p. 249 of **Mage**); Arc Welder (use taser stats).

Innate Countermagick: Covered in a layer of magickal alloy, Primium, these robots receive two free dice of countermagick.

Nodes

When originally constructed, the Institute was supplied with Quintessence from the prison-Construct MECHA (see **The Book of Chantries**). Decillion has since introduced new sources of Quintessence. He hopes to eventually wean his Construct from MECHA's influence. All Quintessence is stored in a battery in the Construct's power station.

Duplex Assembly Line: Though the assembly line does not produce anything of material worth, it has a function beyond sapping workers of free-will: the harnesses convert the life-force of repetitive motion to small quantities of stable Quintessence.

Prosthetics: Inspired by life-tapping artificial hearts used by another Construct, Zimmermann has introduced an ambitious program. Each prosthesis she outfits her patients with has an integrated Quintessence siphon. The siphon takes advantage of the phantom limb phenomena, where Quintessence continues to flow through an entire life Pattern even though the corporeal part no longer exists. Tapped Quintessence reaches the Institute via sub-spatial vortices.

Unfortunately, this source is less than reliable. Flow fluctuates depending on distance of the host from the Construct. Worse still, the system is prone to discovery by enemy mages.

Graylock Chantry: This Chantry was located in the Taconic mountains east of Albany, N.Y. (though actually within Massachusetts). The Node which supplied the Sons of Ether is in the process of being sanitized, and the mansion is being torn down and replaced by a state penitentiary. If Decillion wins the bid for Graylock Node, the Institute will enter a Summer phase.

The Horizon Realm

Basic Concept

Striders of the Umbra know of a huge square window lodged in the Horizon, resembling a television monitor with a snowy picture. Those who approach it find their hair standing on end, their clothes clinging, and their senses overcome by the white noise of static. At least one curious Dreamspeaker has pressed her hands against the "glass," fallen through, and has never been seen again.

Environment

As a Horizon Realm for a Technocratic Construct, this Static Land of Force and Prime was carefully designed for two purposes. First, its obscuring "snow" allows Technomancers to effectively dismiss the Spirit Realm, but still benefit from a Horizon Realm's

magickal parameters. In fact, most Technomancers do not understand the metaphysics behind Horizon Realms; they assume that they are analogous to the Digital Web.

At the same time, the static screen keeps out Umbrood and mages. An intruder must achieve 20 successes on an extended Wits + Intuition roll (or successfully use Correspondence magick) to reach any single destination. Due to the overpowering static, all sense-related rolls (including combat and Correspondence sensing) are at +4 difficulty.

Denizens of the Realm

The Static Land is a hostile environment to Umbrood, and thus uninhabited.

Other Details

Magical Ratings: Entropy -1, Forces +3, Prime +3, Spirit -1, Time +1.

Construct Description

Duplex Assembly/Recycling

Located in downtown Detroit, the Construct's earthly aspect is a deep and narrow building built in 1911. One bricked facade fronts 31st Street, just north of Michigan Avenue; the other side faces 32nd Street. With different signs above each entrance — Duplex Assembly, Duplex Recycling — it seems to be two separate buildings.

Indeed, the interior is divided in half. Each side is almost a mirror image. Decoration is done in neo-drab: brick walls, cement floor (which leach heat from anything in contact); the high-tech computers and machinery are colored an off-white. The air is always dry. Both ends of a curved conveyer belt disappear into the back wall. Beside the belt, a metal door provides access to the manager's office. Though this manager is never seen in the flesh, he communicates via a video monitor and speaker system.

Duplex Assembly employs a gang of paramilitary Kamrads who have live-in quarters. Every day, the drill is identical. After punching timecards at 9:00, they strap into harnesses and begin work at the belt. There they fit a plastic insert into a metal box. Over and over. The components march endlessly by on the belt. The finished product — whatever it is — is conveyed into the wall. Their shift ends at 5:00, when they punch out.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the wall, workers at Duplex Recycling are busy disassembling the very same products. These employees work part-time, and tend to be mundanes who would not fit in with the cyberfascists. Many are students who all coincidentally have an interest in technical or scientific fields. One seventy-year-old man was a member of the SS during WWII.

Though this assembly/disassembly process seems futile, Iteration X abhors waste. The assembly line saps will and teaches conformity. The harnesses are actually Quintessence collectors (see "Nodes," above).

Map by Brian J. Blume
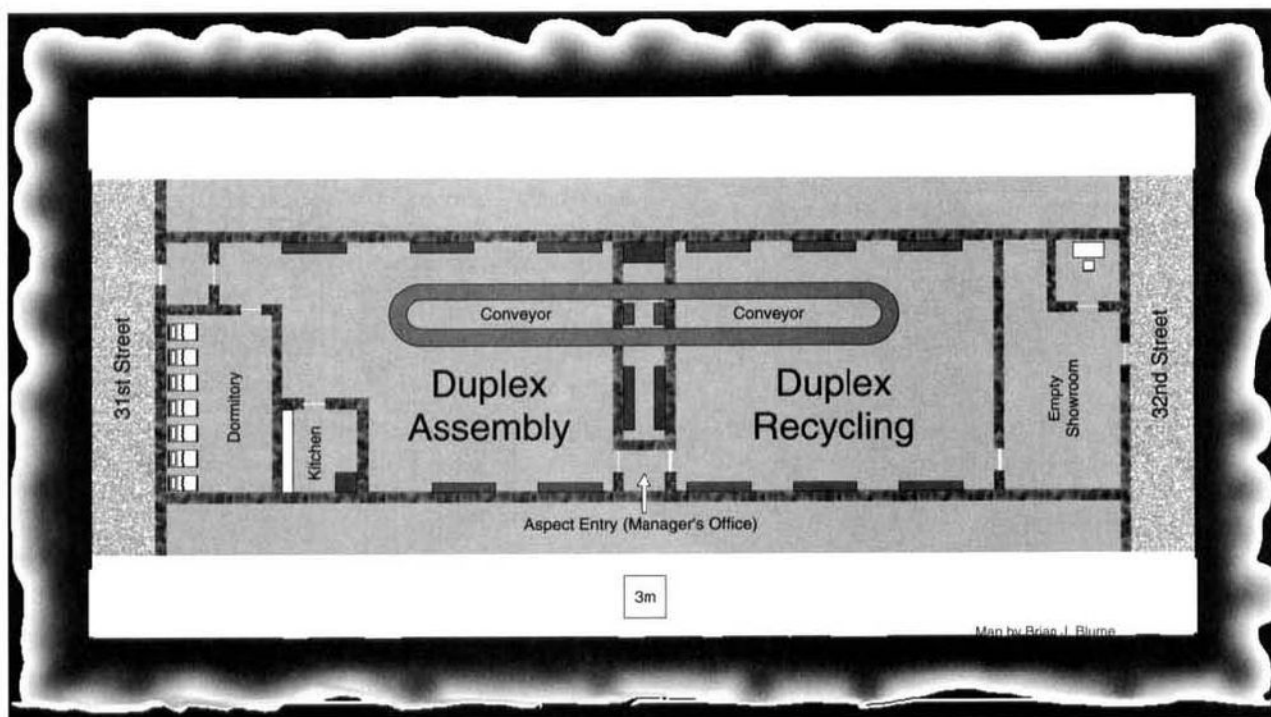
The premises are protected by the advanced security systems, including electronic locks and cameras. To exit or enter the building, workers must buzz at the door.

Acme Pyrotechnic Institute

The Construct's exterior is obscured by the snowy atmosphere of the Static Land. The interior is a labyrinth of steel corridors and spartan cells. Most rooms have computer consoles. Besides blinking buttons and computer screens, static-filled monitors provide the sole form of illumination — a soft, fuzzy light. These are actually bulletproof windows providing a view of the Static Land.

The security system is even better than the earthly aspect suggests, with electronic locks, I.D. scanners, blast-proof doors, automated lasers, and access codes to the computer system. The Institute has direct sub-spatial communications to many other Constructs, including Autochthonia and MECHA.

Aspect Entry: The main entry is from Duplex Assembly/ Recycling. Either manager's door slides open into a small room with another exit opposite. The door closes behind, and a lengthy scanning process begins (which, as Zimmermann has discovered, causes cancer). If the person is cleared, the opposite door opens into the Construct (this is a magickal portal; the door can also open into the other half of the Duplex building).

Manager's Office: This room contains a metal desk, two chairs, and shelf unit for three-ring binders and computer paper. Nine monitors are set into one wall in a tic-tac-toe pattern. Eight of these can be tuned to mundane television stations or the Construct's security cameras. The central monitor accesses the Construct's computer systems.

Decillion uses this room when meeting with other Technocrats or interviewing a potential Cipher. Otherwise, Tecson manages the affairs of Duplex from here.
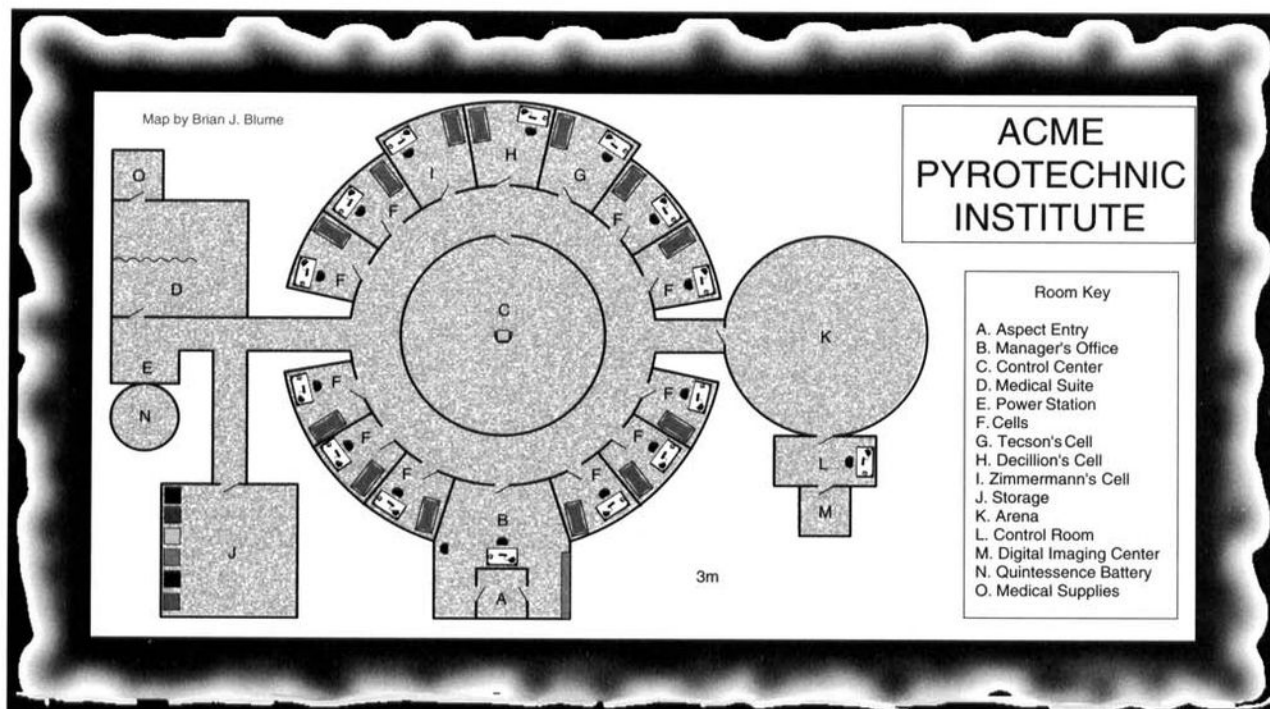
Control Center: The circular wall of this chamber is one huge monitor. It can be divided into an infinite number of smaller monitors. Used singly, it provides a surround-sight, first-person perspective of any environment. Decillion alternately uses it as a planetarium, a battlefield simulator, or a sensory visitation portal into the Digital Web.

A command chair is set dead-center of the room. This Device is attuned to Decillion. When sitting in it, he can mentally communicate with the Construct's computer system.

The Construct's central computer is housed beneath the floor of this room. Removable hatches provide access.

Medical Suite: When present in the Institute, Zimmermann can usually be found in this chamber. She keeps the place extremely organized, even by Iteration X standards. One half of the room is a pristine workshop and laboratory devoted to the study of biomechanics. The other half is for surgery. Every six months, Iterators must undergo a diagnostic check-up to ensure that DEI and biomechanisms are functioning correctly. The stock shelves also hold a supply of mundane medical supplies.

Power Station: Behind this wall is the Construct's Quintessence battery. Though most of the energy is needed to maintain the Horizon Realm, a small surplus can be tapped for powering Devices. Zimmermann sets the access code and is in charge of rationing Quintessence. In emergencies, Decillion can override the fail-safe.

Map by Brian J. Blume

ACME PYROTECHNIC INSTITUTE

Room Key

A. Aspect Entry
B. Manager's Office
C. Control Center
D. Medical Suite
E. Power Station
F. Cells
G. Tecson's Cell
H. Decillion's Cell
I. Zimmermann's Cell
J. Storage
K. Arena
L. Control Room
M. Digital Imaging Center
N. Quintessence Battery
O. Medical Supplies

3m

Cells: These spartan cells contain only a cot, a computer console, and recessed drawers. Meals are served through an automated hatch, which combines the functions of pantry, microwave oven and server. Three cells are reserved for the Institute's resident mages. The remaining ten are for Ciphers. Though such a mass-Deciphering has yet to occur, all Institutes are constructed from an ideal model.

Storage: When not in operation, twelve maintenance robots store themselves here. Along one wall are stacked polyethyline crate containing general supplies — toolkits, safety goggles, food-trays (marked "Progenitor Produce; 100% simulated"), and standard issue tasers. The bank of recessed drawers set into another wall contain holocubes, all carefully categorized.

Arena: Here, Ciphers learn armed combat. The walls are reinforced with steel, concrete, and a thin layer of Primium (to contain stray magick). Sprinkler systems are set into the domed ceiling. A variety of weaponry is stored behind removable wall panels. The Arena is also equipped with low-intensity lasers and a digital sound sytem which can simulate a combat environment. Smith's exoskeleton stands silent just inside the door. Tecson can often be found here sparring with his HIT Marks.

Digital Imaging Chamber: The Digital Imaging Chamber is a cubic room, three meters to a side. Anything (or anyone) standing within is run through various scans and reduced to a digital format. This data can then be transmitted via microwaves to similar chambers in Autochthonia, MECHA, or the Presidio CPU. The chamber can also be configured for holistic immersion into the Digital Web.

The entire process takes two minutes and has a 1.845% chance of deadly error, so the Chamber is not used casually.

Tecson is currently experimenting with a filter subroutine which should reduce error. He also theorizes that it could be used to heal organics or purify matter (so far, he has been unable to turn lead into gold).

Purpose

The Construct has one purpose: to create obedient and efficient Technocrats. The facilities can also be used to condition Kamrads, interrogate prisoners, or prepare minds for transplanting into HIT Marks.

History

Acme Pyrotechnic Institute has a relatively short and uneventful history, and that is how the Convention likes it. In the late 1960s, Iteration X calculated that a new programming center was necessary.

It has long been proven that the most efficient programming is achieved in an enclosed environment, isolated from the diversions of an imperfect world. Iteration X took this idea from Hermetic Covenants of the Dark Ages, but replaced the inefficient method of apprenticeship with one which could handle many students at a time.

Constructors decided to build a Horizon Realm. Stringing mystic powerlines from MECHA, they shaped the Realm and a set down a prefabricated Construct. Meanwhile, a front-company named Duplex had bought a building in Detroit. The final task involved connecting the Construct to its earthly aspect.

On 6 August 1971, construction was finished. Several proven Technomancers (such as Decillion) were assigned to Acme Pyrotechnic Institute. Since then, the Institute has produced a half-dozen Technomancers. Projected quotas look good all the way up until Ascension.

Construct Inhabitants

Decillion, Tecson and Zimmerman each have their own spartan quarters within the Construct, though the latter rarely stays for any length of time. There are ten cells for Ciphers. William Smith resides in one.

In addition to the mortals, the Construct's inhabitants include Tecson's two HIT Mark bodyguards and a dozen maintenance robots. These latter machines are multisensory, mobile, and controlled by the central computer.

Internal Structure and Relations

Like all of Iteration X, the Institute is organized by a rigid chain of command. Decillion receives orders directly from Autochtonia, but is otherwise the supreme authority. Zimmermann and Tecson are technically equal. However, the former's background as BioMechanic (a prestigious Methodology) gives her precedence in any conflict. At the same time, Tecson has total control over the learning and lives of Ciphers placed in under his command. He is also responsible for managing the Kamrads.

The computers, security systems, and robots are programmed to obey everyone in the Construct. However, a fail-safe subroutine allows them to be overridden by Decillion.

External Relations

The Institute coordinates with other Constructs when it requires a trial ground for the Assay of a Cipher. Thrust into the Ascension War, the Cipher is monitored to see how his programming holds up in the field.

Otherwise, the Institute maintains a low profile.

Status and Reputation

Most of the Institute's status is gained through its association with Decillion. Still, the Construct has gained a reputation during its short existence for turning out competent Technocrats (six of them to be exact). This reputation may fluctuate; accomplishments and failures of "graduates" will certainly reflect upon the Institute.

An indication of the Construct's position may be found in the following fact: one of its members, Tecson, was chosen to represent Iteration X at an emergency Symposium held in San Francisco. Then again, this may not mean much; some claim that the threat of an "unraveling of reality" was not taken seriously.

Few Tradition mages know of the Institute. Those who do will insist that its apparent lack of defense is a facade.

Status: 2
Reputation: 2

Policy Regarding Outsiders

The Institute has strict rules against admitting outsiders, even Technocrats. Visitors must undergo sensor scans for hidden weapons and subversive intentions. They are left waiting while identities are confirmed and profiles checked. If Decillion (after contacting Autochthonia) gives final affirmation, they may enter. Upon leaving, visitors are subjected to another series of scans to prevent theft (!) of material or secrets. Sometimes a selective mind-wipe is deemed necessary. Some agents of the New World Order actually enjoy this bureaucratic hassle. Most Technocrats, however, prefer to communicate via phone.

Needless to say, Tradition mages are attacked on sight, then interrogated if they survive.

Allies and Enemies

The half-dozen mages who have survived the Institute feel a strange loyalty to the place — perhaps this is another layer of subliminal programming. The same can be said for the sixty or so mages Decillion has personally taught, though not all are still active. Unless directives conflict, they will provided assistance.

Indirectly involved in the Ascension War, the Construct has few personal enemies. One is the sole survivor of Graylock Chantry, Dr. Van Baas. Other enemies include the Resurrection Men. Based in Windsor, Ontario, this mixed cabal of Euthanatos and Dreamspeakers converse with spirits of the dead. They have lost two members to the Institute.

Research Capacities

Thanks to digital electronics, the Institute's massive computer banks can generate, process, store and transmit vast amounts of data — including text, sound and images. More information can be stored on holocubes — synthetic crystals laser-stamped with digital data.

The database includes teaching tools such as AESs (Advanced Expert Systems), interactive video, lengthy files on procedure, and instruction about the proper use of technology. (Research rolls are difficulty 5 when dealing with Science, Computer or Technology.) Decillion keeps detailed files on hundreds of Sleepers who have the potential to be mages. Each profile is run though multiple simulations to determine suitability and potential — all before recruitment is even considered.

Zimmermann's surgery doubles as an inadequate lab. However, experimentation is limited to biomechanics.

Documentation

Technomancer's Lexicon

Amalgam — Cabal.

Apparatus — Magickal Focus.

Armature — Roughly analogous to Traditional Fellow (see "Structure" in Disk Two).

Artificers — Early (pre-1900) name for Iteration X.

Assay — The trial which a Cipher must pass before gaining the status of Fellow (a true mage).

Big Machine — Iteration X's term for Reality.

BioMechanics — A Methodology of Iteration X which works with special Devices known as biomechanisms (see Disk Two).

Biomechanics — The study of biomechanisms.

Biomechanisms — Devices which are designed to be permanently attached to one's body; a magickal prosthesis or cybernetic. Examples can be found in Disk Three.

Cipher — A Technomancer-in-training; an Apprentice.

Comptroller — Roughly analogous to a Tradition Deacon (see "Structure" in Disk Two).

Construct — Chantry.

Convention — Tradition.

DEI — Digital Enhancement Implant. A Biomechanism which increases mnemonic and logic functions of a mages mind. See Disk Three.

Device — A Technocratic Talisman.

Digital Web — A virtual reality realm described in the **Mage** sourcebook of the same name. Also called the Net.

Iterator — A member of Iteration X.

Kamrad — UnAwakened member of Iteration X (see "Structure" in Disk Two).

Methodology — A subgroup within a Convention, with specific interests and skills.

Mundane — A single Sleeper (q.v. The Masses).

Programmer — Roughly analogous to a Traditional Pedagogue (see "Structure" in Disk Two).

Statisticians — A Methodology of Iteration X whose members excel at manipulating data (see Disk Two).

The Masses — Sleepers in general (q.v. Mundane).

Time-Motion Managers — A Methodology of Iteration X concerned with efficiency and manufacturing (see Disk Two).

Suggested Immersion

You won't find many useful references about robotics (HIT Mark caliber, anyway), biomechanisms, or mind-machine merging. However, the following sources provide a general tone for Technocracy:

• As the dedication suggests, anything by Harlan Ellison. A good start would be "Knox," "I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream," and "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman," all contained in *The Essential Ellison* (Morpheus International, 1993).

• Noem Chomsky's *Manufacturing Consent* describes how American society has been conditioned by an elite. I also suggest a watchable documentary entitled *Manufacturing Consent: Noem Chomsky and the Media* (a Necessary Illusions/National Film Board of Canada co-production, 1992).

• Take the **Mage** bibliography to heart and read Neil Postman's *Technopoly*.

• For visual reference, watch George Lucas's classic *THX-1138*. The setting is a classic Construct of Iteration X.

Strangely (or perhaps not so strangely), I went frantic trying to getting hold of these sources. Only the largest bookstore in the entire city carried Ellison's work! The Chomsky documentary was "rented by another gentleman just a minute ago." *Technopoly* was so "popular on campus" I had to reserve it a month ahead. And the Lucas movie? It had to be specially ordered. Twice! Coincidence? Nope. I think they're banned by the Technocracy. How and why was I allowed to finally obtain them? I'm not sure I want an answer to that one....

Other useful sources include:

• Both *Terminator* movies, *Robocop* I and II (ignore III), and *Hardware* (an Iteration X prototype gone mad).

• Daniel Burrus's *Technotrends* (HarperBusiness, 1993). This book describes the applications of twenty core technologies which will shape our future. A good start for more in-depth research.

• For the core of Iteration X's philosophy (and a liberal education) read Sun Tzu's *Art of War*, The *Analects* of Confucius, and Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching*. All are widely available.

• Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* describes a world where the Technocracy has won the Ascension War. It provides some good ideas for Progenitors.

Metric to Imperial Conversion

The first half of this book uses metric measurement, one of Iteration X's advances which received a less than enthusiastic response from the Masses. Here are some conversion rules:

1 millimeter (mm) = 0.04 inches (caliber)
1 centimeter (cm) = 0.39 inches
1 meter (m) = 3.28 feet (roughly, 1 meter = 1 yard)
1 kilometer (km) = 0.62 miles
1 kilogram (kg) = 2.20 pounds

To convert Celsius to Fahrenheit, multiply by 1.8 and add 32

TECHNOCRACY: N.W.O.

We Hold the Keys to the Future

DEATH

Knight of Pattern

THE DEVIL

King of Pattern

Queen of Pattern

THE MAGE

THE TOWER

LUNA

By Brian Campbell

Credits

Special Thanks To:

SCANNED BY
SG <:B~

Author's Dedication:
Dedicated to the memory of Phillip K. Dick, a man who had the vision to show us alternatives to reality...

And to Number 6, for obvious reasons.

TECHNOCRACY: N.W.O.

Table of Contents

File One: This is Only a Test

*There's a war out there, old friend, a world war,
and it's not about who's got the most bullets; it's
about who controls the information — what we see
and hear, how we work, what we think. It's all about
the information.*
— Cosmo, *Sneakers*

JoHNSoN
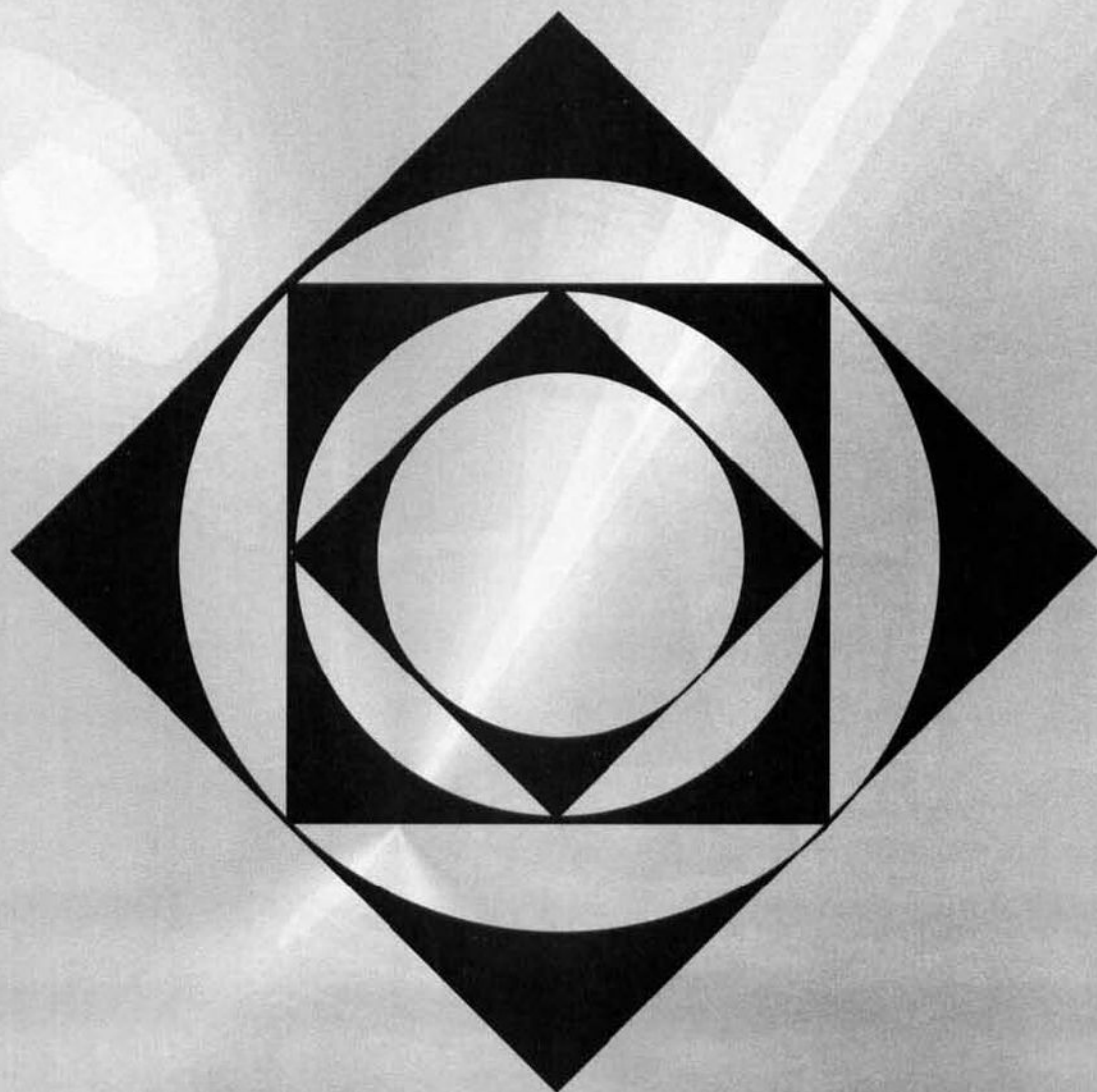
Chapter One:
Inner
Illuminations

Personal Correspondence

Try to work magic, not havoc.
— "Uncle Bob," *La Femme Nikita*

To: Roland Cassault, #AT13
From: Gene, #AT422
Re: Quarantine

Okay, Roland, I'm ready.

They sealed the doors ten minutes ago. The Gengineers gave me a good once-over and confirmed it: I'm going to have to stay in isolation for about two weeks. The raid would have gone perfectly if that *thing* hadn't bitten me.

I really didn't think the Euthanatos mage would have bodyguards. There were three of them, and they put up a hell of a fight. We're pretty sure they're lycanthropes, but apparently their genetic stock derives from rats, not wolves. The doctors stitched up the bite in my shoulder, but they want to make sure there's nothing contagious in my system. The medics were scared of something, but they won't tell me what it is. I haven't seen a human being who wasn't in a biohazard suit for about two days now. The whole thing's still giving me nightmares.

I really appreciate you taking the time to tutor me like this. I've gotten approval from Dan Smith over in Analysis. If they do decide to promote me to training, they'll be able to test me out of some of the classes.

Let me know when you're ready. I'll be waiting.

To: Gene, #AT422
From: Roland
Re: Square One

The payment schedule just came through, so I can start the lessons tomorrow.

As you may have expected, the Euthanatos was DOA. He screamed the usual stuff about reincarnation and revenge before he tore open his chest. Some of the Watchers managed to capture most of his testimony on video. It's good stuff. Apparently, they're already talking about doctoring his testimony a bit. Showing a death cultist committing suicide out of guilt makes for good propaganda material. They're having a field day.

The others are in still in custody, and our agent's being debriefed. I don't think any of them figured out who our plant was. The Euthanatos was coming under a lot of suspicion until we showed the rest of the Chantry the suicide footage. :-)

The Hermes mage is the worst one to deal with. Mr. Smith is showing his usual sense of humor in the interrogation. The wiring in the subject's cortex is altering his thought and speech patterns. He keeps trying to scream out spells, and they keep coming out in pig latin! Gee, now he doesn't have that arrogant sneer anymore...

I've got some bad news, though. Hernando didn't pull through. The anachronism he was fighting let off some kind of vulgar fire spell. The effect was shaped like an elemental, and it tortured Hernando for about two minutes as it was killing him. I've heard that fire's one of the worst ways to go. I hope that Hermes freak suffers after pulling that on one of ours.

I'll send you an address today so you can do an FTP on the history database. I'd like you to access some of Terrance Whyte's lectures on the history of the Technocracy. His stuff's a bit biased, but it's a good starting place.

The going-away party they gave me at the University was really impressive. I've still got sand in my shoes from dancing on the beach. I'm going to miss my old apartment, but the room situation's taken care of here. Some people in Admin are programming my vid-wall with some pictures of the ocean. It's not the same as working on the beach, but it's quite nice.

Hope you enjoy your stay in the Northern California Security Collective...

To: Gene, #AT422

From: Alexandra Takahashi, #AT333

Re: Hello from the Depths!

I hope this message gets to you. I sent off some e-mail and confirmed things with the ComLog people on your station. We're about two days beyond the Horizon now, and we're beaming encrypted transmissions by laser. They've allowed us some bandwidth for personal correspondence.

I heard you got chewed up a bit on your last raid. Everything okay?

My mission's got me a bit worried. I'm stuck here with an amalgam of Void Engineers. The rumors are true: the Voids are really dull. I'm sick of looking at their damned orange jumpsuits all the time. Two more weeks until we get to the Research Collective, and I'm still not sure what we're going to find.

I can't believe that you actually put in for another tour of duty on the front lines. Are you really still so naive at your age? How old are you anyway? :-)

I can't wait until I get back. It sounds like I'm going to get some leave to go visit my old home town. Of course, I won't be allowed to visit any of the people from my oldlife, but I guess that's just part of the War.

And right before I leave for home, I'm going to stop by and visit you... and pry you away from that computer screen... and teach you how to relax... <wicked grin>

Type at ya later!

Love,

Sandi

To: Sandi

From: Gene

Re: Age

Um... Sandi, about acting my age and being naive... well, age is kind of different for you than it is for me. Yes, biologically I'm 21. That's not how old I am, though. I thought you knew I'm a construct. Chronologically, I'm about three years old.

I didn't train with the naturals. Most of my training came from sleepteaching and one of the camps in the Horizon Realms. I'm not like you. I don't like spending time outside my job, and I don't know of any life other than working in the Technocracy.

Does it bother you having an "oldlife?" I can see that maybe it isn't as efficient. I was gengineered for my career before I was even born. How do you join the Technocracy if you're not a genetic construct?

Recruitment

To: Roland Cassault

From: Gene

Re: Childhood's End

I was just talking with a friend of mine about her life before training. Maybe if I'm going to work with the other Methodologies more after my promotion, I should understand them a little better. My perspective of the whole thing is a little skewed. The only time I've spent among naturals has been on patrol. What was your oldlife like?

Oh, I took your advice. They've requisitioned the sleeping pills for me, so the nightmares have subsided a bit. Now if I could just get some of that Alliance Vodka...

The Ivory Tower

To: Gene

From: Roland

Re: Recruitment

No life before recruitment, huh? Spoken like a true Man in Black. Or are you taking that promotion after all? I really think Mr. Smith wants to put you on a gray mission fairly soon. You'd be a fool to turn it down.

I've had this conversation with constructs before. I don't think about my oldlife much anymore. I'm usually too busy working to worry about it. Some people have trouble forgetting, but fortunately we have reprogramming methods to take care of that sort of thing. As far as the university is concerned, I'm taking some time off from classes.

Recruitment is a little different for Operatives than it is in the Ivory Tower. Before joining the Union, I spent a lot of time in training, but I also had a life outside of it. Now that I'm involved with the war effort, I don't have time for that anymore. There are more important things.

When I was growing up, I always did well in my classes. Too well, in fact. Periodically, we would have achievement tests in class. The whole process of testing in Sleeper society allows educators to measure the progress of their students. Our Methodology assesses the information as well, and we can use the data to predict which students are particularly promising. Some of the brightest are isolated in "special programs" where we can keep tabs on them. I was processed right along with the rest of them.

By the time I got to college, I was ready to take on the curriculum required for my degree in history. It isn't terribly difficult for the Ivory Tower to plant sympathizers in a university. In fact, university systems are among the best places for the Technocracy to recruit. After all, we can falsify computer records, identification, recommendations… just about anything. The sympathizer who spotted me in UC Berkeley realized I had potential, so by the time I was ready for graduate school, he was ready to recruit me.

The tricks and techniques I learned in academia prepared me perfectly for life in the Methodology of the Ivory Tower. I can work bureaucracy to my advantage, adjust citations to fit any given thesis, research and investigate any given topic to produce a result I want, or take a room full of individuals and lead them to the same conclusions. I just happen to be better with the process than Sleepers are.

So you see, I didn't find the Technocracy. It found me. My life's highly structured to maximize my contribution to the war effort — but then again, academia's always structured my life. Academia *is* my whole life…

The Watchers

To: Gene
From: Alexandra
Re: Are you insane?

I really don't see how you can watch those entertainment files day after day. Maybe I should clue you in on which ones are propaganda. Well, actually, to some degree all of them are… :-)

My parents watched that stuff, too, just like most Sleepers. I guess you constructs wouldn't know… most Sleepers watch at least six or seven hours of television a day. It's part of their daily processing. In fact, a Sleeper will often volunteer for processing this way. We don't need "magick" to teach the Masses conformity through television; they usually do it to themselves.

Processing and Magick

The New World Order rarely uses the word "magick" to describe its activities. Magick is more than a crime — it is an obscenity. Reworking reality to fit a personal paradigm is an act of defiance against the Collective Will, as well as a means of endangering reality itself. Although some of the techniques used by Technocrats are similar to those used by Tradition mages, Technocrats describe their activities and methods differently, in order to ensure their own form of ideological correctness.

Coincidental magick is a compromise between the vulgar activities of the Traditionalists and the static reality of the Masses. Technocrats of the NWO often refer to using coincidental magick as a "process" or "procedure." A process is a set way of achieving a desired end, whether that process involves mixing a chemical formula, administering a test, interrogating a prisoner or writing propaganda. Such tasks are similar to rituals or spells used by Traditionalists; however, there is no supernatural component to a procedure. Magick is capricious, whereas procedure is precise. Magick defies reality because it is usually the act of one individual redefining reality; procedures, however, reinforce reality through repetition.

The most important process — and the most difficult one — is the act of subtly altering the opinions or even the paradigm of an individual mystick mage to conform to the party line of the Technocracy. When a mage has been Processed, with a capital "P," his paradigm no longer defies the Collective Will.

Processing reality is still risky. The more experimental or advanced a procedure gets, the more likely the chance of failure. Working on procedures far ahead of their time can be seen more as "pushing the envelope" than as "defying reality." When a procedure fails, Paradox is still Paradox. Computers crash, electrical systems surge, Sleepers become wary and communications break down. Paradox happens.

The term "Sphere" was first used by the Council of Nine as a way of coping with the philosophies of the Order of Reason. A Technocrat is said to have "influence" over, or is "influenced" by, different areas of reality. A Gray Suit interrogator, for instance, might be a master of influencing the Mind. For Traditionalists, the capacity to do this relies on an "Awakened Avatar." For Technocrats, true knowledge comes from Enlightenment. (Both share an Awakened state; the Technomancer just chooses not to believe in it.)

Because of this belief, and the subtle nature of the NWO in general, members of this Convention rarely whip off flashy vulgar Effects, even when alone. Only the most desperate circumstances warrant quick and dirty magick; most procedures take considerable amounts of time to perform. Such Effects, however, usually have coincidence on their side.

The term "vulgar" is still used to describe "dynamic" magick, usually as a colloquialism. The New World Order tends to find dynamic magick more offensive than the other Conventions do. Other Conventions tend to use "vulgar procedures" more than the New World Order. A HIT Mark, for instance, is very vulgar when he raises a chain gun out of his back and opens fire. For members of Iteration X, this is hardly considered offensive. To a Man in Black, it's extreme. Any good Black Suit knows that the threat of reprisal can be far more effective than actual mayhem. Vulgar solutions should be left to the cyborgs.

Vulgar magick used by Traditionalists is considered criminal. The act of casting vulgar magick under a Traditionalist paradigm is considered a crime against Reality. As one would expect, Mind influence allows a Technocrat to Process a criminal for his vulgar actions.

The difference between traditional magick and Technocratic procedures is more than just semantic. After all, language is a science as well, and the act of reworking language to reshape the world view of the people who use it is yet another example of Technocratic procedure...

My parents followed the usual routine: clock out at work, sit down on the couch and watch whatever the television station puts on the air. I really don't think my parents could relate to anything they didn't see on a 25-inch screen.

When your parents fall into the same boring routines every day, it's easy to become a freak. When I was young, I was amazed that watching television was "normal" and wanting to spend time reading books was "strange." Did you know that only ten percent of all adults read one book a year? I grew up on a steady diet of science fiction instead, and I developed a particular attraction to books on the supernatural.

By the time I was in college, I realized how much people's views of reality are shaped by TV. The news defines what issues are important, the "critics" tell us which movies are worthwhile, and sitcoms show people how to live their lives. It's like the Masses are taught how to play the different roles of society: roles of gender, roles of race, roles of class and so on. All around me I saw people

buying into those ideas. The worst part is, most of that type of processing doesn't result from the Technocracy. Most people just choose to be sheep.

That's why I picked up a camera. Given a choice between controlling others and being controlled, well, the choice was obvious. I think a lot of people who pick up cameras have that basic idea: "I'm not going to be like everyone else. I'm not going to do work that's like what everyone else is doing." Any new filmmaker thinks he's going to beat the system.

Whether my weapon was a vid-cam or photography, I was trying to be "experimental," "avant garde" — that sort of thing. "Kirlian" photography was one of the media I worked with. The guy who invented it thought he could use it to capture pictures of the "auras" of the people he photographed. My films usually wound up looking like bad experimental photography. I kinda had the sinking feeling that bad photography wasn't going to make for a good career, so I drifted into journalism.

And then there was my interest in the supernatural. It got worse. I wanted to prove something to the world, to show them that something really was out there.

I found it.

My first photojournalism class was deadly boring. I turned in all my regular assignments like a good little reporter, but I was really just waiting for the right story to come along. Not far from the university, up in the hills outside Santa Cruz, there was an area that was getting a lot of attention in the underground papers. A few people had reported "sightings" of things up there. Of course, since it wasn't in the mainstream media, people didn't believe it.

I was hunting around up there for a story when I had my first sighting. Maybe the Technocracy wanted me to see it. Who knows? Maybe it wasn't just coincidence that I had set up my Kirlian lenses in just the right way to catch that Void Engineer spacecraft making a covert landing. It doesn't matter. I found them. And they found me.

My particular talents and my instincts for finding supernatural activity made me a prime candidate for the Watchers Methodology. They revealed information to me I never would have discovered in college. My parents thought I dropped out of school to go freelance. My superiors thought I was too independent to work on the front lines and too valuable to let go. I think I made a damned fine career move.

Now I'm assigned to an amalgam of Void Engineers working beyond the Horizon. While you're busy tracking down Chantries and Processing criminals, I'm fighting on the other front. The Voids need assistance with surveillance, and our superiors in the New World Order need someone to act as a liaison between the Conventions, so here I am. For the next two weeks, we're going to be headed to a Research Collective beyond the Horizon.

I guess you and I will have a chance to talk — online, anyway.

Sandi

The Operatives

To: Roland
From: Gene
Re: Training

I was going to send this to a friend of mine off-base, but I'm not sure if it's too sensitive. Tell me what you think. I'd rather not send it by Mr. Smith.

Sandi,

There is a concept similar to "oldlife" among constructs. Before "I" became "myself," "I" was part of "we." When Operative constructs are trained, there is no "I" — only "we."

"We" were Black Suit Unit AT#4, gengineered at a Research Collective called EcoR. Our birthplace was in the Horizon over the coast of West Virginia. The Gengineer on duty, a Research Director named Stephen Thundran, decided to amuse himself by giving us names. #AT421 was called "Franklin"; #AT422 was called "Gene"; #AT423 was called "Hernando." We wouldn't find out our "names" until later. #AT421 through #AT4223 were still #AT4.

Sleepteaching was the earliest part of our training. We were conditioned and processed to work as a unit. Different parts of us had different specializations. #AT422 received additional training in communication skills so that we could document the actions of our amalgam.

Basic movement was the next task — something most of the naturals take for granted. In our case, we had to learn to walk before we could crawl. Even though biologically, we were eighteen years old, chronologically, we were only a few weeks old. Machines helped us learn basic motor skills. When we fell, the machines would help us up. That's when we first learned to trust the machines.

The twenty members of our unit were then sent to a Horizon Realm for military training. Under the stress of training, some of us had an easier time than others. Those among us who were Enlightened found new ways to cope with the rigors of training. Some could influence Life to heal, some were influenced by Prime to sense some of the tricks used against us, and so on. Together, we combined our talents to survive.

It was evident, however, that not all of us were Enlightened enough to reshape reality. We have since found out that not all of us do. Some agents are Enlightened, and some are just highly educated Sleepers. We never found out which among us were the constructs and which were the naturals until the last week of training in the Realm.

The last part of our training concerned equipment. Once we found out the specialties of the different components of our unit, we were assigned equipment to assist with the enhancement of our abilities.

Military training lasted for about six months. After that came spy school. Apparently, many of the techniques of teaching espionage weren't perfected until the Second World War. By the end of the century, though, the

instruction had been perfected to a science. We have the Tower to thank for that. Everyone received the basics — shadowing, interrogation, and so on. We also divided the advanced training between us to learn faster. #AT422 learned assassination techniques.

After graduation, we were assigned to field work. Unit #AT4 spent a year on the front lines as an amalgam of Men in Black. A great deal of the work is mainly concerned with having a presence in the field. The Analysts want to have a team near any given danger spot at all times. Special operations rarely involves the same kind of work twice. We've handled just about everything from abductions to cryptozoology.

Most Men in Black don't make it though their first year or two. Many eventually learn what it is to have an identity separate from the unit. Not all of them do.

The raid last week was pretty much the high point of my career. "I" had been "I" for a while, but "I" couldn't become fully "me" until then. That's why they're talking about promoting me from a Man in Black to one of the Gray Men.

I don't know, though. I like working with the amalgam too much. I think I'd rather make the move to Unit Leader than do something like infiltration work.

…what do you think, Roland? I don't know how much we're supposed to say about our training.

Oh, BTW, I've found another FTP site in the Construct database. They've got twenty episodes of an early television show called "Dragnet." Great stuff.

Security: Who's Watching You?

From: Gene
To: Sandi
Re: Chemicals

Sandi, I'm not sure I should be talking to you about this, but I'm starting to get really worried. I keep waiting for signs of the disease to show, but I don't feel any different. No one's come in to check on me. Maybe the signs of this disease aren't going to show at all. I kind of feel like I've been put on the shelf. Maybe there's some other reason they've put me in here.

While we're on the subject, why are they promoting me? I've already said that I don't want it. I'm happy with my job as it is.

Something's not making sense. I'll be honest. I'm getting a little scared. I know, I know, I should be *thinking* instead of *feeling*, but my instincts are telling me something strange is going on.

To: Gene
From: Sandi
Re: In the Dark

I know the feeling, Gene. The briefing tapes they're showing us scare the hell out of me. We think that most of the people in that D.U. Collective are dead. Something just came out of the Great Deep and got them. No transmissions

have come out of there for a while. The surveillance cameras got one shot of a technician sitting at his desk with two-foot-long scratch marks through his chest.

And here I am, armed with just a vid-cam. Ah, well. Apparently, I'm better with that than with a pulse-laser.

Hang in there. I'll be here for you if you'll be there for me.

From: Watcher #AT776

To: Daniel Smith

Re: Loyalty, #AT422

Confirmation Code: XXXXXX

Subject #AT422, "Gene," responding to social deprivation within predicted parameters. Has begun to confide in Watcher #AT333, "Alexandra Takahashi." May pose potential security leak. Please advise.

To: Watcher #AT776

From: #AT335, Asst. to Analyst Smith

Re: Directive, #AT422 Confirmation Code:

Instruct "Roland Cassault" to caution #AT422 against disclosure. Reveal surveillance as keyword search — do not, repeat, do not compromise the integrity of the surveillance. Contact between #AT422 and "Cassault" must continue.

Increase concentration of gaseous structure 224-62-8819 in quarantine chamber. Gradually shift color temperature of ambient lighting to 6500 degrees Kelvin to improve morale.

To: Watcher #AT976

From: #AT336, Asst. to Analyst Smith

Re: Loyalty, #AT422

Confirmation Code: XXXXXX

Option: If contact between "Takahashi" and "Gene," #AT422 must be severed to preserve security of information, replace "Takahashi" with Operative #AT992. Falsify communications to further test loyalty of #AT422. Subject showing emotional attachment, possible willingness to jeopardize career or security to pursue "Takahashi." Advise warning against "Takahashi." Further deny opportunity to work on front lines, and decrease contact with oldlife.

To: Shroedinger Team

From: Dan Smith

Re: Gene

Confirm: XXXXXX

Counter-confirm: XXXXXX

Don't sever contact.

Disregard advice from #AT336.

To: Gene

From: Roland

Re: Suspicion

If she wants to know that much about your past, I'd say follow procedure and send her a red-clearance bio file. There's some standard material on the training of constructs. Beyond that, it's rather silly to treat your processing as oldlife.

Oh, BTW, I had a nice chat with your Order of Hermes friend. His Social Conditioning is coming along nicely. He's managed to help us pick up the druggie who was delivering packages to the Chantry.

Mr. Smith has suggested planting some new memories. The plan is to have him think that he's been confiding in a Gray Man about problems in his Chantry. More specifically, he'll come to believe a Gray Man was going to help him solve his problems with the freak Euthanatos, the one conspiring with those rat creatures. In order to make it look like the Hermes mage sold out the rest of the cabal, we'll need an infiltrator to assume a role for us.

Your name has come up. This is it, Gene — gray work. You've "made the grayed," as they say. :-) I really think you'd be foolish to turn it down.

If your morale is dropping a bit, you should read through the file dated 2-23-72, "Nepalese Chantry Raid." It's one of the classic operations John Courage pulled off before he defected. That is, the first time he defected. :-) I'll send it to you with your file on Victorian History. Pay close attention to the way the historian cites conspiracy theories regarding Queen Victoria to disprove the absolute interpretation his rival advocates.

Relative History

He accepted everything. The past was alterable. The past had never been altered. Oceania was at war with Eastasia. Oceania had always been at war with Eastasia. Jones, Aaronson and Rutherford were guilty of the crimes they were charged with. He had never seen the photograph that disproved their guilt. It had never existed; he had invented it. He remembered remembering contradictory things, but those were false memories, products of self-deception. How easy it all was!

—1984

He who controls the present controls the past, but he who controls the past controls the future.

— (Ibid.)

<enter chat mode>

Gene: …but that article on Queen Victoria shouldn't be in the database. It's disloyal.

Roland: Disloyal? How?

Gene: It casts doubt on the party line.

Roland: The party can establish one ideology, but it can't set one standard of history.

Gene: Why not? It should fit with the rallying cry of the New World Order: "One World, One Truth, One Reality." That's what Ascension is, isn't it? Bringing all of humanity to one Reality.

Roland: Not everyone in the NWO agrees with that. We certainly debate that point pretty fiercely in the Collegium of History. There are different ways to look at history. You can try to represent it in absolute terms, partly by accrediting events to specific people or places; you can indulge in conspiracy theories to speculate about what really happened, or you can see it all as relative.

JOHNSON

Gene: But which one is right?

Roland: Well, since you're preparing for an exam, it depends on who your teacher is, actually. "Truth" is what helps you pass the exam. It's what the instructor says is correct. More precisely, we use the examples of the past to justify the actions of the present.

Gene: That's absurd.

Roland: That's the Ivory Tower. :-) I'll give you an example. How did the New World Order begin?

Gene: Well, the article you sent me begins by attributing it to Queen Victoria, citing the writings of Terrance Whyte, but later in the article, Professor Richardson traces the New World Order to a group of knights in the twelfth century.

Roland: Right. My point exactly. The absolute version is to look at the person "in charge" of a movement and say, "There. Right there. She did it." Some of the really die-hard Servants of the Tower will say, "Obviously, Queen Victoria must have been Enlightened. No Sleeper could have been responsible." That's the sloppy version of history.

Gene: Okay, so if the instructor wants a definite name and place, the answer is "Queen Victoria was the first to implement a true World Order. By sending British ideals of nobility and honor throughout the world, she led the country of England to a position of world supremacy, enforcing the belief that the world should consist of one Empire."

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From the Notes of Terrance Whyte
Collegium of History
Re: The Origin of the New World Order

The New World Order did not exist prior to the nineteenth century. The Order of Reason was not the New World Order, for the Order of Reason consisted of philosophical and political movements rather than spiritual ones. Our Order came out of the Queen's "Grand Housecleaning," the reorganization of the Technocracy in the 1890s, as a result of the efforts of dedicated men such as Inspector Rathbone. The attempts of charlatans such as Professor Richardson who try to establish a quasi-religious lineage for our Order leading back to the Mythic Age are a menace. Such pernicious deviants indulge in spiritualist fantasies that are no better than the anachronistic lies we are trying to eradicate.

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Roland: Right. But you can also ask the question, "How did Queen Victoria get there?"

Gene: According to Professor Richardson, her position on the throne was the result of a centuries-old conspiracy beginning in the twelfth century. A group of twelve knights — called the Knights Templar — decided that they would make the roads to the Holy Lands safe. They protected travelers, but covertly. They saw the threat to the pilgrims as both physical and spiritual, and knew about the existence of hidden forces. At least, that's what Professor Richardson says.

Roland: What do you think?

Gene: I think I'm glad I'm a Man in Black and not a Collegium professor…

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From the Notes of Terrance Whyte
Collegium of History
Re: The Cabal of Pure Thought

One of the greatest struggles of the Mythic Age involved two secret societies who sought to guide the events of the thirteenth century. As the covenants began to fall, two world views collided. The Cabal of Pure Thought, one of the great powers secretly behind the Inquisition, sought to promote "faith" as the salvation of the world. They saw in the Church a way to unite the Masses and replace the misguided superstitions of the magi. Opposing them was the Order of Reason, a society seeking to unite several factions of the time, including the Knights Templar (who belonged to the Cabal of Pure Thought) and the Craftmasons (who later united various Technocratic factions from across the world at the Convention of the White Tower in 1325, "officially" founding our Union).

Oddly enough, some noted conspiracy theorists within the Tower continue to argue that some of these societies still exist in their original form. Despite a lack of evidence, they argue that groups such as the Templars and Inquisition continue to fight to this day. Although many of the ideals of the Templars were integrated into the Order of Reason, the knights were destroyed in the early fourteenth century.

There are conflicts today that resemble earlier ones — such as hostility between the Celestial Chorus and the Men in Black — but the idea that the Templars or Inquisition could have persisted to this day is ludicrous in the extreme…
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Just as Iteration X has found a spiritual center in the lessons of Autochthonia, so are a growing number of warriors of the New World Order learning the ideals of the True Knights. The Enlightenment we seek is of a spiritual nature. We advocate nothing less than the perfection of all mankind. Many religious groups of the last millennia have sensed the echoes of our true goal. The seeking of the Cosmic Christ, the attainment of Agartha, the goal of becoming More than Human… all are but faint imitations of our ultimate pursuit: the attainment of Enlightenment for all mankind.

The Order of the Rosy Cross, the Prieure de Scion, the Bavarian Illuminati, the Knights Templar — let us recognize these societies for what they truly are. They are sympathetic to our ideals. Just as they are united throughout history by a single unbroken chain of events, so do they advocate the bringing of Light to the World. The single, brilliant light is the Light of Reason, the triumph of the mind. Is this not the true meaning of Ascension? Our true purpose is this: to bring Enlightenment to all mankind. When the war has been won, all of mankind will Ascend.

— Donald Richardson
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From the Notes of Terrance Whyte
Collegium of History
Re: Ascension and the Supernatural

One can be said to be Enlightened when one realizes the ways in which the Collective Will can change the course of history. Beyond that, there is no supernatural belief within the New World Order. Nor do we strive to bring Enlightenment to the Masses. Only the Enlightened can protect the Masses. Only the best and brightest can lead. The rest enjoy the benefits of our struggle to provide for the betterment of All. To suggest that we must bring our knowledge to all is subversion; to entertain the delusions of such deviants in our midst is societal suicide.

— Terrance Whyte
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Roland: Under the conspiratorial version of history that Richardson advances, how did the Templars help form the Order of Reason?

Gene: Their knowledge of the supernatural was kept secret so that the Masses wouldn't panic. Richardson believes that those twelve knights, in turn, recruited their successors, and their circle of influence spread until they finally controlled many of the crowned heads of Europe. Professor Richardson tries to establish a connection between the Templars and the rulers of the nineteenth century, but he really seems to be speculating. There are gaps in his reasoning.

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In the centuries that followed, the Merovingians — aided, protected, or perhaps even directed by the Prieure de Scion — made repeated attempts to regain their heritage… One was the creation of a psychological atmosphere, a clandestine tradition intended to erode the spiritual hegemony of Rome — a tradition that found expression in Hermetic and esoteric thought, in the Rosicrucian manifestoes and similar writings, in certain rites of Freemasonry… A second program entailed political machination, intrigue, and, if feasible, an overt seizure of power…

…A contingent of Templars had allegedly fought on Robert Bruce's side at the Battle of Bannockburn. Because the papal bull dissolving the Templars was never promulgated in Scotland, the order was never officially suppressed there. And we ourselves had located what seemed to be a Templar graveyard in Argyllshire. The earliest of the stones in the graveyard dated from the thirteenth century, the later ones from the eighteenth… The later stones combined these symbols with specifically Masonic motifs, attesting thereby to some sort of fusion. It was thus not impossible… that the order did indeed perpetuate itself… gradually secularizing itself and becoming associated with both Masonic guilds and the prevailing clan system.

— Michael Baigent, Holy Blood, Holy Grail
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Roland: The conspiratorial view of history is based on the idea that you can never really know everything. Well, at least not until you have surveillance on everyone. :-)

Terrance Whyte's opinions show the first view of history. There's one party line — don't stray from it. Whyte is taken as the "official" view of history. Then there are mavericks like Richardson who use the "conspiratorial" view of history. They can't prove everything they say, but they know enough about conspiracy to still be useful.

Gene: So in other words, even we don't know where we really started?

Roland: That would be telling. :-) The third way to answer the question "Where did the New World Order begin?" is to argue that history is relative. That's my opinion. Consider which point of view you should use to answer the question. For instance, suppose I answered the question with a question: "What does the New World Order do?" From your point of view, of course…

Gene: The purpose of the New World Order is to seek out the supernatural world and contain or destroy it.

Roland: Okay, the Man in Black response. Can you give me a documented case of someone doing that in history?

Gene: Well, Richardson doesn't really *prove* that the Templars knew about actual hidden forces. There's no specific mention of societies of vampires or types of werewolves. But we all learn early on about Detectives St. Crispin and Inspector Rathbone working with Scotland Yard. St. Crispin and a group of detectives found a neighborhood in Whitechapel that was under attack from unseen forces. They used the information in the files of Scotland Yard to find the two families who were raising the spirits that attacked the neighborhood. They also used vulgar procedures to destroy them. Off-hand, that's the first historical event I can think of to describe the beginnings of the Men in Black.

Roland: Or, if you defined the purpose of the Men in Black as soldiers in the Ascension War?

Gene: Oh, yeah. I'd cite their involvement in the destruction of Mistridge in the early thirteenth century.

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From the Notes of Terrance Whyte
Collegium of History
Re: The Order of Reason

On March 25, 1325, some time after the destruction of Mistridge, the first Symposium was conducted in a white tower in southern France. The tower itself has long since been destroyed, but the plans made at the Convention of the White Tower were to last for over half a millennium. With the assistance of Enlightened warriors and mages, the conspirators of the Order of Reason began their plans for the salvation of mankind.

There is, however, no evidence that the original members of the Order of Reason performed "magick." We can only prove that they were masters of politics and diplomacy. Later, their secret society worked with such noted Enlightened as the Parminideans,

Gutenberg, Copernicus, DaVinci, Newton, Weisshaupt, Jefferson and Franklin — yet the Inner Circle of the Order remained untainted by any pseudo-religious ceremonies…

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Roland: Exactly. Or let's say you were arguing the viewpoint of the Methodology of the Watchers.

Gene: The origins of the New World Order would be in the beginnings of technological communications. I'd cite the invention of the telegraph or the telephone.

Roland: …and some smart-ass Virtual Adept would try to take credit for it. The sloppy version of history would involve saying "Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone. Perhaps he was an unAwakened Son of Ether or Virtual Adept." It is really very hard — as well as somewhat ludicrous — to prove that historical figures were Awakened Traditionalists or Enlightened Technomancers.

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Richardson is a pompous fool, a pseudo-historian who concerns himself more with the rambling arabesques of his own delusions than with any actual revelations of truth.

—Terrance Whyte, Ivory Tower

Shall I define the word 'dictatorial' for you? The Nazis were but errant children compared to madmen like Terrance Whyte. Merely summon an image of his visage and you will understand the face of oppression: a tyrannical fool who cries for 'documentation!' whenever anyone contradicts his sacred dogma. His purpose is clear. The Ascension War is not a conflict between Traditionalists and Technomancers. It is, to Whyte, a vehicle for the triumph of his ego and of his version of history over all others.

—Prof. Donald Richardson, Ivory Tower

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Roland: Relative history can also be a way to advance a particular philosophy or set of beliefs. Whenever you defy the opinions of the mainstream, however, you run the risk of censure…

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From the Notes of Prof. Yukio Ishida
Collegium of History
Re: The Legalist Empire

…at this point, I would like to address another disturbing trend within the Collegium of History, the attempt to marginalize the contributions of non-European cultures to the structure of the Technocracy. For instance, the current proliferation of 'Order of Reason' articles within current journals denies an early origin of our Union. The fanciful tales about the Technocracy's medieval European origins distract us from the true birthplace of our Union. Long before the fantasies of the Knights Templar and the conspiracies of the Order of Reason, the Mythic Age of China evolved a distinct technological paradigm of its own…

By the fifth century, while the Roman Empire was descending into decadence and disrepair, China had formed the most advanced civilization in the world. This was largely due to the development of a government based on an extensive

bureaucracy. The Legalists, as they were called, put the affairs of the state in order by dividing responsibilities among hundreds of bureaucrats. Although these servants technically advised the Emperor, they had the authority to monitor political matters on their own.

The system of promotion within the Legalist bureaucracy depended on a rigorous series of examinations. Most of these dealt with matters of history and philosophy, such as the teachings of Confucius.

Today, we still follow this example. Within the Convention of Iteration X, for instance, Ciphers learn the principles of Technocracy by studying Confucius and Lao Tzu...
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Professor Ishida? She shouldn't be considered a Servant of the Ivory Tower at all! She's more a collaborator with her Statistician cronies in Iteration X than a true Servant of the Collegiums!

—Prof. Donald Richardson

Don't quote me on this, but the Collegium of History is the most useless component of the Ivory Tower. These policies of 'academic freedom' and 'philosophical discourse' are really a way to shelter traitors. Deviants like Ishida waste our time with lies to distract us from the important task at hand: the War on Reality Deviance.

—#AT335, Assistant to Daniel Smith
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Magick, Paradigm & the Technocracy

I like the _pretty_ lies.
—Myria, *The Crow*

Roland: Let's muddy the waters a little further. How would you define "invention?"

Gene: I guess someone puts a machine together, turns it on, and watches it work. There's a procedure and a result.

Roland: Where does the idea come from?

Gene: From the person who puts it together.

Roland: Really? I'd say no. Consider this: most advances in technology can't be achieved until the idea is a possibility. Reality is limited by what's possible and impossible.

Gene: Oh, great. Metaphysics. What do think I am, a mage?

Roland: You're training for a promotion. You'll want to show off. Consider: reality has certain limits. Those limits are the parameters of what is possible and impossible. When someone uses magick to attempt the impossible and succeeds, he distorts reality. The limits of the consensual reality paradigm weaken. When a Technomancer uses an apparatus in a way that has never been attempted before, reality shifts. In a way, that is the invention, not the device. Alexander Graham Bell wouldn't have been able to invent the telephone if a Technomancer hadn't made it work first. Same thing with television.

Gene: So television was invented by the Technocracy?

Roland: Yes and no. Technomancers made it possible; a Sleeper put the parts together and introduced it to the Masses. Sometimes we'll work to make sure the invention isn't ready until the time is right. Sometimes the invention is released accidentally and has to be suppressed. Usually, the idea isn't available to the Masses until it's approved by the Ivory Tower.

Gene: So reality depends on your point of view, and our point of view fits within the party line of the Technocracy.

Roland: Yes. For a Traditionalist, magick depends on a personal paradigm. That act of deviance works against the wishes of the Collective Will of the Technocracy and humanity. For a Technomancer, approved procedures depend on your Methodology.

Gene: Just like interpreting history. In the Ivory Tower, events depend on the interpreter.

Roland: Or events depend on the person who predicts them. Remember, some of the Enlightened have influence over Time. That's another factor. Suppose a Technomancer—a Statistician of Iteration X or a futurist in the Ivory Tower—uses his influence over Time to predict whether a particular device will be invented. The predictor estimates the year that the device will be unveiled. At that time, a Technomancer visualizes the effect of the invention and makes the procedure work for the first time. Later, a Sleeper makes it work the same way... by "accident."

Gene: So history is predetermined?

Roland: Professor Richardson, in his own inimitable way, has theorized the idea of a Templar "Grand Plan" from the thirteenth century. Suppose that's true. Suppose the Templars predicted that they would control the world by the end of the millennium?

Gene: I see what you mean.

Goal: What is "Ascension?"

Look around this world we've made;
Equality, our stock in trade
Come and join the Brotherhood of Man
O, what a nice contented world...
— Rush, "2112 — The Temples of Syrinx"

Gene: But eventually, the Ivory Tower will come to consensus. Regardless of personal squabbles in the Collegiums and Symposiums, we *still* have one party line: "One World, One Truth, One Reality." Amalgams of Men in Black are taught that the only version of Reality is the Technocracy's vision of Reality. If enough people believe that one interpretation, then that *is* an objective statement of reality.

Roland: Even if that's an interpretation of history? That sounds too much like trying to change the past. One of the absolutes of influencing time— even among Tradition mages— is that you *can't* influence the past.

Gene: Really? Maybe that's the difference between your Methodology and mine. I'm not in the Ivory Tower. I'm an Operative. We see things a little differently. If all the evidence I've gathered from espionage and all the footage I've compiled by surveillance reveals that subject A betrayed and killed subject B, and there's no evidence to the contrary, then that's the truth.

Roland: That's absurd.

Gene: That's the Men in Black. :-) If all the evidence points to one interpretation of events, and the Collective Will defines reality, then that interpretation is the truth. The only reason we let those Virtual Adept bastards go as far as they did before they defected was that we essentially agreed with them that reality was composed of information. Tactical error on our part, I guess. We won't make it again.

Roland: Well, my philosophy of history is different. Reality is subjective; any statement of history is relative.

Gene: I thought we were supposed to be discussing history, not philosophy. Besides, Ascension is the achievement of one Reality. The winners write history, right? That means what is really at stake is deciding who writes all of history.

Roland: See, to me, Ascension is more than just "winning." One vision of reality, one standard of reality, will triumph over all others. It's not enough that all reality will become static and unalterable. We have to make sure the right set of ideas win out.

Then again, that's my belief: that history is relative, and that you use it to support a specific thesis or course of action. The end result is Ascension. Terrance Whyte would argue that Ascension is the attainment of a static reality, one where the Technocracy could not be deposed by the introduction of another paradigm. Donald Richardson would see Ascension as a spiritual process, one culminating in all of humanity having the same beliefs and the same attainment of Enlightenment. Which would you favor?

Gene: Are you trying to test my knowledge of history or my loyalty?

Roland: :-) Same thing.

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Gender Roles and the NWO

Men of Sense in all Ages abhor those customs which treat us only as the vassals of your Sex.

— Abigail Adams, to her husband John

From the Notes of Terrance Whyte
Collegium of History
Re: Gender in the New World Order

Within the communiqués we've intercepted from the Tradition mages, we've seen a fair amount of debate over the names of their so-called "Traditions." One such debate involves the names "Sons of Ether" and "Akashic Brotherhood."

Fortunately, within the Collegiums of our Union, debate over the name "Men in Black" has been quite limited. The practice of assigning tasks to genetic constructs based on their gender has continued to work admirably. Admittedly, some amalgams have been quite successful after integrating the controversial female Black Suits. However, as Professor Ishida has recently noted, 94% of Men in Black constructs are male.

This can be attributed chiefly to the high percentage of male constructs in Black Suit amalgams. Only 4% of MiB constructs are female. The efficacy of asexual constructs still remains to be seen.

This is in sharp contrast to the ratio of male to female constructs in other Methodologies. There is an even ratio of male to female naturals working as Servants of the Ivory Tower. Among constructs, however, the ratio is different. Ishida cites the high number of female constructs performing menial work in the Ivory Tower...

From the Notes of Yukio Ishida
Collegium of History
Re: Gender in the New World Order

...clearly Professor Whyte has a rather distorted view of the role of gender in history. Perhaps he prefers to entertain the idea of genetically-engineered secretaries and typists to serve him. But how long can we continue to tolerate the idea of our Union being primarily a patriarchal institution?

In actuality, the high percentage of female constructs in the Ivory Tower can be attributed to other reasons. Historically, the role of women has been to "run the house." This includes administrative duties as well. The practice of shutting women out of the labor pool (chiefly as a means of encouraging "ladylike" behavior) is a fairly recent trait of an aristocratic minority...

From the Notes of Terrance Whyte
Collegium of History
Re: Gender in the New World Order

...and history has shown us that civilization succeeds best when roles of gender are clearly defined. (The recent article "Queen Victoria and the New World Order" in Administrative Journal #32 actually works to demonstrate this point.)

Ishida's theories about introducing more male constructs into secretarial amalgams are still available in that issue as well. No doubt her innovative ideas will continue to increase the production of our Union. Now that she has been reassigned to compile sociological statistics in MECHA, we anxiously await the results of her latest study...

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To: Daniel Smith
From: AT#944
Re: Directive, #AT422

Subject needs motivation for accepting promotion. Please advise.

To: Shroedinger Team
From: Daniel Smith
Re: Operation Shroedinger

Subject appears to have personal attachment to Takahashi. Encourage further contact. Establish danger to Takahashi. #AT422 almost ready for operation. Encourage contact with Takahashi. Mission following standard procedure.

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To: Sandi

From: Gene

The exams are going extremely well. The most challenging part seems to be guessing which party line to take. Of course, there's really only one party line :-), but if I wind up getting a reviewer like Ishida, I'd be in deep trouble. I've been hearing strange rumors about Ishida. (Then again, I think some of the people in the Collegium of History have been intentionally starting rumors about Ishida…)

I've got some bad news. The contamination is starting to show. They've assured me that the medication will take care of it, but that thing that slashed at my chest managed to get something into my bloodstream. I haven't seen another human since they sealed the doors.

If I was doing better, and if there was a way I could be there with you, I would. I've still got a few days to go…

To: Roland

From: Gene

Re: Acing my Exams

The last exam was no problem. Aced it, easy. I think the extra sleep is helping. In fact, my sleeping habits are changing a bit. Sorry about not logging on before noon.

I had a dream about someone coming into my room last night. He rubbed something cold and sticky on my temples. It turned into marmalade, and I remember rubbing it off and eating it.

The dreams are starting to make more sense. I keep dreaming about that rat thing, and about how hundreds of them are probably nearby, waiting to invade. I'd feel guilty going off to do gray work if we're facing a menace like that. They need me on the front lines, Roland. The tests will come in handy for the promotion, but I'd rather supervise an amalgam down below than do that cloak and dagger nonsense. I've started writing my formal request to Mr. Smith.

To: Dan Smith

From: Watcher #922

Re: Reprogramming Error

We've caught a discrepancy in the reprogramming of #AT422. Subject previously stated that his wounds are the result of the bites of large "rat creature." However, subject is now identifying wounds as "slashes in his chest."

To: Watcher #922

From: Dan Smith

Don't worry. We've altered his wounds for a reason…

JOHNSON

Chapter Two: Ranks and Relationships

And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve;
whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods
of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.
— Joshua 24: 15

Gathering Forces

Trust me, Jack.
—Sam Lowry, *Brazil*

To: Gene
From: Roland
Re: Symposium

Good news. I managed to pull a few strings and get you some computer time in one of Terrance Whyte's symposiums! I have to admit, though, I sort of suggested you needed it because you were being rushed through for gray work.

Look, for all we know, those rat things are pretty rare. There are worse things out there, I'm sure, and you'd be wasting your talent sludging around in sewers. The Union needs you, Gene. Besides, if we need raw, static firepower to take care of beasties underground, we can educate sympathizers to take care of it instead of risking Enlightened personnel. That's one of the reasons we have Social Conditioning.

To: Roland
From: Gene
Re: The UnEnlightened

I'm flattered. Yes, you're right, we can use sympathizers to take care of the problem, but I don't really like leaving that much responsibility to them. If we have to use them, I'd rather be the Unit Leader directing them.

I'm curious... does your Methodology use sympathizers as well? The only command structure I'm familiar with is the one for the Men in Black. There are the troops — the constructs and sympathizers — the commanders in the field and the Intelligence Analysts who direct them. How do you use sympathizers in your Methodology?

For that matter, why do we take the risk of using them at all? Isn't it dangerous to give that knowledge to the unEnlightened?

Oh, BTW, the dream I've been having continued last night. I was following the sewer tunnel for miles and miles, trying to find where the rat creatures came from. There was some kind of elastic tunnel reaching down into the sewers, and I was running up it, running up to the moon. Weird.

Sympathizers

To: Gene

From: Roland

Re: Sympathizers

You sure you don't have any of that vodka in there? :-)

Yes, sympathizers work with all three Methodologies. Enlightened personnel are pretty hard to come by! There's quite a bit of hierarchy and bureaucracy in the NWO, but a few basic distinctions can be made. Most of the agents in the field are usually constructs and sympathizers. You've already seen that on the front lines.

In all three Methodologies, sympathizers are either educated Sleepers or Technocrats who have yet to attain Enlightenment. Many times, a sympathizer doesn't know whether he'll attain it. In Traditionalist terms, he doesn't know whether his "Avatar" will "Awaken." The Order can try to predict if and when it will happen, but there really isn't a reason to do that. In the end, it really doesn't matter.

The Black Suit work you've done is just one example of integrating sympathetic agents into the Union. It's too bad you haven't had more of a chance to see the rest of the Construct. We have all kinds here. There's no reason for everyone here to be Enlightened. It's not like in a Chantry, where some crazed Order of Hermes mage might show off by bending reality when he wants to light the candles in a room. There are a lot of tasks here that don't require Enlightened agents: handling paperwork, janitorial work, food services, and so on. Remember, the Ivory Tower does more than just take care of education. The Servants of the Ivory Tower have to take care of all the administrative and supportive tasks that the other Conventions won't touch. After all, our Convention understands more than any other how the societal part of our Union should be structured.

Media sympathizers perform support work for the Enlightened personnel. It takes a lot of people to man a surveillance station, and even Sleeper reporters are useful at gathering information. The principles of gathering information are the same as with espionage. Not every spy has to be Secret Agent John Courage. A sympathizer who can report what's happening around him — whether that's at a television station, the phone company, a film production company or next door to a possible Chantry — plays his part in the war effort. Fortunately, the Tower has a thorough enough knowledge of Social Conditioning to ensure that any given sympathizer will remain loyal.

Even in an amalgam of Men in Black, it isn't important which ones are Enlightened naturals or mindless drones, or which ones are Sleeper sympathizers or Gray Men. They all act as a unit. If the mages treat all Men in Black as inhuman drones, so much the better. It gives us an edge.

However, once an agent has attained Enlightenment, once his "Avatar" has "Awakened," his chances for promotion increase. Until then, the distinction between an unEnlightened Technomancer and an educated Sleeper doesn't matter. Because nearly all our procedures are "coincidental," it's even possible for the agent himself to be unaware of whether he's actually reshaping reality. If other agents don't know, then he's doing his job extremely well.

I'll give you a classic example from Sleeper history. In the early 1950s, an agent named Karpov was performing an assassination outside a subway station in Bulgaria. He wanted to appear nondescript, so he carried an umbrella and newspaper with him. As his target was leaving the platform, Karpov bumped into him. At that moment, he "accidentally" dropped his newspaper as a distraction. The tip of his umbrella bumped into his target's thigh. Karpov excused himself and continued on.

A few days later, the target grew increasingly sick. His doctor could find no reason for the illness — until he took an x-ray. A small pellet had been projected into the subject's leg, and the pellet had been coated with a rather virulent poison.

By sheer bad luck, Karpov was captured a few days later. As a foreign national, he had been followed by the Bulgarian Secret Service. When they inspected his personal possessions, they found a device in his umbrella. The tip was hollow, with a coiled spring and firing mechanism rigged to the edge. The gadget was constructed to fire a pellet into a human body upon contact.

This example was cited in one of my early classes. Some analysts believe that the method of assassination was so outrageous that it could only have been a process, an Effect of "coincidental magick." Karpov sees his target, conceives of the device, and uses his technological apparatus as a focus to pass off a coincidental influence over Life. Other analysts say that the task was merely a result of ingenious gadgeteering. No "magick" was required. Some of the more conspiratorial students tended to argue that Karpov intended to get caught. Releasing to the general public the idea of this "secret agent gadget" convinces them of the importance of technology in covert operations. Which answer is true?

It doesn't matter. If the mission was performed as part of a Technocracy operation, it doesn't matter if the Operative was an educated Sleeper with a brilliant idea or an overly-imaginative Enlightened Technomancer with a penchant for umbrellas. The mission is still carried out the same way.

In the end, if a sympathizer can do his job, it makes no difference whether he's Enlightened or not.

To: Roland

From: Gene

Re: Minimizing Paradox

So sympathizers can be used as plants without obviously being Enlightened. Makes sense. It's kind of easy to try to sense someone's Quintessence to find out if they're Enlightened. If a Reality Deviant tries to sense the Quintessence in a sympathizer and finds nothing, he's less likely to suspect him of working for us.
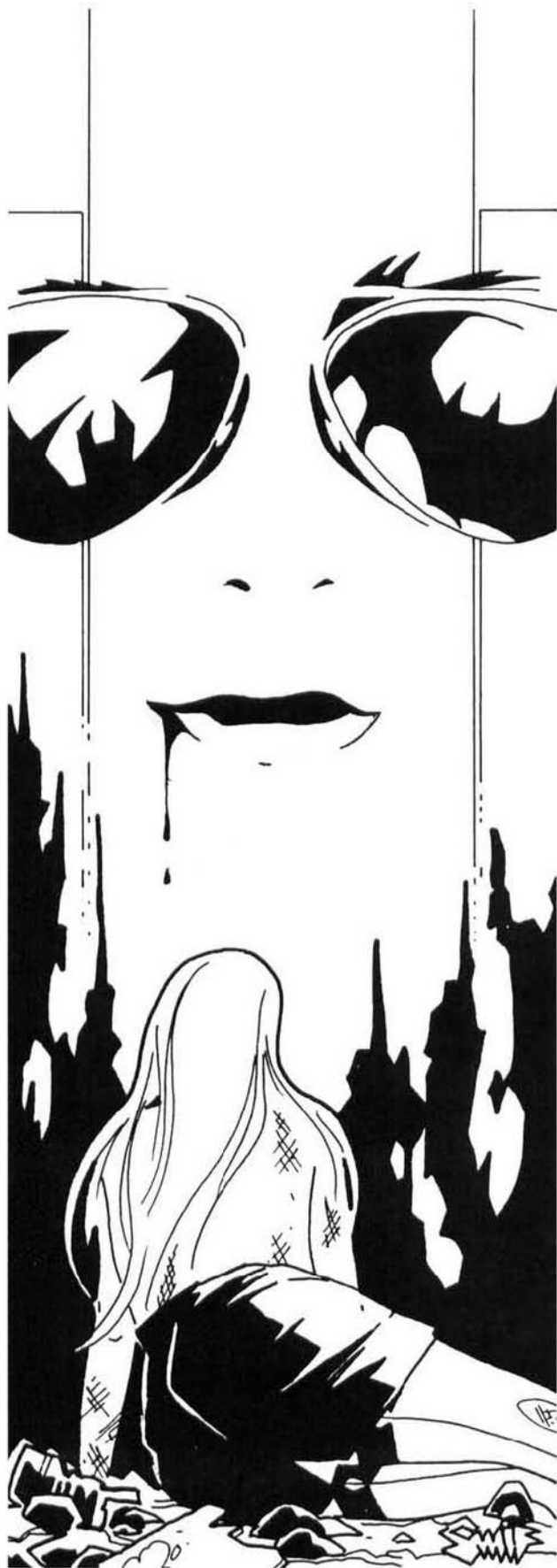
I've found that the key to pulling off a successful mission is to limit the amount of vulgar procedure you use. My work usually has to appear as "coincidental" as possible. It reduces the chances of Paradox and increases the chances of success.

At least that's the way I feel. Every once in a while I hear some story about some hotshot Black Suit who thinks he's going to become the next John Courage, goes off half-cocked and guns his Spectre Limousine into battle... usually right into a Paradox Spirit. :-)

The exams are wrapping up. I seem to have misplaced the file on Methodologies, though. Could you send me another copy?

Methodologies

Priests work in a rigorously structured hierarchy fixed in a firm set of traditions... Shamans, on the other hand, are arrant individuals... Hence, a shaman is always a threat to the control of the organized church...

...The struggle between shaman and priest may well be a death struggle.

— Robert Pirsig, *Lila*

Instructional Material #6612

Directive 77214

Prepared: Roland Cassault, Ivory Tower

The New World Order is composed of three Methodologies. Rather than applying generic terms to the ranks of all New World agents, each Methodology has its own hierarchy. Understanding the levels of these organizations requires an understanding of the three theatres in the War for Ascension. Each is vitally important to our triumph over the enemies of Reality. As the administrative branch of the Technocracy, the New World Order oversees the crusade on all fronts. The war effort is divided into three theatres: the Front Lines, the Horizon and Beyond the Horizon.

The Front Lines

On the front lines, battles are fought in the world of Sleepers. These operations must be extremely subtle. Our highest priority is the conversion of hearts and minds, the strengthening of the consensual reality paradigm of the Technocracy. The structure of Reality is the manifestation of our Collective Will. Our enemy works to undermine the consensus we have built with the assistance of the Masses. Our enemy does not limit himself by working within the safe procedures of the Technocracy. Instead, he threatens the safety of the Masses by performing vulgar Effects in their midst, increasing the chance of causing a Paradox among Sleepers. Our enemies' conflicting plans for the world are nothing more than a design for unleashing chaos and endangering humanity for the sake of their myriad deviant visions.

Although we offer mages the chance to undergo Social Conditioning to enjoy the protection of the New World Order, the outcasts have demonstrated their disregard for the Safety and Security we maintain. Make no mistake, however — when subtlety has no effect on these criminals, we have no choice but to eradicate them with overwhelming force to protect the innocent.

The Horizon

At the edge of Earth's atmosphere, outside of "real" space, Horizon Realms and Horizon Constructs act as bases of operations for our Union. Constructs stationed in geosynchronous orbits survey the Masses, ensuring their protection and Safety. Usually, one Convention will be dominant at a Horizon Construct, but at any Construct, there must be coordination among all Conventions. We oversee this administration. Horizon Realms are also accessible outside the terrestrial sphere. Many of these are used for missions of security, including the training of troops and the incarceration of Tradition mages and other perpetrators of crimes against Reality.

The Horizon Realms also contain experimental societies, cities that allow for the perfection of social engineering. We must decide the face of the future, for we are the builders of utopias. Just as a model of a physical structure is tested for weakness, we fine-tune our plans with living models. What we learn from these societal organisms will help us breed our bold new world.

Finally, it should be noted that outposts on the Horizon are part of the defense of the Earth. Along the Gauntlet (the reality barrier we have erected with the assistance of humanity to block out the menace of the supernatural world), secure outposts stand vigilant watch against extraterrestrial threats. Only we have the strength to defend our world.

Beyond the Horizon

Far beyond the limits of the terrestrial sphere, hidden in the altered space *outside* the depths of the Great Deep, Technocracy bases operate in the Deep Universe. The limits of earthly reality do not inhibit these visionaries. While Horizon Realms, such as the Horizon Research Collectives, allow for limited adjustments of reality, Deep Universal Collectives permit radical shifts, thus enabling our highly advanced research, the maximum security of Our Leaders and the Inner Circle, and the protection of allied alien life forms. While the Masses sleep, we must prepare the universe itself for humanity's Awakening into Collective Enlightenment.

Within a Deep Universal Collective, reality is often determined by the consensus of the individuals contained within it. For this reason, loyalty and ideological purity are critical. Consensus within a Collective, as with any Reality Environment, ensures the safety of all.

The Universe is Ours

On all fronts, we strive to attain Safety and Security for the good of all. Though members of each Methodology may view the war differently, the Provost of our Collegium, along with the latest directives from Alpha Outpost, call for a renewed effort to direct ourselves to our ultimate goal: One World, One Truth, One Reality. All three Methodologies of the New World Order — the Operatives, the Servants of the Ivory Tower, and the agents of the Watchers — must work toward this common goal.

The Operatives

Thus, we do disagreeable things, but we are defensive. That, I think, is still fair. We do disagreeable things so that ordinary people here and elsewhere can sleep safely in their beds at night. Is that too romantic? Of course, we occasionally do very wicked things.

— John LeCarre, *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*

The first Methodology, the Operatives, deals primarily with espionage. The secret agent works to gather information in the field and to ensure Security within our ranks. He is the eyes and ears of our Union.

The shock troops of our Convention are the Men in Black. Most mages think of the Black Suits when they hear the words "New World Order," and many acolytes and apprentices think of them as mindless, soulless constructs who lack independent will. This illusion works to our advantage. "Black Suit" work is the starting assignment for most operatives. Not all Men in Black are constructs, nor are all of them conversant in Technocratic procedures.

These units' most common activity is the capture or elimination of Reality Deviants, such as Traditionalist mages, Marauders, cryptozoological specimens, supernatural entities and demonic manifestations. Although the psychological mandates of the Masses have psychic mechanisms to actively ignore some types of Reality Criminals, the Men in Black must police the front lines to ensure the Safety and Security of humanity. Fortunately, Men in Black can operate with some degree of impunity in the field because they are often mistaken for government authorities. Most Sleepers either trust or fear their government. Those who trust do not question; those who fear dare not question.

The constructs and sympathizers working as Men in Black actually run interference for more experienced agents. Although the majority of Black Suits are male, their superiors, the Gray Suits, have a more even balance of genders. The Gray Suits are the assassins, impersonators, thieves and saboteurs. While some work in the shadows, others work openly, assuming an alternate identity and working in the midst of the Traditions.

The most common task of the Gray Men is infiltration. Cabals often come to think of units of Black Suits and cyborgs as their most immediate threat. Actually, the greatest threat to their cabal is often living in their midst. Because of the nature of the Pogrom, most Tradition mages have to bestow

a certain degree of trust to each other. There usually isn't time for them to interrogate any renegade mage they encounter. This makes the task of infiltration easier.

While Black Suits and Gray Suits work on the front lines, Intelligence Analysts organize them and interpret the data they gather. Their bases are often in Horizon Constructs. These agents also act as intermediaries between Unit Leaders in the field and administration. Coordinating field work also means teaming agents of the New World Order with agents of other Conventions. This is also part of the administrative responsibilities of the Operatives.

The masters among the Operatives are the Men in White, agents who are responsible for monitoring the loyalty of individuals. "Men in White" is of course a colloquial term; such agents are as often female as male. Men in White have great latitude in their inquires; anyone ranking below a White Suit can be interrogated by her, regardless of Convention. Among their other responsibilities are overall Security for Horizon Constructs, ideological conformity within Horizon Realms, and regional reports to the highest ranks of the Technocracy.

The Ivory Tower

We don't need no education
We don't need no thought control
—Pink Floyd, "Another Brick in the Wall, Part 2"

The second Methodology, the Ivory Tower, oversees education and administration. The armies of sympathizers, educators, academics, teachers, psychologists, computer programmers, Reality Programmers, bureaucrats, administrators, instructors and indoctrinators ensure that this is the most diverse of the Methodologies. At the highest levels of this Methodology, the masters of the Tower act as mediators in inter-Convention politics, organize Symposiums and report to the Inner Circle. The Ivory Tower can be divided into five areas of influence: recruitment, education, computer security, psychology and bureaucracy.

On the front lines, legions of sympathizers work within universities and other educational systems to gently guide the Masses towards correct indoctrination. Many sympathizers work as recruiters. Universities are one of the best areas for recruitment. Disaffected youth, Enlightened drop-outs, gifted students and Orphaned mages also make for excellent sympathizers.

Education involves the transfer of ideas and the colonization of minds. On the Horizon, instructors and academics oversee the indoctrination of Technomancers of all Conventions. Educators within the Ivory Tower have many tools at their disposal for processing students, including sleepteaching, subliminal broadcasting and virtual reality systems. One important application of these tools is the education of field specialists, who often work with amalgams on the front lines. The education branch of the Tower also includes the Collegiums, sanctuaries of academia where luminaries are free to debate the philosophies of our Union.

Computer security is the third area of influence. Since our Convention handles information storage for all the Conventions, access to information is critical. The most difficult responsibility is preventing "hacking" and attacks from Virtual Adepts. Fortunately, many of the brightest security specialists are former Adepts who have undergone Social Conversion. The New World Order also works in collaboration with the Cybernauts of the Void Engineers. Servants are usually more proficient within the computer systems of Sleepers; Cybernauts are usually more proficient with the Digital Web.

Psychologists are invaluable in the War against Reality Deviance. The wealth of information they can access allows them to process psychological profiles of Sleepers and mages, as exemplified by the Citation Procedure. Their abilities to process the mind and access technological devices enable them to assist with such tasks as Social Conditioning — the process of altering the belief system of an individual — and mindscaping — the process of altering an individual's perceptions of reality. Psychologists proficient with Social Conditioning and mindscaping are sometimes known as Reality Programmers and often work with Intelligence Analysts of the Operative Methodology.

Bureaucracy and administration are the largest sections of the Tower. Admittedly, some jaded members of other Conventions will claim that these are tasks that none of the other Conventions want to oversee; however, handling these duties helps us to maintain our position of leadership within the Technocracy. After all, as some of the bureaucrats of the Tower are overly fond of reminding us, information is indeed power. The highest levels of administration use that power to maintain harmony among the Conventions.

All Servants of the Ivory Tower are adept at processing information, regardless of whether their procedures are based on education, psychology, Reality Programming, computer programming or politics. As a concerted front against the deceptions and dangers of Traditionalist thinking, the Servants are united by their slogan: "Our Knowledge is Our Strength."

The Watchers

Approaching northern perimeter. Contact imminent. Contact imminent. Orange alert. Orange alert.

—#36, *The Prisoner*

This is Emerson Carter, Network XXIII, coming to you live and direct!

—*Max Headroom*

Procedures in the third Methodology, the Watchers, are based on surveillance, media and communications. Their primary tasks include monitoring for crimes against Reality, manufacturing the consent of the Masses, and working with amalgams to locate and neutralize random elements in Reality.

Sympathizers to the Watchers work within mundane television and radio stations, as well as within telephone companies and other communications organizations. Most

have limited knowledge of our Union, and some only partially realize the role they play in the war effort. Other sympathizers assist in the production of media. The process of manufacturing media — making a film, manipulating an image, producing a television program, "electronic news gathering," or addressing an audience over the radio — is a process of transferring a message. As Marshal McLuhan has said, "The medium is the message," and as such, the language of a technological medium can easily become a process for a Technocratic message. Sympathizers assist with the menial tasks of production, freeing the Enlightened to carry out their duties. Dutiful sympathizers are promoted to positions where they, too, can help create Our Reality.

Field agents of this Methodology are usually Field Observers, Reporters or Lensmen. Field Reporters are often assigned to amalgams in which a Man in Black or Gray Man is not needed, ensuring that the proper documentation of their mission is preserved. Reporters can also work with amalgams to gather incriminating evidence, seek out the supernatural, and document or even counteract Reality Deviance. Lensmen coordinate surveillance in the field, including the installation of permanent posts. Many of these technicians work well with units of Men in Black and the field patrols of Iteration X.

Horizon Constructs usually contain outposts for surveillance over wider areas. Working in conjunction with satellite systems, ground-based security systems, radar and manar tracking stations, and computer systems, Watchers can direct field operations and gather evidence. Numerous devices exist for tracking Sleepers as well, such as credit cards, cash point systems, marked currency, computer monitors in automobiles and automatic teller cards. Anything a Sleeper carries with a distinct magnetic encryption or unique encoded message "marks" him for tracking.

On the Horizon, Watchers provide Intelligence Analysts and White Suits with information on disloyal citizens. This is partly a procedure of counterespionage. It is also a means of helping Technomancers guard against possible betrayal by coworkers. Working within a collectivist society heightens our sense of individuality; we must stay on guard against possible traitors in our midst. By limiting our trust of others, we intensify our overall trust in our Union. The vigilant eyes of Horizon surveillance surround and safeguard us. Back to back, we stand against the intrusion of deviants who would rend the fabric of our Safe Reality.

Gatekeepers coordinate the activities of sympathizers, monitoring activity in the media as well as Sleeper reactions to it. Just as rating systems can be used to measure the Masses' responses to media, so can adjusting rating systems alter the response of the Masses. By subtly controlling the messages of the media of the Masses, we direct society toward homogenous and harmonious union. By manufacturing consent, we create a secure world.

The Surveyors stand at the top of the pyramid. They oversee the efficacy of the War on all fronts, including working with the deep space and Deep Universal surveillance and patrols of the Void Engineers. Their expertise coordinates the data of telescopes, space stations and scout ships with the expertise of Intelligence Analysts. Rumors of mind-control satellites continue, no doubt, to help support researchers in their perfection of this valuable weapon in the fight for freedom.

The eye of the Watchers represents eternal vigilance in our perpetual battle to purge disruptive random elements from the fabric of Reality. As long as the Safety of the World is threatened, as long as the selfish egotism of the Traditionalists endangers the Security of the Masses, the Watchers will faithfully give their all to the Ascension War.

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To: Gene
From: Sandi
Re: Hiding

Bad news. Radio silence. Something's stalking us, Gene. The thing from the D.U. Collective is heading this way. I can't say anything else, but we're going into hiding.

I love you.

— Sandi

To: Roland
From: Gene
Re: Communications down?

Roland, no one's answering my e-mail. What's wrong? What's that scratching noise I keep hearing at my door?

I e-mailed my essay to the Collegium, so I seem to have some time on my hands. I keep sleeping more and more each day; I don't know why.

If you're still reading this, please write back. I'm getting nervous.

√√√√√√√

Factions in the War

The only lasting peace comes from the application of Reason and Scientific Principles.
— The Rt. Ordinary Horatio Jackson, *A Public Servant, The Adventures of Baron Munchausen*

Analysis of Psychological Tactics
Addendum to Promotion Review
Prepared by Agent #AT422

In the shadow world of espionage, lines between "sides" are not always clearly drawn. It's possible to define sides, and it's possible to define ideologies, but any such statements are generalizations. People cannot be

reduced to stereotypes. One can belong to a group, but any individual will have his own variant of the group's philosophy and his own reason for espousing it.

Nevertheless, when guessing how best to predict the actions of other groups and manipulate them accordingly, generalizations help. This applies to friendly diplomatic relations with other Conventions, as well as to necessary Social Conditioning of the random elements of society.

First, we shall examine how our Convention achieves its goals by cooperating with other groups in our Union. Then we will examine the more difficult practice of Processing criminals who serve the Traditions.

The Conventions

We're all in this together.

— Harry Tuttle, *Brazil*

The Technocracy functions as a Union, but different Technomancers have different visions of the goals of our Union and the shape of our future. Each Convention can be said to have a "party line," interpreted in various ways by individuals within a Convention. Within the Symposiums, debate over the preferred courses of action in accordance with these philosophies can be fierce.

In any such debate, we can have a degree of assurance that the New World Order has the upper hand. The Methodology of the Ivory Tower organizes most Symposiums, and although a Department Chair may be chosen from another Convention, we oversee the progression of philosophical dialogue, with and without the use of subtle procedures.

The New World Order also performs the administration necessary between Conventions. Operatives rarely work alone. Instead, the Administrative Branch of the Ivory Tower appropriates the support Operatives require from other Conventions. In defining the other Conventions, we must understand what assistance they can give us as we organize our forces.

Progenitors

Gengineers, Pharmacoepiasts and FACADE Engineers make up the Convention of the Progenitors. Each Methodology provides assistance in the science of espionage. Pharmacoepiasts provide the "chemical gadgets" necessary to augment an Operative's performance, and also manufacture pharmaceutical augmentation to interrogation and brainwashing. Gengineers and FACADE Engineers provide the genetic constructs that compose the ranks of our shock troops. Cloning provides a steady population for our war effort; gengineering guarantees the quality of our artificial recruits.

Gengineering is also useful for altering the appearance of Gray Men, assisting in infiltration work. Through genetic alteration and plastic surgery, a Man in Gray can appear as nearly anyone. In extreme circumstances, cloning and gengineering can be used to manufacture constructs

to replace dangerous Sleepers or even mages. Regardless of whether a Sleeper is replaced with a construct or Gray Man, the Progenitors cannot carry out this task alone. The Progenitors may be proud of their ability to replace "random elements," but without the sleepteaching and indoctrination methods developed by the Ivory Tower, this kind of operation cannot succeed.

Since we offer practical field tests for their work, obtaining assistance from the Progenitors is fairly easy. It is occasionally useful to assign one Progenitor to an amalgam in the field. Pharmacoepiasts are usually ideal for this type of work, unless a FACADE Engineer is necessary to perform a cloning in the field. Keep in mind, however, that talented Progenitors experienced in lab work and research on the Horizon may not appreciate the discretion required in the field. For this reason, field agents of the Progenitors often require the supervision of Field Observers or Gray Men.

Iteration X

The most obvious uses of Iteration X Technocrats are as shock troops and as backup. Cyborgs and HIT Marks are superb for providing the firepower required to support an amalgam of Men in Black. For Men in Gray, they function as ordnance, held in reserve in case last-minute support is necessary. In the field, it is evident that agents of the New World Order must advocate restraint to counteract the crude, vulgar methods used by our brothers in Iteration X. At the higher levels of administration, some Comptrollers argue that cyborgs are capable of carrying out operations without the assistance of Black Suits. As a compromise to this philosophy, Watchers and Servants are sometimes assigned to work with amalgams of cyborgs to guarantee that discrete procedures are implemented.

When dealing with Iteration X, never forget that there are other Methodologies as well. The Statisticians provide much of the raw data we need for psychological and Operative analysis. They cannot function without us, for we're really the ones who provide the interpretation for their data. Our dealings with the Methodology of Time-Motion Management are quite formal; we set the goals of production in administration, and they implement them. Finally, although BioMechanics make the final decisions on the training and availability of cyborgs, through diplomacy, we can suggest which cyborgs would be useful for operations.

Field amalgams of Black Suits often consist of at least one HIT Mark as backup; amalgams of cyborgs are usually required to include a Servant or Watcher. Cyborgs also serve well as temporary members of a team. Political relations between our two Conventions are improving. Comptrollers of Iteration X occasionally argue that they are capable of fighting in the war without the "interference" of the NWO. Rivalry between cyborgs and Gray Men still continues. The higher success rates of our agents, however, demonstrates why we continue to be the dominant Convention in organizing amalgams.

The Syndicate

The main coordination we have with the Syndicate is through advertising. Watchers will often coordinate media campaigns with the current sales needs of the Syndicate. The messages conveyed in advertising advocate conformity to the proper values that bestow happiness and prosperity upon the Masses. By gathering surveillance data on purchasing habits and preferences, we help the Syndicate in their battle plans. Furthermore, the implementation of automatic tellers has greatly enhanced our ability to track the movement of individual Sleepers, and the Syndicate's ability to guide their purchasing habits has occasionally been helpful in manipulating them as part of larger operations.

Contacts in the criminal underworld act as "sympathizers" to the Syndicate, and can be efficient, if nontraditional, allies in our efforts to eradicate random elements. So far, most field amalgams do not require individual Syndicate representatives, although current negotiations may find new ways to integrate them with Operative teams. The Syndicate has other methods of contributing to the war effort, namely, their methods of obtaining funding for our operations.

Too often, however, the Syndicate has been contentious in regard to their autonomy in making financial decisions. We must not allow the headstrong nature of these "bean counters" to detract from the power of our leadership. We are the ones who make policy; they must realize that their place is in implementing it. They must focus on drawing funds and finance from the Sleepers and cease to question our policies, if we are to maintain the Unity that makes our society so strong.

Void Engineers

Our work with the Void Engineers rarely relates to the front lines. Instead, the Void Engineers perform the critical task of maintaining the Horizon Gauntlet and implementing Security Beyond the Horizon. Although we typically coordinate security within Research Collectives, the Void Engineers are primarily responsible for outside security.

Another useful alliance with this Convention concerns computer security. They are more responsible for security in the Digital Web; we are more concerned with computer security relating to the activity of Sleepers. Data is often extracted from the Net by the NWO. Usually, Sleeper operations do not require the assistance of the Void Engineers; however, knowing that a group of Cybernauts can lend assistance outside the Net is a good assurance to success in such operations.

Finally, the distant patrols of the Void Engineers often require static firepower and Operative assistance. Although the Voids are often better suited to function in areas like the Deep Universe, Horizon Realms and distant worlds, they can also serve as support for Gray Men and Field Specialists. Neutralization Specialists also manage threats to Reality that originate from outside the material world, such as ghosts, spirits and "astral entities." It is often best to leave such perils to their expertise.

The Amalgams

Evans was a crusader. Now, I got no fight with any man who does what he's told, but when he don't, the machine breaks down. And when the machine breaks down, we break down.

— Platoon

It is worth noting that within certain geographic areas, Technomancers from different Conventions will sometimes function in the same amalgam over an extended period of time. We have found that the morale of field agents is often better if they function as part of the same team for more than one mission. It is not unusual, then, for a safe house to act as a base of operations for the same group of three to ten Technomancers as part of an extended campaign, if you will, in a particular city.

Tradition Mages

You are a flaw in the pattern, Winston. You are a stain that must be wiped out. Did I not tell you just now that we are different from the persecutors of the past? We are not content with negative obedience, nor even with the most abject submission. When you finally surrender to us, it must be of your own free will.

—1984

Each Tradition of mages is a political entity representing a philosophy of magick and reality. Traditionalists, by practicing their antiquated and conflicting philosophies of magick, seek to undermine the very fabric of reality. On the surface, if would appear that they share a common goal: opposing the procedures of the Technocracy, what they call "technomagick." There is no such unity in the Traditions. Sons of Ether and Virtual Adepts advocate a "compromise" in the magickal paradigm, allowing certain apparatus and forbidding others. Each time one of the Tradition mages works magick under his particular model of reality, he undercuts the philosophies of the other Traditions. The result is a patchwork quilt of muddled ideas, dangerous visions and destructive realities.

By coordinating our efforts within our Union, we rework that fabric into one strong pattern. The patches of resistance in the fabric of Reality are slowly worked out. One can see that trying to rip a patch out of the fabric would damage the areas around it. But subtler methods, such as changing the tint of the cloth or removing and reworking the stitches — in effect, amending and altering the paradigms of the Traditions to fit with ours — repair and strengthen the warp and weave. This fits with the philosophy of the Reality Programmers: "Do not destroy when you can suborn."

Reality Programming allows us to bring converts to our cause. When evaluating a potential convert, two essential factors should be considered. They correlate to the "carrot and stick" method of conversion:

• First, an agent must understand the similarities between the other group and his own. Any ideological common ground offers an opportunity for potential conversion;

• Second, in order to effectively manipulate potential converts, an agent must first understand his opponents' weaknesses.

By working both techniques — offering sympathy while masking the threat of hostility — the agent has a greater chance of implementing conversion.

Each Tradition has ideological and tactical weaknesses. These are by no means absolutes, but they can guide you in subverting your enemies.

The Akashic Brotherhood

"I admit it. I can't fight what I can't see."

Akashic Brothers typically fall into two categories: those who seek to strengthen the mind and those who seek to strengthen the body. Often, a practitioner will focus on one aspect at the expense of the other. Those who seek to strengthen the body are easier to exploit. Psionic assault and guile often work where brute force does not. Keep in mind, though, that the first task an Akashic disciple often learns is the empowerment of his mind, establishing his basic psionic defenses.

Those whose who seek to strengthen the mind are harder to manipulate. Cruder methods are sometimes necessary. Showing the weaknesses of their primitive fighting techniques is one way to demoralize your enemy. I have yet to see a martial artist who could stand up to the average chain gun. Perfection of the mind is useless when the spirit is broken or the body destroyed.

Celestial Chorus

"Yes, I'm ready to serve the One. I can see now that God is really in the machine."

There was a time when Faith was strong enough to contest with Reason. Those days are gone. Faith is a concept of the Mythic Age, an ideal that has no place in the modern world. The Cabal of Pure Thought once contested this idea with the Order of Reason. Remnants of the Cabal's cults are now few and far between.

There is a certain common ground between Technocracy and most doctrines of Faith. The Chorus are, at the core of their being, essentially collectivists. Their belief in the One is not too far removed from the idea of serving one Union. Many converts of the Chorus have adapted their religious beliefs to incorporate the idea of worshipping technology rather than following mythic entities. Some of the strongest advocates of the religion of Autochthonia are former Celestial Chorus members, and Richardson's observations on the values of the "True Knights," the Templars, have brought many spiritualists to a compromise with our values. Religious fanatics often make outstanding conformists, as many have already proven themselves vulnerable to standard brainwashing techniques.

Cultists of Ecstasy

"Leave her alone! She has nothing to do with this! She's a lover of mine… Don't harm her. I'll do whatever you say."

Exploiting the vices of enemy agents is one of the oldest techniques of espionage. Using these techniques on Cultists, however, often requires special precautions. Blackmail will not bring shame from the average Cultist, but it can bring censure and even retribution from the community in which she lives. Controlling a Cultist by supplying an addictive substance is a challenge, but our allies in the Pharmacoepiast Methodology of the Progenitors are constantly working to overpower the resistance of potential converts. Cultists also have ties to Sleepers that can be exploited: lovers, drug contacts, fellow musicians, and so on. Directly controlling a Cultist can be quite difficult; making use of the Sleepers around them can prove easier and more effective.

Dreamspeakers

"We haven't the strength to resist their patrols. We're too busy driving the Wyrm from our lands."

One way to strike at these fanatics is to strike at the territory that is dear to them. Strengthening a local Gauntlet around their territory is a good start. Basic tactics of "ecotage" are extremely useful to augment the effect. When the purity of their territory is compromised, they will often see corruption of the accompanying spiritual landscape. The general public also has a certain fear of environmental fanatics. This makes Dreamspeakers easy to frame for acts of ecoterrorism.

Euthanatos

"That can't be! The raven said the weakness in the Construct was right here!"

Members of this Tradition make for difficult enemies. They have an innate ability to sense weaknesses, guide probabilities and sow disorder in the midst of our Unity. Countermagick is essential; any amalgam striking against a Chantry with a Euthanatos would be wise to have an agent with a talent for these procedures and for Entropic influence. If countermeasures are particularly successful, disinformation is sometimes implanted as a result. Opposing a Euthanatos mage with counterprocessing is an excellent example of reason working better than force. Killing such a mage only delays him.

This Tradition's preoccupation with death and killing also works in our favor. Euthanatos are rarely trusted by their compatriots, a fact which we can often use to our advantage. It takes only a single death and a few well-placed words and thoughts to turn an Euthanatos' teammates into his undoing. No procedure is required.

Hollow Ones

"Look, I don't give a damn if a bunch of self-serving Tradition mages live or die. Just let me come out of this alive, okay?"

Disaffection makes for excellent recruitment opportunities. Many Hollow Ones value their freedom and individuality over anything else. The bitterness many Hollow Ones feel toward the Traditions sometimes makes

them willing to sell information or assistance piecemeal. Do not overestimate this tendency, however. Some will intentionally feed disinformation, and some are fiercely loyal to their Chantries, especially if they have been treated well. Some will also strike against the Technocracy with crude force and without fear of retribution, hoping that Tradition mages will take the brunt of Technocracy counterattacks.

The Order of Hermes

"If that's what it takes to make sure they're safe, I'll help you."

The Order of Hermes is often righteously indignant about their opposition to the Technocracy, but their motivations have not really been so different. They essentially seek to recreate one world order as well: the Medieval Paradigm. Some claim to care about the safety and security of the Masses. They essentially advocate a "manatocracy," a society where those who control magick control the Masses. This is one avenue to potential recruitment. Some are willing to make the compromise of integrating foci into their magick if they can in turn assist in operations against supernatural threats, such as ghosts and vampires. Establishing our "common enemies" can lead to collaboration, and collaboration often leads to their compromise. This type of indoctrination can be a lengthy process, but a rewarding one.

Sons of Ether

"Of course I believe in the triumph of science."

Sabotage is one of the most effective techniques against the Sons of Ether. Their core belief in a scientific paradigm makes them useful. Disproving and sabotaging their outlandish theories is often the first step to breaking their will. Bribing them with equipment — even sabotaged equipment — can also be useful. Sons of Ether are already allies to some extent because of their promotion of the use of technomagickal foci. Once they are converted, they make for very devoted servants.

Virtual Adepts

"Uh.. excuse me. Did you say 'fifty-thousand dollar salary'?"

There is a tendency in the mundane world for great hackers to become the most rabid opponents of hacking. Many sixteen-year-old rebel deckers sell out to well-paying jobs in computer security by the time they are in their thirties. So it is with Virtual Adepts. With many, it's a waiting game. Others are willing to sell out early in life.

Many of our fellow Conventions pursue a "shoot on sight" policy with these traitors. We recognize, however, that an ally gained is better than a foe destroyed. Suitable Processing, significant incentive and a new identity (with the threat of revealing the old one to hang over his head) are often effective conversion strategies. When conver-

sion fails, however, a suitably gruesome death often serves as a warning for other anarchists and an additional "alternative" for later converts.

The Bottom Line

Living as a rebel means isolation, rejection, paranoia and possible extermination. Compromise with the Technocracy brings security, prosperity and possible advancement. Remember: not every conversion has to result in a mage moving into a Research Collective and abandoning magick. If a mage restricts his magick and begins to implement foci, or even if he sells out a few crucial bits of information to guarantee his own survival, he's on his way to conversion.

The opportunities the New World Order affords to former Reality Criminals shows the mercy and majesty of our Union. Using subtlety to suborn the slaves of Traditionalist politics is one of the most delicate tasks of the Operatives. However, most Traditions refuse their place in our harmonious world. Most would, like errant children, rather violently rebel with acts of terrorism and pollution of consensual reality than atone for their crimes. Thus, we have constructed the tools of interrogation and social conditioning to ensure their safety. We have forestalled the genocidal policies of Iteration X to offer the random elements of the Traditions sanctuary from the madness of Paradox. Their political squabbles have turned the world away from our Utopia to create a battlefield of ideological insanity. We must not let the Sleepers suffer for the folly of the Traditionalists.

Other Factions

What we are looking at is Good and Evil, Right and Wrong.

— George Bush, on "Operation Desert Storm," sampled in "NWO" by Ministry

Just once, I'd like to fight something that could be harmed by bullets.

— The Brigadier, *Doctor Who*

Although the Ascension War is chiefly between the Traditionalists and the Technocracy, there are other factions to consider as well. Hidden among the Masses are several groups of supernatural entities who can shift the balance of any particular skirmish in the war.

In evaluating these factions, one prime consideration must be made: Sleepers must never learn of their existence. There is perhaps a certain amount of subconscious belief in the these creatures that gives them power. Within the Tower, some psychologists speak of a "collective unconscious" that recognizes their existence even if the conscious mind does not. However, any member of any of these groups working to make her existence known to the general public would greatly threaten the security of the consensual reality paradigm.

Usually, these groups have standard procedures for protecting their secrecy. This is mainly because such entities understand the retribution they would receive if the Masses knew of their existence. They would be hunted and extinguished as the monsters they are. Some higher-ranking entities within these factions also realize that if they were to compromise the secrecy of their existence, our Union would organize countermeasures. The existence of the occult must not be made known. Until they can be exterminated, they must remain hidden.

In the same vein, we must keep our existence secret. The true extent of our power, the depth and breadth of our conspiracy must remain a mystery. We must trust the judgment of Our Leaders to only reveal what we must know, for we suspect that other factions are led by creatures with power beyond what the agents on the front lines imagine. There are ancient forces, "giants in the earth" who are watching and waiting for their time to emerge.

There is a further complication: not all of these groups strive to remain secret. Some rejoice in their monstrous activities. It is imperative that their activities are curtailed whenever possible. For the safety of humanity, and the security of our world, the supernatural world must be contained or destroyed.

Nephandi

What we seek to build, they strive to destroy. What we work to purify, they infiltrate and corrupt. Never trust these deceivers. Although they are useful as a second front against the Traditionalists, as agents who lead random elements to their destruction, some seek to infiltrate our Union as well. Nephandi serve dark destructive forces that not only seek to undermine order within the Traditions, but to undermine *all* order.

Marauders

There can be no compromise with these outcasts. Do not reason with them. They are the antithesis of reason. Do not suborn them. They are the antithesis of sanity. Do not tolerate them. They are to be destroyed whenever found.

Moreso than any Tradition mage, the Marauders work to bring complete chaos and disorder into the world. They are notorious for directly assaulting Constructs and even infiltrating Tradition Chantries. One strong argument for the continuance of the Pogrom and the genocidal policy of destroying all mages is that many Tradition mages are Marauders in disguise.

The insanity of Marauders is so strong that it often warps reality around them. Traditionalists may intentionally warp reality; Marauders are diseased to such a great extent that they cannot help but infect their surroundings. Like a cancer in the body politic, they must be excised; like a rabid animal savaging the innocent at random, they must be put down. By any means, by any method, they must be stopped. Destroy them on sight.

Vampires

There are currently no overt hostilities between the Technocracy and vampires. Most adhere to a strict policy of secrecy called "The Masquerade." Among the societies of vampires, openly proving the existence of fellow vampires to the Masses is punishable by death.

Some extreme academics within the Collegiums continue to debate the policy of handling a group of vampires known as "Clan Tremere." Although they are still practitioners of magick, they work within a limited static paradigm that does not threaten the stability of reality. The Thaumaturgy of the Tremere does not rework reality. Current theory states that such magick works because subconsciously the Masses believe in the existence of vampires. As the mages pose a far more direct threat than the vampires, even the Tremere, we continue to rely upon their practice of the Masquerade.

It should be noted, however, that there is one society of vampires that cares nothing for secrecy. They openly revel in their bestial natures and practice open cruelty on innocents. This society, called the Sabbat, is limited only by one consideration: they are hunted by the rest of vampiric society when they do not curtail their operations. We suspect that open hostilities with the Sabbat would lead to all-out war between our two groups; therefore, we are currently leaving the war against the Sabbat to the rest of vampiric society.

Werewolves

You must look for the werewolves in your midst.
— Zirinovsky, on looking for spies in contemporary Russia

Perhaps there was a time long ago when these monsters had power in the world. If so, that time is long gone. These primitives are a dying breed, anachronisms who fight a losing battle to bring spiritualism back into the world. Many of them are involved in the anti-corporate environmentalist movement, and many of them work against companies affiliated with the Syndicate. We do know, however, that they are capable of espionage as well, as we have discovered some members of their society working *within* corporations. Their secret circle has thoroughly infiltrated society.

The main guideline to remember when handling these creatures is that direct violence is very risky. Therefore, we limit most of our operations against them to subtle manipulation. By current estimates, at the rate they are dying, it is unlikely that they will survive beyond the end of the century.

Ghosts

The New World Order rarely handles these threats to our world; the Void Engineer Neutralization Specialists are better equipped and better trained to deal with them.

The party line, however, is quite simple: destroy them. We know that they can interfere with computer and electrical equipment, we know they can circumvent security devices and we know that they exploit the living. That's all the justification we need. In any good amalgam, at least one agent has Spirit influence and can track spectral manifestations. We have found that overwhelming firepower is one successful tactic against them.

Faeries

Yes, I do believe in faeries. I believe they should be exterminated whenever possible.

— Daniel Smith, Intelligence Analyst, Operative Methodology

Most data compiled on these creatures is contradictory. We believe that they have difficulty maintaining a consistent identity; therefore, they are not to be trusted. Do not underestimate their ability to seed chaos and destruction.

√√√√√√√

Relocation

Please try to understand, we're helping all mankind.
We use them a while, then it's over the shoulder.
— Ministry, "Over the Shoulder"

To: Roland Cassault, Alexandra Takahashi
From: Daniel Smith, Intelligence Analysts
Re: Conversion, #AT422
Well done.

Agent Cassault, I'm pleased with the progress #AT422 has made. However, he has repeatedly refused gray work and has specifically requested the promotion to Unit Leader. We're going to honor his wishes. Eventually, I'm sure the training you've given him will be useful. Right now, we need assistance with Deep Universal Collective #722.

Agent Takahashi, make sure #AT422 has the data he requires for the final sweep of the station. We are currently assembling an amalgam of three agents to assist him in taking care of the invasion of D.U. Collective #722. We are arranging transport for #AT422 after the last stage of his training.

Subject is now being prepared for next wave of attack. Our Reality Programmers are mindscaping #AT422 in a virtual reality environment as training for his next assignment. Estimated time of completion is one week. Subject now believes "Northern California Research Collective" has been overrun and will soon be ready to assist in defense of DURC #772.

For the Good of the Collective,
Daniel Smith

√√√√√√√

mayday mayday mayday...please answer please answer please answer... they're coming... they're coming... omigod, they're coming through the tunnels, the plastic tunnels in the walls.. i can smell them...i can smell their burning skin... they come from outside space, outside our reality... the gauntlet will not hold!...the gauntlet will not hold!...low on ammunition...they walk through the walls of reality!... the center cannot hold, they walk through souls!...mayday mayday mayday...please answer please answer please answer...

√√√√√√√

To: Gene
From: Takahashi
Re: We're coming!
Gene! You're alive!

Hold on. We're sending a ship to pick you up. We need you, and fast. We need someone to lead the shock troops onto the station.

Looks like you're going to do Black Suit work one more time....

√√√√√√√

To: Roland
From: Sandi
Re: Gene

What a shame. He had such promise, too. I'm sure he'll make a great Unit Leader, once you manage to erase those independent notions out of his mind.

I heard about the flowers you sent to my apartment. You're so sweet, Roland. After we send in the grunts, with #AT422 leading the way, I'm sure I'll be rushing back to you soon. Good luck with the rest of his programming.

Love, Sandi ;-)

√√√√√√√

mayday mayday mayday... we are under attack... this is operative #AT422...northern california research collective... creatures of unknown origin have breached our correspondence jamming and have destroyed most of the station...there are four of us left....we are arming heavily...we will not allow intruders in our midst...the center must hold...we must purify against their smell...need reinforcements, please assist, please assist, please assist....

File Two: Hardware

Welcome, ladies and gentlemen,
To the end of the 20th century
And the arrival of Friendly Fascism.
Regrettably, millions will die as before,
But just think of the tremendous selection in savings you'll gain!
Of course, the loss of freedom and democracy are tragedies, I know,
But consider the entertainment value contained within!
And to remind you: it is you the people
Who have mandated this course of our fate.
So please, come with me.
— Consolidated, Introduction to "Friendly Fascism"

JOHNSON
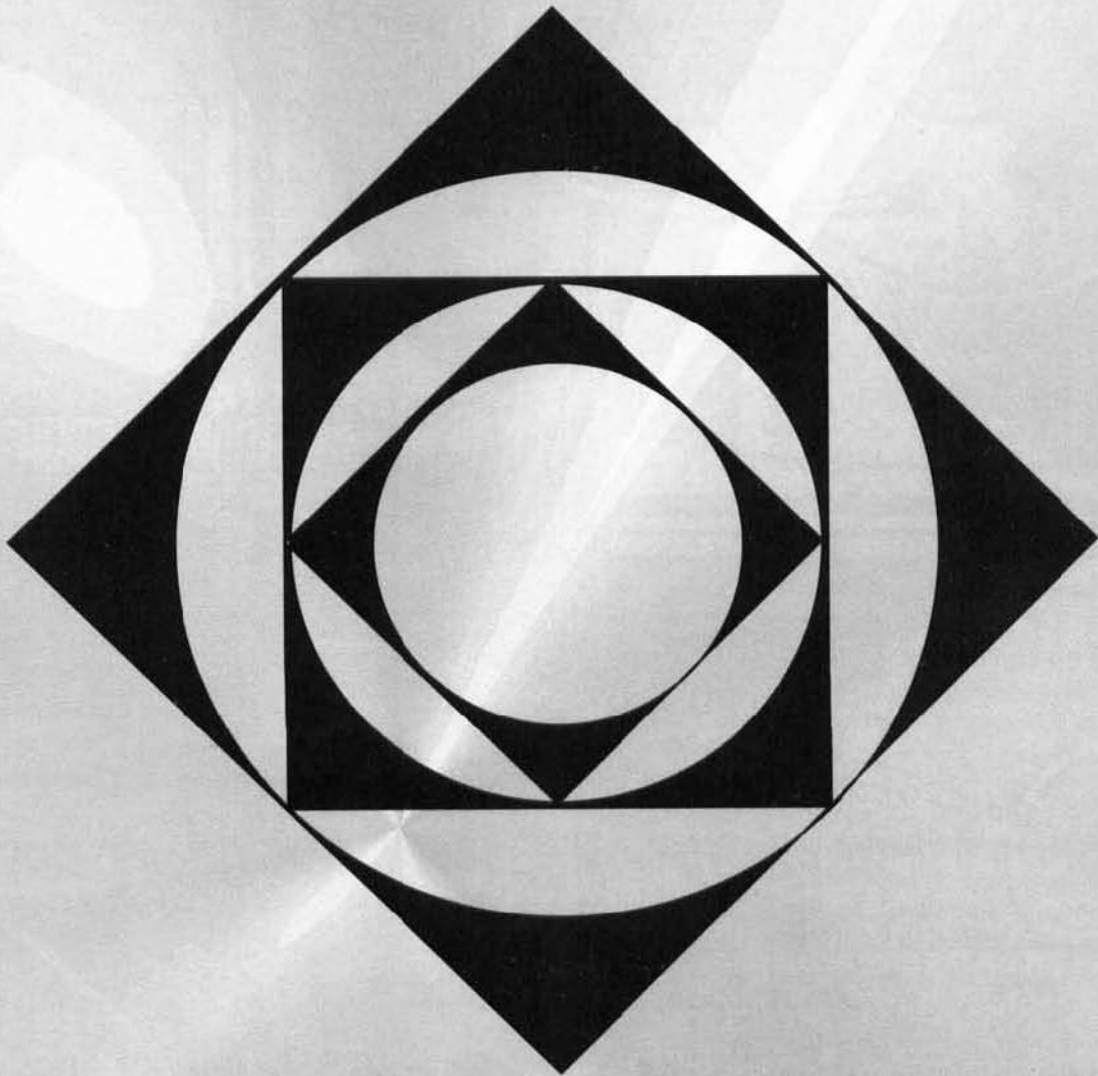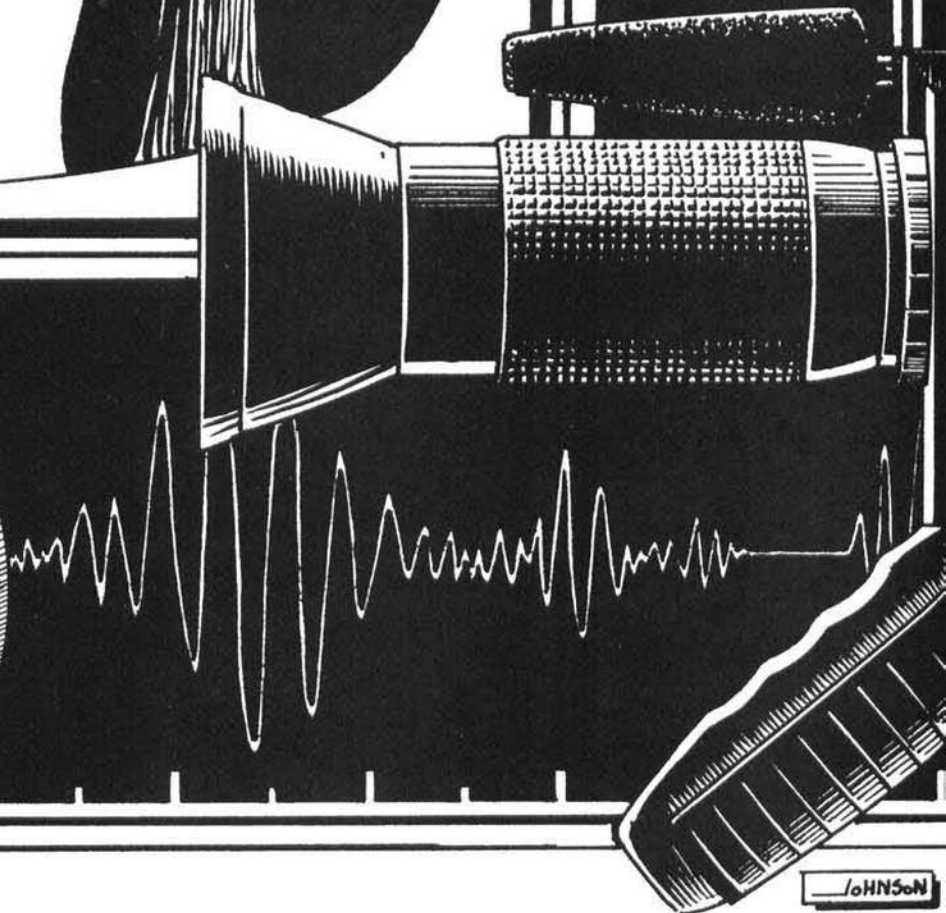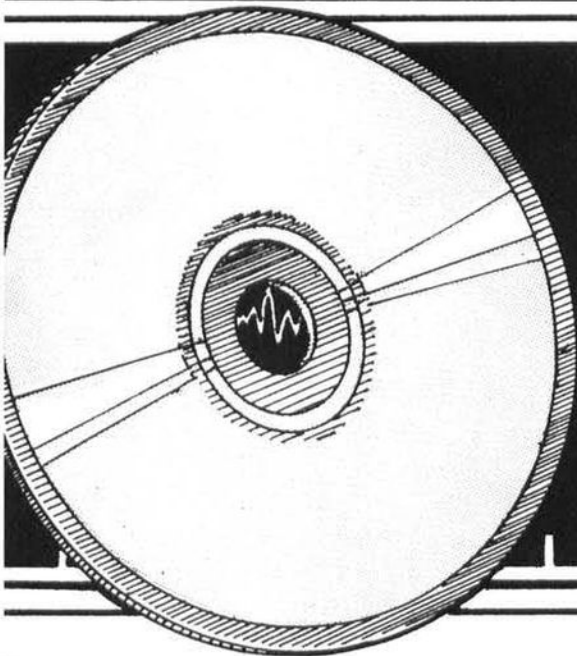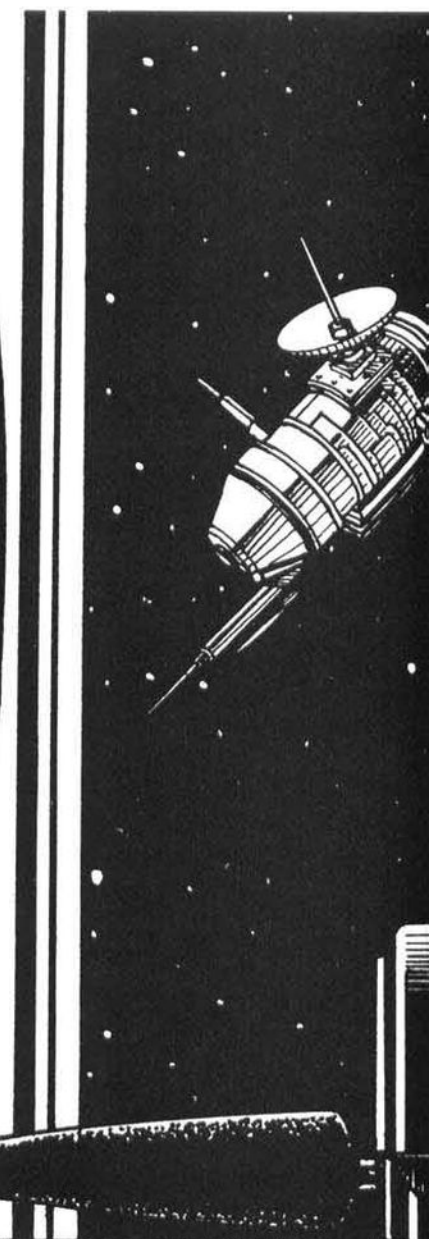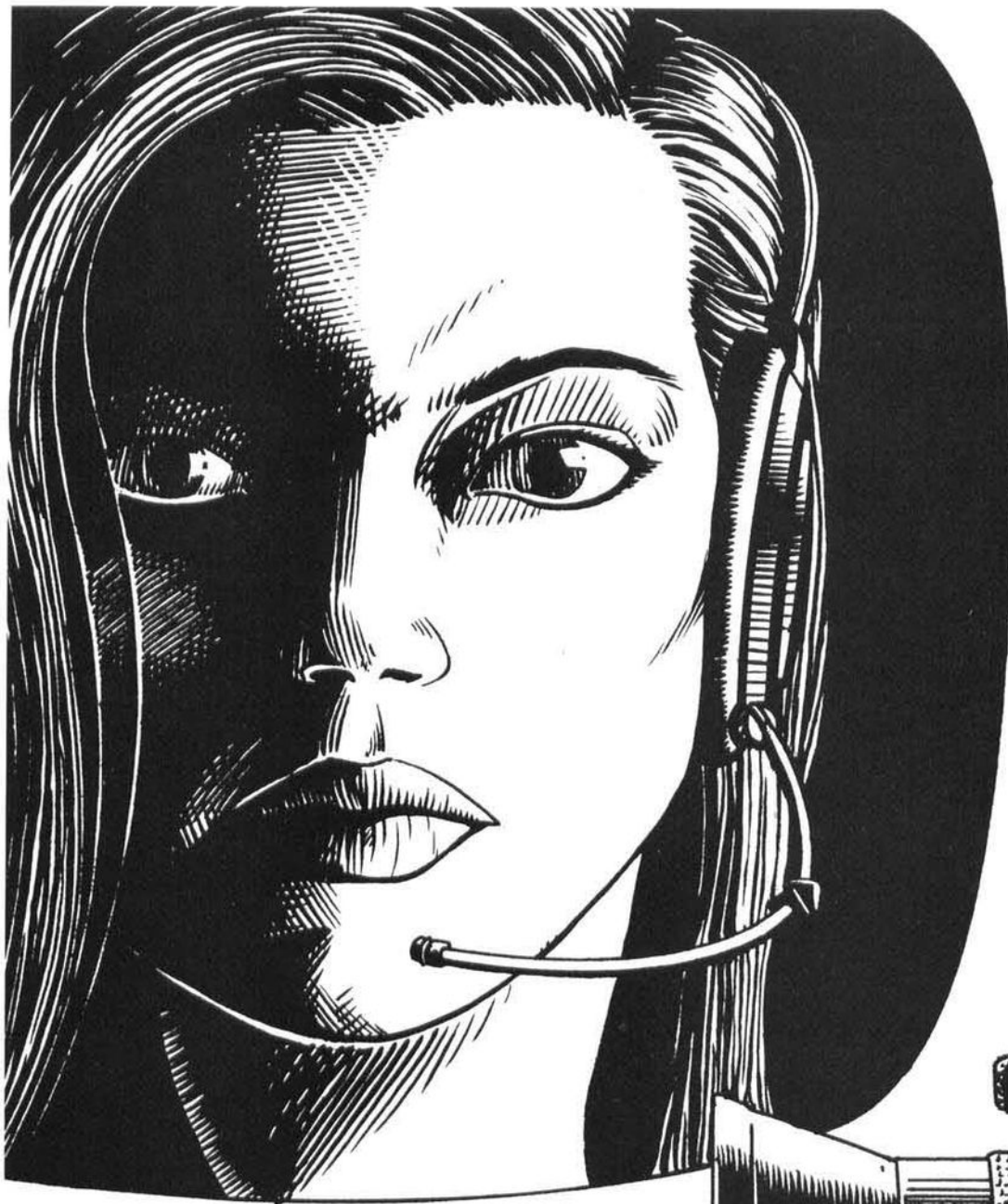
Chapter Three: Procedures, Gadgets and Agents

We control matter because we control the mind. Reality is inside the skull. You learn by degrees,
Winston. There is nothing that we could not do. Invisibility, levitation — anything. I could float off this
floor like a soap bubble if I wished to. I do not wish to, because the Party does not wish it. You must get
rid of those nineteenth-century ideas about the laws of nature. We make the laws of nature.

— 1984

Technomagick

A technocracy has an essentially anti-humanist philosophy at its core: machines are more important than men. Knowledge and power don't come from mastery of the self or mastery of the world around you; perfection comes from mastery of machines. As a machine becomes more efficient, the person using it becomes more efficient. As technology evolves, in order to keep up, we must adjust our needs to fit the requirements of the machines we use. More precisely, as we develop a dependence on technology, we must adjust our philosophies and ethics to accommodate our machines.

Within the Technocracy, the machines are so advanced that only an Enlightened few can use them. The Technocrats who control them have advanced beyond the Masses, who cannot. Accordingly, power rests with an Enlightened minority, a secret society that hides its true power. Since they hold the reins of authority, they establish the standards of morality in industrialized nations and slowly work to spread it to the rest of the world.

This "might makes right" philosophy is the foundation of the New World Order. "Progress" is made at the expense of freedom and individuality. Neil Postman, in his book *Technopoly*, argues that in an advanced society, science and technology affect the ethics and lifestyles of the people using them. In the New World Order, science and technology are used to manipulate information. Information shapes the world.

In the Information Age, for instance, the ability to compile extensive records on an individual, monitor his life, label him, number him and process him denies him his privacy and individuality, as well as part of his humanity. Media becomes a way to shape reality by guiding consensus, setting the agendas of public discourse and focusing on issues the gatekeepers of information consider the most important. Education becomes a series of standardized curricula, scientific testing and skirmishes for an "acceptable" body of dogma to disseminate to the Masses.

The technology used in the modern world shapes how we perceive reality. A video camera is regarded as an objective observer of events; therefore, what we see on the news is perceived as "truth." An argument among five

people on the Internet can be presented as a sampling of the public at large, causing the opinions of a few highly vocal individuals to be mistaken for an objective representation of public opinion. A powerful nation can use technological wizardry and espionage to manipulate the government of a third world country, creating the impression that justice has been served. Welcome to the New World Order.

Through Technocracy, consensus is guided by the opinion of "experts" — psychologists, technicians and Gatekeepers who define for the Masses the way the world is and the way the world should be. These experts have the tools of manipulation, the scientific knowledge and technomagickal Devices that give them power. Machines can master men, but through force of will, the Enlightened can master the machines, thereby mastering the world around them.

In **Mage**, Technomancers refer to "processing" and "vulgar procedures" when they speak of shaping reality and guiding the Masses. Tradition mages call this "technomagick," the alteration of reality through technological theories and machines. The difference between technomagick and the mystick variety is the mage's perception. The Awakened mage knows that it is force of Avatar, will and knowledge that allow her to rework reality, while the Technomancer believes that scientific principles guide his craft, even if he must invent those principles himself.

NWO Procedures

Subtlety is important to the NWO; moreso than any other Convention, the Order requires its operatives to act with discretion and an eye towards long-term effect, not short-term advantage. Because of this, many New World Order procedures take more time and preparation than most magickal Effects. This limitation is counterbalanced by virtual invisibility; because most NWO Effects come through foci, mass paranoia and extended operations, they are largely coincidental and tend to last longer.

Men in Black do not simply wave their hands and cause buildings to fall; if harsh measures are called for, they whip out high-tech blasters or explosives, computers or devices of torture. When time permits, Convention agents perform elaborate mind games, tracking procedures and media barrages. These Effects usually require extended actions, but successes are cumulative. A gradual mindscaping (see below) will last longer and prove more effective than a sudden brain-wrenching Mind Effect. This philosophy guides most of the Convention's magicks; the New World Order works slowly but decisively, with minimal flash and maximum results.

Apparatus

Dependence on technology has shaped the paradigm of the Technomancers. Performing "magick" requires the use of a Device or invention to alter reality. Again, mastery of technology allows for a mastery of reality itself. The type of Device a Technomancer uses as part of procedure is called an apparatus. The type of apparatus required depends on the Convention, Methodology and paradigm of the Technomancer.

Some examples are listed below:

Correspondence
Watcher: satellite surveillance, camera, telephone
Operative: credit card, black limousine, laser sight
Servant: telephone, intercom, e-mail

Entropy
Watcher: television
Operative: reports from field agents
Servant: test results, transcripts

Forces
Watcher: microphone, light meter
Operative: military weaponry

Matter
Operative: military weaponry

Life
Any: plastic surgery, medical kit

Mind
Any: access to computer records, intimidation, media barrages, torture
Servant: sleepteacher, subliminal broadcaster
Watcher: television or radio

Prime/Spirit
Watcher: recording device
Operative: sunglasses
Servant: computer

Time
Any: digital watch
Watcher: editing bay
Servant: academic journal

A pair of sunglasses often works as a sensory-magick focus for Men in Black. An Enlightened Operative is informed enough to see the truth hidden behind a panoply of lies. At the same time, he must be able to filter extraneous data to find this truth. Watchers have special

equipment, such as "Kirlian" lenses, to enable them to do this. Servants of the Ivory Tower sift through bureaucratic files and databases to find Prime, and have little influence over Prime or Spirit outside such applications. Operatives have such a high degree of dedication to this goal that a complicated apparatus isn't necessary — a pair of sunglasses is enough.

This Convention specializes in Mind magick. Because NWO agents have access to so much information, some people assume that they know more than they actually do. Part of this Convention's strength comes from fear and paranoia. Many Sleepers believe the "government" and "secret agents" are far more efficient than they actually are; therefore, the efficacy of the Convention increases as paranoia increases. Having access to the massive databases on Sleepers and former Sleepers, such as mages, is enough of an apparatus to give control over them.

Common Effects

The problem with science is that it can be perverted!
— The Prisoner

Basic training for most Enlightened NWO agents often involves learning a few standard techniques of technomagick. While some of these are specific to a particular Methodology, others are known by all agents.

Coordination

NWO agents often work together to achieve a desired result. These mages can add their successes together if they know the proper procedure, achieving a more lasting result. Such cooperation is difficult, however, even with training. For each mage over the first three working together, the Storyteller should add one to the difficulty of the magick (+1 for four mages, +2 for five, and so on), to reflect coordination difficulties. Men in Black with a Hive Mind (see sidebar below) may sidestep this limitation if the Storyteller prefers.

Correspondence

•• Check the Corners

An agent outfitted with proper sensory equipment, such as parabolic microphones, thermal detectors or motion sensors, can detect movement around corners or behind walls. This procedure allows properly trained (read "Awakened") agents to exceed the capacities of normal equipment. See the **Correspondence Sensing** Effect (**Mage**, page 185) for more details. Remember, however, that a mage can only view a location he can pinpoint; this Effect does not grant the ability to scan the entire world in a glance!

••• Dragnet

This is similar to the Tradition Effect: **Filter All-Space**. Over a period of twenty-four hours, the Technomancer, with the assistance of his amalgam or collective, is able to locate an individual mage or group of mages. The agents must have some form of information about their target(s) to begin or continue the search. Dragnets typically require extended rolls against the area searched.

Area	Difficulty	Successes Needed
Small town	6	5
Small city	7	10
Large city	8	15
State	9	20
Country	10	25 (30 to scan the world)

Countermagick is possible if the target mage is inventive and alert; each success subtracts one from the agents'. Mages may deduct their Arcane ratings from a Dragnet's success as well; this is how Secret agent John Courage gets away with murder!

The type of coincidences used to explain this Effect depends on the Methodology using it. Operatives will often rely on reports from the field when tracking criminals. Several amalgams of Men in Black will perform a search of the area where the mages are supposedly present. Watchers primarily rely on surveillance. This may include satellite surveillance, hidden microphones, investigators with video cameras, and so on. Bureaucrats within the Ivory Tower have extensive access to computer records. By accessing Sleeper devices like automatic bank tellers, credit card records and even phone lines, these Technomancers lend their assistance as well.

Entropy

This influence is common among Analysts and psychologists. When analyzing data or evaluating the chances of a mission, the ability to find weak points in strategies or individuals is crucial.

••• Counterintelligence

Analysts also oversee the Security of the Constructs and Horizon Realms they live in. This Effect is used to counteract mages, Marauders or Nephandi using the Entropy Sphere to plan attacks on a Technomancer base. By subtle influence (coincidental magick), the analysts will have remembered to have taken precautions against the strategy employed by the intruders. This Effect acts as countermagick against their attempts to find a weakness in the security system; each success deducts one from an attacker's total.

Ivory Tower Servants specializing in computer security use this Effect to take precautions against intrusions by Virtual Adepts. The "counter-influence" will add to any countermagick against an attempt to enter the system. Each success subtracts from the Adept's number of success on his attempt to infiltrate or invade.

••••• Create Drone

If a captured mage is truly impervious to mind control and indoctrination, he might be rendered mindless through **Intellectual Entropy** (**Mage**, page 191). The resulting piece of animate meat will only be able to perform the simplest tasks. The psychological effect of seeing a former Chantry-mate reduced to a mindless drone is extreme.

The process can take days or even weeks; the difficulty is the subject's Willpower + 3, and she may resist as if the Effect were Mind magick. Each success reduces the mage's permanent Willpower by 1. One roll is made per day of psychic assault. When the mage's Willpower drops to zero, she is mind-numbed for one week per point lost. If she loses twice her Willpower to this Effect, her condition is almost irreversible.

Forces

• Monitor Communications

This Effect (similar to the Iteration X Effect of the same name) is used by the Watchers Methodology, and requires equipment for intercepting and interpreting communications (radio broadcasts, satellite images, microwave transmissions, etc.). At least two successes are required to interpret the communications; only one success is required if accessing the system physically (such as by tapping phone wires).

Mind

The most extensive training of agents of the New World Order involves learning procedures to influence the Mind. Many advanced processes involve mindscaping (see below), the act of restructuring a subject's beliefs by altering his perceptions of reality or social interactions. Some Abilities, such as Interrogation, Intimidation, Sense Deception, Psychoanalysis, Torture or Seduction, may be used to reduce the difficulty of such magicks (see **The Book of Shadows**), or to make the Effects seem coincidental. Some processes *require* technical knowledge; an agent without Computer Knowledge cannot operate a sleepteacher.

Mind Effects can be resisted with Willpower (**Mage**, page 176) if the subject is aware of some outside influence. Most mental magicks are virtually impossible to detect outright, however, and a target must actively oppose the agent in order to resist. Mages usually know what they are dealing with when Mind-influenced, but Sleepers rarely recognize such coercion for what it is.

•• Move Along

When a unit of Men in Black carries out an operation, they will often station a few agents nearby to discourage bystanders from watching too closely or "getting involved." Their intimidating presence has a marked psychological effect on anyone getting too close. Anyone desiring to get close must resist this magick with a Willpower roll to overcome the effect of the intimidation. Otherwise, he will ignore the encounter and "move along."

•• Psychic Intrusion

Men in Black use this Effect to assist in interrogation. The agent may choose either to gradually weaken the will of his subject or to extract specific information. Each use of this Effect requires one hour.

NO ENTRY

If the agent is attempting to weaken the will of his subject, each success will reduce the subject's temporary Willpower by one. If the agent is attempting to gain information, each success will lower the difficulty of an Intelligence + Interrogation roll by one, to a maximum modifier of -3.

••• Plausible Denial

This Effect is used to make the subject forget that he has witnessed an event. Three or more successes wipes one offending memory away.

With repeated uses, large gaps of the subject's memory can be erased, although the subject will remember having "blackouts." Keep in mind that a Sleeper who responds to a Technomancer's statement "You saw nothing," with "Yes, I did!" will certainly attract serious reprisal…

••• Social Conditioning

This is one of the most useful procedures of the Ivory Tower. Over time, through Reality Programming, an agent can condition anyone to follow a set of beliefs or change the object of his loyalty.

This process can take days or even weeks to achieve. By wearing down the subject's beliefs, the magick weakens and eventually changes those convictions. The agent rolls his Arete against the subject's Willpower + 3 (see **Create Drone**, above); successes do not destroy permanent Willpower, but make the subject suggestible. When the victim reaches zero Willpower, Reality Programming begins.

Conditioning requires an extended resisted action against difficulty 6. Other Abilities may reduce this to a maximum modifier of -3. The Storyteller ranks the degree of Social Conditioning on a scale of 1 to 10; the agent must achieve this number of successes on the extended action to alter his subject's beliefs.

1 The subject will forgive minor grievances, like inadequate food or improper working hours.
[Example: An escapist film makes someone forget the unhappiness she has suffered over the last week.]

2 The subject will submit to minor Technocratic procedures without question.
[Example: Minor procedures include such things as the "Bavarian fire drill" in Wilson and Shea's *Illuminatus Trilogy*; fire drills, routine inspections, etc.]

3 The subject considers another individual to be a friend, and will trust him and act friendly towards him. The subject strongly considers another individual to be a potential enemy and will watch him closely for signs of betrayal. A mage will refuse to perform minor Traditionalist procedures; the idea of using a candle to channel Quintessence or a blunted dagger to direct "magickal energies" now seems ludicrous.
[Example: An Observer is programmed to befriend #6 in *The Prisoner*; children working with The Spies are conditioned to watch their parents for signs of treason in *1984*; parents suspect their child is "up to something."]

4 The subject considers another individual to be a social leper, and will actively ignore him.
[Example: In *The Prisoner* episode "Piece of Mind," #6 is declared "Unmutual" and no one will associate with him.]

5 The subject becomes docile and pacifistic. He has no hostile impulses and cannot summon the will to fight.
[Example: Alex in *A Clockwork Orange*; #6 after "Social Conversion" in "Piece of Mind".]

6 The subject is actively hostile to another individual, and will actively work against him and possibly violently assault him.
[Example: An individual is programmed to hunt down another individual.]

7 The subject considers another group to be an ally to his own, and will secretly work to aid them; the subject considers another group to now be his enemy and actively conspires against them.
If the subject is a Tradition mage, he has been Processed and will be loyal to the Technocracy. If the subject is a Sleeper, she is now an educated Sleeper and will work as a sympathizer. The sympathizer is no longer considered a "witness" for vulgar technomagick.
[Example: Conditioning the Masses against Emmanuel Goldstein during the "Two Minutes Hate" in *1984*.]

8 The subject forgets ever having met a close friend or a close family member.
[Example: The parents of a Tradition mage forget their son or daughter.]

9 The subject will betray the object of his love or adoration, or treats a specific individual with reverence or religious devotion.
[Example: Winston's betrayal of Julia, or the Masses' worship of Big Brother in *1984*.]

10 The subject is homicidal towards another type of person and will risk life and limb to destroy the object of his hatred; the subject is suicidal with remorse at being rejected by another group and will do anything to gain the group's favor again.
[Example: "He had come to love Big Brother." —*1984*]

Social Conditioning can be used as a subtle influence by combining it with mindscaping. Social Conditioning involves restructuring the belief system or emotional relationships of the subject, while mindscaping involves altering the environment of an individual to change his perceptions of reality.

Under normal circumstances (working in isolation with a sleepteacher, Ivory Tower technician and Men in Black), one conditioning roll is allowed per day. Note that the subject does not have to resist; if she performs the **Empower Mind** Effect, however, the agent adds +2 to his conditioning difficulty.

The levels of Social Conditioning are listed on the facing pages, ranked by the number of successes the Reality Programmer must accumulate:

••• Edit Memory

This process is performed by Intelligence Analysts or technicians of the Ivory Tower. Old memories can be replaced with new ones. The process usually takes several hours.

Servants of the Ivory Tower typically perform this duty with equipment, such as sleepteachers or drugs and virtual reality machines. The subject is restrained and sedated while an alternate reality is created for him. A mage may try to actively deny the altered state. The result is an extended Arete roll against the subject's Willpower +3 (see above). The process is considered an extended action, and one roll is allowed per hour. The Reality Programmer must amass five success. Once these are obtained, he makes his "Edit Memory" roll, rolling Sphere + 3 against a difficulty of 6. For each success, he may alter one memory in the subject's mind.

Field agents can attempt crude versions of this with VCRs or editing bays, but the procedure becomes vulgar at that point. The most useful variant of this involves videotaping a real or staged scene and "splicing" it into the subject's memory. The order and content of the subject's memories are altered. Extreme mindscaping orchestrated to induce insanity can involve splicing experimental films, commercial films or commercials into the subject's memory to make the subject believe he has personally experienced them.

The process used by Intelligence Analysts is, in terms of Storytelling, more complex. For details, see "Mindscaping" later in this chapter.

••••• Manchurian Candidate

At this level of efficiency, a Man in Black or Servant of the Ivory Tower can program a subject to perform a series of actions upon command. The difficulty for this Effect can be reduced by a conjunctional roll of Manipulation + Leadership or Instruction, but the first roll can be resisted by a roll of Willpower. If the Reality Programmer succeeds, a "trigger" can be specified to activate the sequence. After all, the human mind is like a computer — it can be programmed. Uses of this Effect include programming a mage to kill a member of his Chantry, programming a Sleeper to sabotage equipment, or programming a mage's relative or family member to take action to reduce the mage's renegade convictions. Refer to the "Social Conversion" table above for the number of successes necessary to program a subject to perform a specific task.

Spirit

As with most Technomancers, agents of the New World Order rarely have influence beyond Spirit 2. Note that there is a process for high-ranking Operatives listed below: **Strengthen Gauntlet**. Spirit 5 allows high-ranking agents to discorporate their minds from their bodies, but information on astral operations is highly classified.

• Detect Reality Deviant

Although Men in Black typically have limited understanding, their will is sufficient to allow them to see past subterfuge and obfuscation. A Man in Black can use this Effect to counter a vampire's **Obfuscation**, any Effect rendering a mage invisible or undetectable, the Garou Gift: **Blur of the Milky Eye** or **Blissful Ignorance**, or a wraith's **Enshroud** Arcanos. Compare the level of the Man in Black's Arete with the level of the subject's Discipline level, Rank, Sphere rating or Arcanos level. If his rating is higher than the rating of his target, any magickal success will let him spot his target.

Example: Agent Simm tries to spot a "Blurry" Ragabash werewolf. If Simm's Arete is 4 and the Garou is only Rank 1, the Man in Black can magickally pierce the Gift. If the werewolf were Rank 4, however, Simm would have a harder time, and if it were an elder he would have no chance at all.

•• Summon Paradox Spirit

This is a last-ditch effort used by desperate amalgams. If an operation is not working, or the secrecy of a mission is seriously compromised, the leader of the group will defer to the darkest impulses of his will. This Effect draws a Paradox spirit to the next magickal act, vulgar or otherwise, that is performed. The number of successes dictates the level of the summoned spirit. Who it goes after will be anyone's guess…

Careless use of this process is frowned upon. For more information on Paradox Spirits, see **Book of Madness**.

Time

• Synchronize Watches

Successful use of this Effect will allow the members of an amalgam to carefully coordinate the timing of an operation. This is particularly useful to Men in Black, allowing them to carry out procedures with shocking precision. Others may even suspect that the members of the amalgam are in constant telepathic contact. No one in the amalgam will need to actually check a watch or specify times at which actions are taken. This is performed as a communal Effect to make an amalgam appear to have orchestrated a battle plan second by second.

••• Download Specialization

Many field agents of the Ivory Tower are experts in specific subjects. Any Servant of the Tower can quickly absorb massive amounts of information by rapidly assimilating written text. The agent can download information on one topic prior to a mission by studying for one day.

Each success will increase his Dice Pool by one with any Knowledge Ability for one day's duration. As an alternative, the Servant can use this Effect in conjunction with the Research Ability, reducing the difficulty of the research by 1 for each success on his Arete roll (up to a maximum modifier of -3).

Complex Procedures ("Spells")

Sense Node (•• Correspondence, • Prime)

Kirlian lenses are used to detect the presence of Quintessence. By using proper equipment, a Watcher can sense the presence of a Node in a building. The range at which this rote will work is based on the General Effects Table (see Chapter Three of the **Book of Shadows**), not the Correspondence Range Table in the **Mage** rulebook.

Heat Seeking (•• Correspondence, • Life)

This spell represents surveillance devices that track individuals by body temperature. Amalgams can use these devices to search buildings for specific individuals. When tracking a cabal with heat-seeking surveillance, each success will uncover one individual in the group. Bricks and mortar will not hide criminals from the watchful eyes of the Technocracy.

Hail of Bullets (•• Time, •• Forces)

After extensive training, with the assistance of "military weaponry," a unit of Men in Black can drastically increase the effectiveness of their firepower. If ballistic weapons are used, the weapons involved have been altered to increase their rate of fire. If energy weapons are involved, the devices have been "hotshotted" to increase their destructive capabilities. In either case, the Men in Black use such a heavy barrage of firepower that the number of shots fired is impossible to estimate.

This complex procedure is communal (**Mage**, p. 178): use normal Firefight rules to determine how many shots hit, then make a group Arete roll at difficulty 8. For each success, roll for an additional attack. The Effect must be repeated each turn to work continually.

Psychological Breaking Point (•• Entropy, •• Mind)

By using his access to psychological profiles, a Servant of the Ivory Tower can determine the psychological weaknesses of an individual. This can be advantageous during interrogation. If a subject is undergoing interrogation, lower the difficulty of all rolls by one (to a maximum modifier of -3). The psychologist can also, with a modified roll of Intelligence + Psychology, uncover a mage's psychological "Achilles' heel," whether it is a phobia, unusual sexual proclivity or addiction. In game terms, a successful application of this complex procedure will also reveal Psychological Flaws.

Phone Tap (•• or ••• Correspondence, •• Forces)

Watchers are experts at sending encoded messages and monitoring enemy communications. Sending a message requires Correspondence 2; intercepting a message requires Correspondence 3. If Watchers are monitoring a telephone, the subject will detect the intrusion with an opposed roll of Perception + Alertness. Note that hearing a conversation in a room with a telephone does not require that a "bug" be in the telephone or even that the phone be off the hook.

Holdout Weapon (••• Forces, •• Prime)

The agent using this complex procedure is assumed to have some form of deadly energy weapon "up his sleeve." As long as the user appears to be a government agent and is reasonably discreet, the procedure is usually coincidental in urban areas. The apparatus can be any type of pistol-shaped device. This procedure is easiest to use if no Sleepers are present.

Red Button (••• Entropy, ••• Forces, •• Prime)

"No! Not the Red Button!"

This procedure is employed when raiding the laboratory of a Son of Ether mad scientist. If the Arete roll is successful, the agent can find the weak point of the Etherboy's machine and sabotage the device with a roll of Intelligence + Repair or Technology, difficulty 7. If he succeeds, the device will self-destruct within thirty seconds, usually with a dramatic explosion (Forces + Prime). Many Ether mages are used to this type of persecution, and often prepare for this contingency by installing an aural or visual countdown to warn bystanders of the coming explosion.

Strengthen Gauntlet (•••• Spirit, •• Prime)

This is a rare rote possessed by a few Intelligence Analysts and Men in White. The Storyteller may choose to use it as part of an ongoing campaign. The results, under the proper circumstances, will increase the Gauntlet or Shroud of a captured area.

Although this ritual dates back to the destruction of Mistridge in the early thirteenth century, its most famous use was after the resolution of the Whitechapel Murders in 1894. Archibald St. Crispin and his black-clad Scotland Yard detectives eliminated a Chantry of mages summoning wraiths to ritually slay the living. In the course of his investigations, St. Crispin gradually learned about the menace of the unseen world. After the wraiths were destroyed, St. Crispin surveyed the remaining area and proclaimed the words, "This house is clean." This has become a tradition in this type of operation.

If an amalgam of Men in Black (or Void Engineer "ghostbusters") can hold an area for 24 hours after cleansing it of the occult, an Intelligence Analyst may send in a high-ranking official to survey the results. The communal procedure is then performed with the assistance of all Men in Black present. If the amalgam obtains at least five successes, the Gauntlet rating of the area will increase by one for the duration of the Effect. Difficulties involving the Shroud will increase by 3 (see **Wraith: The Oblivion** for more details on the Shroud).

Persona (•••• Life, •• Mind)

The agent has had plastic surgery to alter his appearance. With sufficient data, the disguise will be thorough enough to fool the subject's acquaintances. The conjunctional use of the Mind Sphere discourages anyone from looking too closely. A roll is only required if someone suspects the agent of being in disguise (Perception + Awareness, difficulty 8, penetrates the disguise).

Pirated Media Blitz (•••• Mind, ••• Correspondence, •• Forces)

This can be a risky but effective complex procedure. The target(s) can be in any room where a television or radio is present. If the Watcher in charge has a sufficiently high Arete rating, the transmission can be used over a wider area, such as a city. Subjects may oppose with Willpower if they choose to be skeptical of the local media. The Watchers have the power to interrupt commercial broadcasts with falsified "emergency bulletins" regarding "dangerous criminals." If the complex procedure succeeds, all viewers will consider the "criminal" to be a menace and will report any sightings or suspicious activity that can be tied to the mage. The Effect also diverts any responses to a NWO set-up.

However, if this complex procedure fails, Paradox will immediately slam on the pirating broadcast station, damaging equipment and possibly Technomancers as well. For this reason, pirate stations usually broadcast from very remote locations.

Mind Games

Oh, I was cured, all right.

—Alex, *A Clockwork Orange*

When mages or rogue Technomancers pose a great threat to the Technocracy and show resistance to simple techniques of indoctrination, specialists (such as Men in White) may orchestrate more complicated tactics to psychologically control their prey. Several examples are listed below.

Daedalus Gateway (•••• Correspondence, ••• Mind)

The subject is transported by vulgar procedures, yet is discouraged from realizing that his location has moved. One application of this is forcing a cabal exploring a building or Construct to take the same route repeatedly, regardless of the course of action they choose. This can be countered with Correspondence influence or a great expenditure of Will (two points per success on the procedure roll).

Imaginary Friend (•••• Mind, •• Prime)

As I was walking up the stair,

I met a man who wasn't there.

He wasn't there again today.

If only he would go away...

— *Children's Nursery Rhyme*

After one day of indoctrination, the subject is programmed to be the only one to see or hear from a fabricated persona. This can be anything from a Man in Black who is always hiding nearby watching to a wraith of a dead friend or phone calls from someone who has defected from the Chantry.

The subject can break this paranoia by an extended Willpower roll. One roll is allowed per day; the mage's successes must exceed the successes of the programmer.

Destructive Paranoia (•••• Mind, •• Entropy, •• Prime)

After one week of magickal indoctrination, the subject becomes programmed to believe he is in a world slightly different from his own, one where his persecution has drastically increased. After the conditioning ends, the paranoia remains, and lasts for the duration of the Effect.

The artificial reality will slowly drive the subject insane unless he resists. Friends will notice that he is not exactly in the same reality as the rest of them. The subject can make one Willpower roll (difficulty 8) per day. Each failed roll results in the loss of one point of Willpower; each successful roll brings him one step closer to sanity. The victim needs to accumulate more successes than his programmer had to escape. If a mage is thus reduced to zero Willpower, he is permanently in the other world and takes on an appropriate level of Quiet. The delusions have driven him to permanent insanity and an alternate interface with reality.

Typical delusions of destructive paranoia can range from the plausible to the extreme. The victim might, for instance, come to believe that his Chantry mates have split personalities and are conspiring against him when he is not around; that the neighbors' dogs are plotting against him and making plans telepathically; that Progenitors have equipped all the roaches in his apartment with monitoring devices; that invisible men are watching him; that the television can watch him, too; that all kitchen appliances secretly serve the Technocracy; that the Technocracy is just a front for an alien invasion, and so on.

It is a common practice for the Technocracy to offer to "save" mages who seem to have suddenly slipped into Quiet. The subject often concludes her harrowing adventure by feeling remorse for living a life of Reality Deviance. The process sometimes backfires, however, and creates a Marauder instead!

Degree Absolute (••••• Mind, •••• Correspondence)

A captured mage can be drugged and psychically isolated within virtual reality equipment to make her think she is in another environment. A Servant of the Ivory Tower can then program a series of events to test the reactions and psychological limitations of the subject. Any environment can be created. The mage's mind is in the machine.

One common version of this is a simulation of the state of Quiet; other possibilities include placing the subject in a "world" parallel to this one but acceding to another reality paradigm (a town in the Wild West, a children's fable, a fantasy world), placing him back in his Chantry with Gray Men impersonating his Chantrymates, or, for extremely dangerous renegades, even a town or village isolated from the real world where he can be subjected to "retirement."

If Paradox Backlash results, events may begin to go in the subject's favor, the interrogator may take psychic damage from the ensuing battle of wits, or the mage may
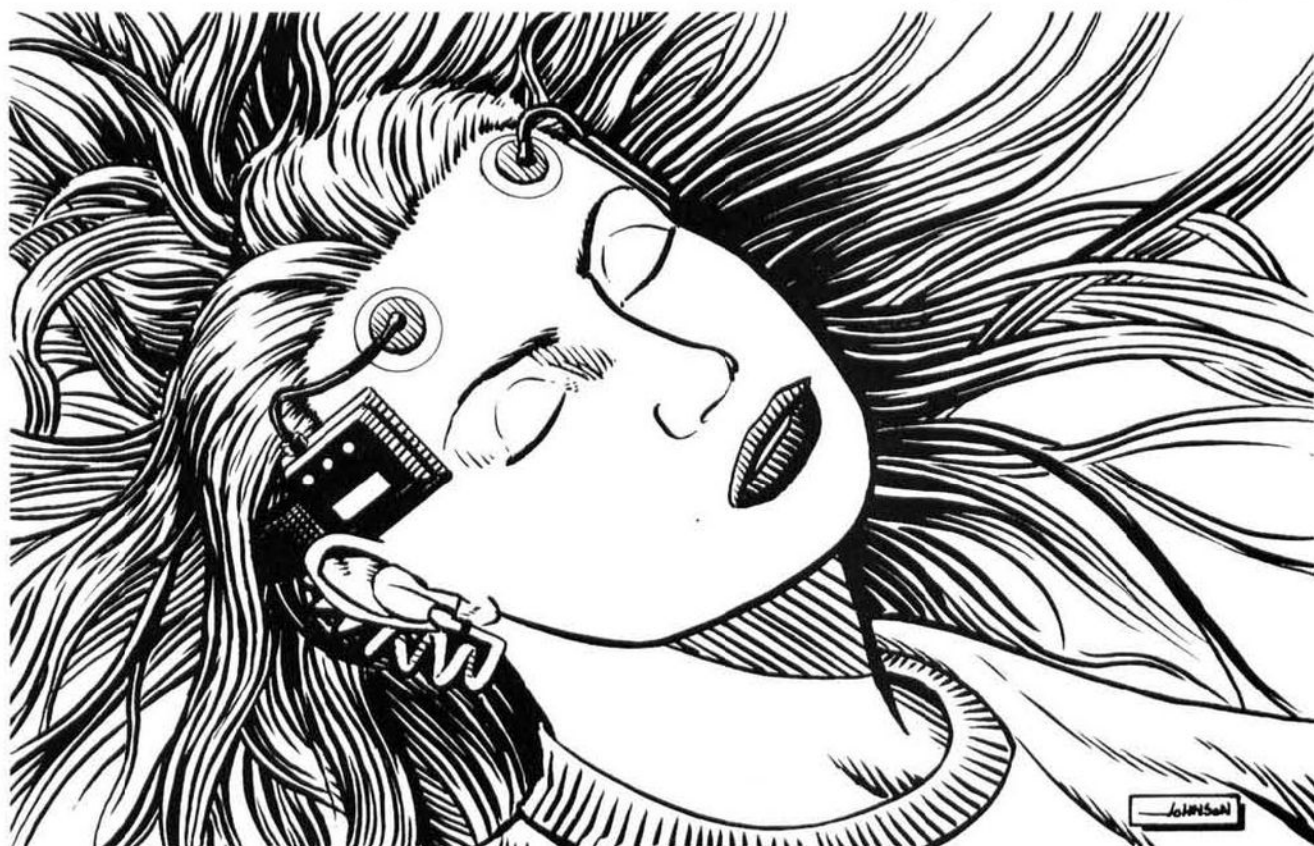
Storyteller Hints: Mindscaping

His mind is now yours. What do you want from it?
—The Prisoner, "A, B & C"

Several of the Technocracy's mind-altering procedures allow for major changes to a mage's reality with only a few die rolls. A lengthy period of indoctrination is required, allowing a chance for other Tradition mages to rescue their ally, but a sadistic Storyteller can still misuse these Effects to thoroughly abuse the characters in his campaign. A subtle and ingenious Storyteller, however, can use his advanced repertoire of storytelling techniques to change a few die rolls into a mind-altering adventure. Mindscaping rules should be used to advance the plot of an adventure, not to punish the characters (or players) for having free will. The entertainment of the players is far more important than sating any dictatorial whims of the Storyteller.

The Storyteller should describe the process of conversion or indoctrination. If the procedure is performed using a device like a sleepteacher or virtual reality device, a story should definitely be involved. The easiest way to do this is with a dream sequence. In this lucid dream, the Technocracy controls the story, and the Awakened mage (or rogue Technomancer) is the lucid dreamer trying to escape their lies.

This type of story is easiest to run if it resembles real life. For instance, the mage may imagine that she is back in her Chantry and that she has been covertly contacting a Man in Black and considering defection. The player must then roleplay through the alternate situation.

The mage may use magick to escape situations in the story; however, Paradox results in the story working against him. If the Technocracy achieves Paradox as part of the procedure, the story will still work in favor of the mage, possibly undoing previous work.

The other players in the group don't have to just sit by and watch. The Storyteller can "cast" them in roles as "extras," such as alternate versions of their characters, Men in Black, innocent bystanders and so on. Other players may be "let in on the joke" in good troupes.

Numerous works of fiction can provide inspiration for this type of story, such as Ursula LeGuin's *Lathe of Heaven*, Phillip K. Dick's "We Can Remember for You Wholesale" (loosely adapted into the movie *Total Recall*), and various *Prisoner* episodes, such as "A, B & C" and "Living in Harmony." Groups with an affinity for live-action are challenged to attempt a session based on *Prisoner* episode #16, "Degree Absolute."

Constructing Mindscape Adventures

Intelligence Analysts may also attempt this type of conversion in the real world. This is done by placing psionic agents in the field and orchestrating a plot to deceive the subject. The Storyteller must construct a session with the **Alter Memory** procedure. For instance, a group of Gray Men trying to enact the **Alter Memory** procedure might fake the death of a mage's friend or show a loved one working as a tool of the Technocracy. After the plot is enacted, an indoctrinator must be near the subject long enough to alter his mind. This is easiest if a Gray Man completing the operation has infiltrated the subject's Chantry. Subliminal broadcasters placed near where the subject sleeps are another method, although the subject should then have a chance to find them. (Refer to Phillip K. Dick's *Through a Scanner Darkly* as an illustration of the effect of this.) If the plot succeeds, the indoctrinator must make a roll to "win" the mind of the subject. The British television show *The Prisoner* shows many examples of how to structure this type of plot.

The result is a highly psychological adventure designed to fool both player and character. Remember, above all else, to use skill, not force, when running this type of adventure. When reduced to "roll-playing" and crude manipulation, this type of adventure can deny free will and lead to *player* disaffection. When skillfully done, the challenge of a mindscape adventure makes for truly memorable gaming and even masterpieces of storytelling.

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actually be shunted into another similar reality. In the case of artificial Quiet, the mage's mind may be permanently ripped from his body, yet still exist in the machine.

Alter Paradigm (••••• Mind, ••••• Entropy)

By inflicting prolonged torture and indoctrination, a Servant of the Ivory Tower can destroy a mage's system of belief. The process involved is the same as the **Edit Memory** Procedure, but each roll represents a week's worth of effort. The indoctrination takes several steps.

Successful completion of the Processing moves the mage one step along the conversion process.

• **Step 1:** The mage can still cast magick without using a focus in a nonscientific paradigm.

• **Step 2:** The mage requires a focus whenever he works magick, although the Effects are guided by a nonscientific or alternate scientific paradigm.

- **Step 3:** The mage requires a technological focus whenever he works magick, although the Effects are guided by a nonscientific or alternate scientific paradigm.
- **Step 4:** A technological focus is required every time the mage uses magick or procedures, and the Effect of the mage's magick accedes to a scientific paradigm.

Sons of Ether and Virtual Adepts begin Processing at Step Two. All other Tradition mages begin at Step One. The mage is moved from step to step until he has been amended to conform to the Reality of the Technocracy.

Talismans and Gadgets

Do be careful, 007…
—The original "Q," any given James Bond film

Each Methodology has a different opinion on the need for Talismans. Generally speaking, many Watchers regard them as essential for talented agents, many Servants regard them as a necessary "crutch" for less-talented agents, and many Intelligence Analysts within the Operative Methodology still debate the importance of so-called "secret agent gadgets" or "spytech" in field work.

For Watchers, Talismans are usually surveillance devices or recording equipment. The only requirement for a Technomancer to use one is, of course, that she be Enlightened. These devices fit within the consensual reality paradigm because of two basic prevalent ideas: that media is an objective portrayal of the world around us, and that the government has a seemingly limitless ability to survey and observe the Masses.

Most devices of the Ivory Tower involve psychological control, education, indoctrination and computer security. The efficacy of these machines depends on the idea that the human brain works much like a sophisticated computer, one that can be programmed and scientifically controlled. Postman's book *Technopoly* emphasizes that one of the hallmarks of technocracy is the proliferation of comparisons between machines and human beings. Devices of the Ivory Tower operate on this analogy: the mind has been reduced to a machine.

The Tower shares the responsibilities of computer security with the Void Engineers. The Voids are best equipped to patrol areas like the Digital Web; the Servants are better equipped to deal with real-world machines. Ideas for computer Talismans and computer security can be found in **Virtual Adepts** and **Digital Web**.

There is an ongoing debate among the Operatives over the need for Talismans. Many agents refer to them as "gadgets." These devices were extremely popular during the 1950s and 60s, especially after the Karpov Umbrella Incident (see Chapter Two) and the defection of a handful of Sons of Ether in the early 1960s. Sympathizers within the entertainment industry also achieved a major coup by popularizing secret agent movies, such as the widely celebrated James Bond films. The public came almost to *expect* agents to carry expensive toys. Some constructs even began to refer to centers' Talisman R&D as "Q Divisions."

Some Analysts believe they can improve the efficiency of Black and Gray Suits by giving them a few key gadgets. Others realize the problem with this: if a covert agent is found with a gadget, it reveals him as a spy. Moreover, the average Virtual Adept or Son of Ether would greatly benefit by capturing one of these gadgets. Nonetheless, the history of espionage has involved a shift from the idea of a talented individual having the capacity to subvert a government to the notion that spies are only as good as their spytech.

Optional Rule: Assigned Gadgets

Most Technomancers do not own potent Devices; rather, they are issued by supervisors, who revoke the gadget if the agent steps out of line or transfers. If the Storyteller wants a system for this exchange, NWO agents may be given a certain pool of Background points with which to "buy" gadgets from their Methodology. These points are used as leverage by supervisors to insure good performance. Needless to say, things will go hard for an agent who steals gadgets from her superiors.

In a Technocracy campaign, an agent's Talisman rating may represent her standing with "Q Division," resulting in an Analyst trusting her to protect the gadget. If this is the case, losing a gadget will reduce an agent's Talisman rating by one for the next two missions. If the rating is ever reduced to zero, the Analyst will no longer assign the agent gadgets.

Close groups of Operatives may pool their points to "buy" special gadgets like Spectre Limousines or Manar Stations (see below). In these cases, the conduct of the group as a whole will determine the points they get as individuals. The better the amalgam, the richer its gadgets.

Conduct	Background Points
Poor	0-3
Fair	3-5
Good	5-7
Very Good	7-10
Exemplary	10+

Watchers

The American people know what the American people see.
— George Bush

Watcher Talismans can be placed in one of two categories: surveillance devices and recording devices. Most surveillance devices are not personal, but many field agents have the security to use them as part of a mission. Most recording devices are used to document a mission or even to actively disprove or debunk supernatural activity.

•• 1/2 Inch Deck (Vid-Cam)
Arete 2, Quintessence 10

Just as Virtual Adepts treasure their computer decks, field observers and reporters value their video equipment. A Watcher can purchase a video deck for 4 Background points. The Talisman uses Prime 2 to power other devices; for additional Background points, he can add Talismans like a color filter, light meter, shotgun mike, and so on. If a Technomancer can channel Quintessence into the Device, it can store the energy, allowing the caster to reduce the difficulty for his special effects (to a maximum of -3).

•• Light Meter
Arete 3, Quintessence 15

This Device allows a Watcher to adjust his photography equipment and lighting to evoke a desired effect. Since the camera of an Enlightened Watcher is an objective observer of the scene it records, adjusting the Device will alter the environment it is portraying. The processes are mainly conjunctional Effects of Mind 2 and Time 2. Three examples are listed below.

1) Increase color temperature of lighting

The photographer can set his camera to work with high-temperature lighting, giving the environment a sterile, antiseptic feel. This will dampen emotions, reducing any Attribute + Ability roll relating to sensing emotions or using Empathy with a resisted roll of the agent's Arete.

2) Decrease color temperature of lighting

The environment will take on a slightly yellowish glow. Anyone in the scene will have a slight sense of nostalgia, increasing their propensity to remember the past. The Effect is similar to the Cult of Ecstasy Effect: **Sugar Magnolias**, save that each success will increase Dice Pools to remember past events.

3) Extremely high-key lighting

This is used to assist in interrogation. A victim subject to this type of lighting for at least an hour must

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make a Willpower roll or lose one point of Willpower. The subject must be conscious and have his eyes open; this is not cumulative with sleepteaching.

•• Xenon Bulb
Arete 3, Quintessence 15

This type of lighting can be attached to a video deck or camera for use in an emergency. Activating the Device will temporarily stun or blind anyone within view of the flash. The defender must roll Willpower (difficulty 8) or be stunned for two turns. The Device uses a conjunctional Effect of Forces 2 and Prime 2.

••• Shotgun Microphone
Arete 3, Quintessence 15

The shape of this type of microphone allows the user to hear at a greater distance. An optional parabolic attachment is included. The distance at which the microphone is effective is determined by the General Effects Chart, and the Effect is the result of Correspondence 2 and Forces 2.

Manar

This surveillance Device works in a manner quite similar to radar, save for the fact that it is attuned to monitor magickal energies. The "sweep" of the manar (pronounced MAHnahr) varies with the strength of the Device. Operating the Device requires an Enlightened user and a roll of Perception + Awareness. The number of successes determines the amount of detail the Watcher using it receives. The Effect is the result of Correspondence 2 and Prime 2.

A targeted mage can try to duck a manar scan in a number of ways: the Arcane Background subtracts one scan success per point of Arcane; the mage can "dump" her Quintessence by channeling it into something or someone else with Prime 2; Correspondence can foul the scan by moving the mage out of range, and targeting can be "clouded" by moving into a Quintessence-laden site. Using magick is risky when someone with manar is scanning you, however; each Sphere used adds an automatic success to the scanner's roll (maximum +3).

| Successes	Information
1	Magick activity noted
2	Subject discerned
3	Subject temporarily located
4	Subject locked and tracked
5	Subject noted, tracked and analyzed for magickal potential

• Portable Manar
Arete 2, Quintessence 10

Think of the devices used in *The Thing* or *Aliens* to detect xenomorphs. Now imagine it sensing magick. The difficulty of the Arete roll is 5.

•• Vehicular Manar
Arete 3, Quintessence 15

This might appear like the radar scope used in *Goldfinger*. The area of effect covers roughly a city block. The difficulty of the Arete roll is 6.
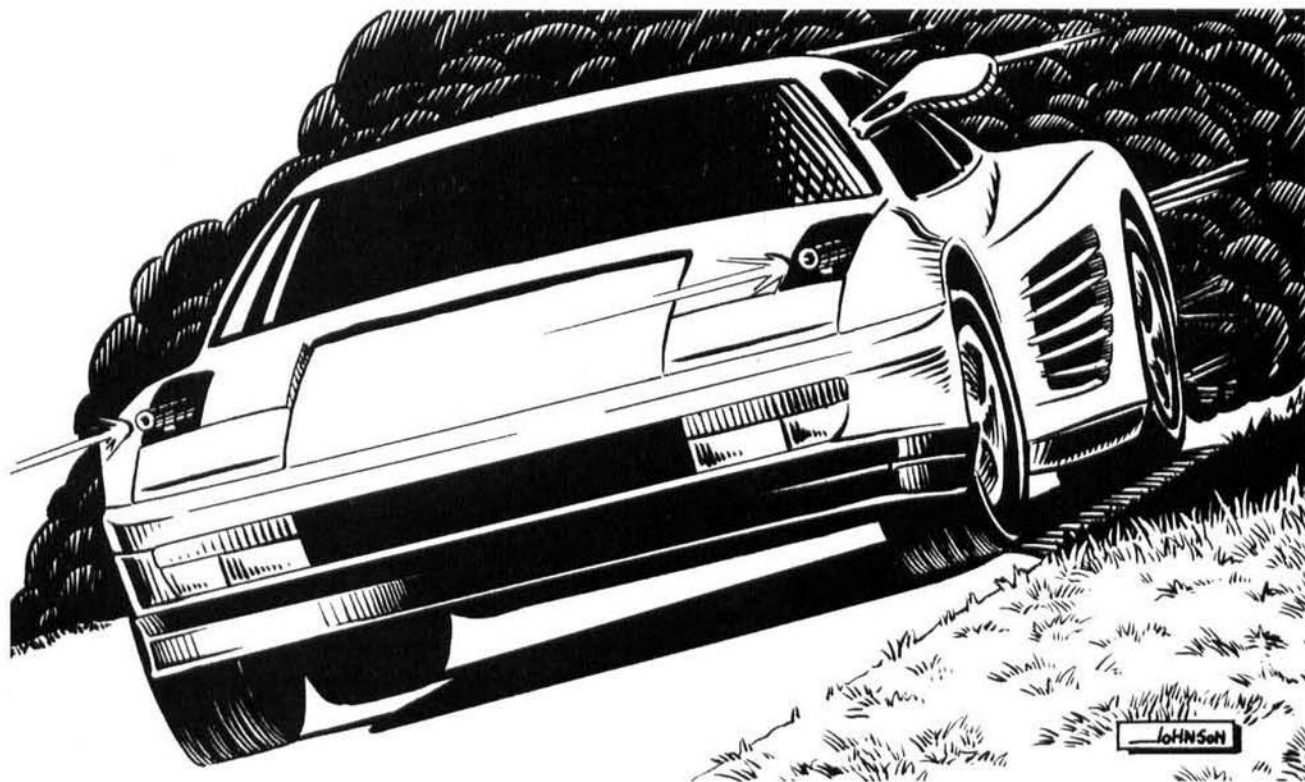
••• Green Dome Manar
Arete 4, Quintessence 20

Picture the surveillance station monitored in *The Prisoner*. This can monitor activity throughout a city, and can be installed in a safe house. The difficulty of the Arete roll is 7.

•••• Orbital Manar Station
Arete 5, Quintessence 25

It's unlikely that characters will "own" this type of manar; consult the section on pooling Background points, above. The station monitors a city or other large geographic area. Think of the targeting systems used to direct lasers from orbit in *Akira*.

Men in Black

Nerve gas. One squirt, you're paralyzed. Two squirts, you're dead.

—*The Prisoner*, "Schizoid Man"

Gadgets of the Men in Black can be divided into two categories: personal and vehicular. The members of an amalgam can share a vehicular Talisman, and they may pool their Talisman points to add to their vehicle (see above). Personal gadgets are carried by the agent himself.

•••• The Spectre Limousine
Arete 4, Quintessence 10

The Men in Black rely on ground transport to assist in the dispersal of their troops. The most common model is the Spectre Limousine. The vehicle is, of course, black, and is either the size of a luxury sedan or a full limousine. Gray Men have access to similar vehicles, usually ones based on current or classic sport scars. At the directive of an area's Intelligence Analyst, the vehicle may also be equipped with additional Devices for operation in the field. Misuse of a Spectre Limousine can lead to suspension of the agent or temporary confiscation of the car.

The engine of the automobile stores Quintessence using Prime 3, and can channel it to any of the Devices on the vehicle. A few sample accessories are listed below. (Please cue your CD player to the James Bond soundtrack at this point.)

•• Smoke Cloud
Arete 3, Quintessence 15

To foil pursuit and facilitate exfiltration, the car releases a cloud of smoke to discourage anyone behind the vehicle from following it. The driver of the pursuing car must resist with Willpower to negate this Mind 2 Effect.

••• Nitro-Quintessence Injector
Arete 4, Quintessence 20

The car can inject a mixture of Quintessence and nitroglycerine to rocket the car at extreme velocities. Each success on the Arete roll (difficulty 5, with the Effect based on Time 2) will increase the speed of the car up to double normal speed. Usually, however, agents will not set one to top speed. Driving rolls must remain your friend, and Paradox at 250 miles per hour is not very pretty.

• Vehicular Manar
Arete 2, Quintessence 10

See the section on "Manar" under "Watcher Talismans."

•••• Bootlegger Jets
Arete 5, Quintessence 25

Small jets at the four corners of the vehicle allow it to turn 180 degrees at any speed. The coincidental Effect reverses the direction of the car and instantly begins slowing it down as the wheels begin to push in the opposite direction.

One useful variant of this Talisman are Attitude Jets, available at the same cost. Each successful activation of the jets adds one die to the driver's Dexterity + Drive Dice Pool.

••• Energy Shielding
Arete 4, Quintessence 20

This protects the vehicle from energy and magickal attacks, thanks to Primium furnished by Iteration X. Three dice of countermagick are patterned into the metal. For an additional Background point, a retractable Primium shield can be raised or lowered in front of the windshield or the rear window, offering four dice of countermagick. This Device cannot draw Quintessence from the engine; once the Quintessence has been used up, the Primium is at a minimum.

••• Ejector Seat
Arete 4, Quintessence 20

The individual in the passenger seat is rocketed to a high altitude. If this is intentional, the driver will have taken the precaution of mounting a parachute to the seat. If not, the offending mage better have precautions of his own. The Effect is Forces 2, Prime 2. Ejector seats can also be installed in the back seats of the car.

••• or •••• Holdout Weapons (personal Devices)
Arete 4, Quintessence 20

Nearly *anything* can be used as a secret holdout weapon. Q Division gets really tired of requests for these, and agents who are overly fond of such things are sometimes suspected of secretly working for the Sons of Ether. Examples include a laser pen, exploding cufflinks, a poison pen (capable of squirting acid), a semi-automatic umbrella, poison lipstick (gengineered to not affect the wearer), a wristwatch with rotating blades on the dial, a laser flashlight, et cetera, ad nauseam. Despite what some Gray Men might think, showing off these sorts of toys back at the bar in the Security Collective singularly fails to impress anyone after a while. (*"Been there, killed with that."*) You're better off with standard weaponry.

Servants of the Ivory Tower

Log on, tune in, burn out.

—net.goth motto

Most Talismans used by Servants of the Ivory Tower are not used in the field. In a Technocracy campaign, a Servant with the Talisman Background either has the security clearance to access this type of Device at a Construct whenever he needs it, or uses it enough to

warrant having it as a permanent fixture in a safe house. Other Talismans are used as security devices and are included for Storytellers who wish to make use of them in Constructs.

•••• Tempest Hardening
Arete 5, Quintessence 25

Many threats to computer security come from the supernatural world. Tempest hardening is a counterprocedure that shields a computer, machine or electrical system from intrusion through the Umbra or Shadowlands. TEMPEST systems in the world of Sleepers allow a surveillance crew to read the screen of a computer by monitoring the energy flow from a distance. Tempest hardening prevents this. In the Technocracy, tempest hardening makes it more difficult to enter a computer system by using supernatural abilities like the **Inhabit** Arcanos (in **Wraith**) or the Glass Walker Gift: **Phone Travel** (in **Werewolf**).

The strength of the hardening depends on the level of the Talisman. The standard setting allows for five dice of countermagick. For each level the Arete of the Device is raised, increase the Dice Pool of the security procedure by one. The Device uses a conjunctional Effect of Spirit 3 and Prime 2.

•••• Sleepteacher
Arete 5, Quintessence 25

All of the many varieties of this Device either allow a Servant to learn quickly or assist an agent in studying efficiently. If used for teaching, the instructor must roll Intelligence + Instruction or Intelligence + Computer to operate the machine. Each success will double the amount of "time" spent in the machine and reduce the difficulty of the next learning roll by 1 (to a maximum modifier of -3). The Effect is conjunctional, relying on Mind 3 and Time 2.

Sleepteachers can also be used in Mind Games or for mindscaping. The Device is used as an apparatus and lowers the difficulty of the appropriate Arete roll by 1.

•••, •••• or ••••• Subliminal Broadcaster

The Servants are masters at relaying information by subliminal methods. At Mind 2, the Device will evoke specific emotions; at Mind 3, messages or information will be conveyed; at Mind 4, commands can be given. If the subject wishes to resist, a Willpower roll is allowed. Usually, however, the subject should roll Perception + Awareness or an **Empower Mind** roll to even realize subliminal persuasion is being used! This Device could be a tape player set at sublim speeds, speakers set in a hallway, headphones on a portable stereo, or any similar transmitter.

Security Talismans

A few Devices used in Constructs, especially Horizon Constructs, are noted here. Since the Ivory Tower oversees the administration of these Devices, they often have authority in deciding when and where to use them.

JOHNSON

• • • • Schroedinger's Closet
Arete 5, Quintessence 25

If properly used, the application of this Device is coincidental. An Enlightened Technomancer steps into a building, such as a safe house, away from the watchful eyes of Sleepers. As long as he is inside the building, any curious Sleeper outside will assume that the missing person is inside. In actuality, the agent activates the Talisman and uses Correspondence to travel to a Horizon Chantry. Even if the building is raided later and no one is discovered inside, the Paradox slams down on the building on the ground, not the agents safely in the Horizon. This deception uses Correspondence 3.

• • • • • Extraction Device
Arete 6, Quintessence 30

This is an emergency Device used during failed missions. The NWO agent monitoring the Device can instantly snatch agents from the field into a safe location. Agents are *extremely* wary of using these, and placing oneself in a position where vulgar extraction is required will often result in disciplinary action. Usually, these locations are isolated from sensitive or populated areas since the possible Paradox backlash might jeopardize the immediate area. The procedure relies on Correspondence 4.

If the Device is used in a Horizon Construct and the agents are extracted from an area on the front lines, Paradox will apply to the *extracted agents*, not the Construct. If the agents are wounded or killed, this is often considered to be their punishment for requiring extraction.

• • • • • Horizon Gateway
Arete 6, Quintessence 35

Using Correspondence 5, this Talisman establishes a permanent "conjoinment" of two physical locations, one on Earth and one in a Horizon Construct. Anyone can step through the Horizon Gateway to enter the Construct. These Devices are always carefully hidden and cautiously guarded. Some are built with a conjunctional application of Mind 2 to discourage anyone from looking for them or even noticing them.

Shadow Warriors

The world is as one. We are Americans.
—George Bush

Although the New World Order is a diverse Convention, any Storyteller can benefit from having statistics for a few typical agents on hand.

Operatives

Whether searching out Reality Deviants or ensuring ideological purity, these agents of the New World Order fight the never-ending battle to make the world secure.

Men in Black

Not all Black Suits are the same. Some are mindless, soulless constructs programmed to do the bidding of their masters, while others are independent and intelligent masters of espionage directing other agents in the field. Statistics for mindless constructs appear in the Appendix of the **Mage** rulebook. As stated there, they are often pale, hairless creatures that dissolve into nothingness after being destroyed. Feel free to use them to pad out an amalgam when you're a few agents shy; otherwise, sympathizer Black Suits will do. This type of amalgam is good for throwing a lead-slinging group of "crunchies" at a cabal of mages. They are often structured in a Hive Mind (see the sidebar) and if they are used in campaigns this way too often, they can become rather dull.

Men in Black are more interesting when they use subtlety, show judgment, have personalities and stand a chance of surviving a fight. One or two advanced Men in Black will often work as part of a larger amalgam of "crunchies."

Advanced Man in Black

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2, Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 4, Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Brawl 2, Dodge 3, Intuition 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3, Drive 2, Firearms 3, Meditation 2, Melee 3, Stealth 4, Enigmas 1, Investigation 3, Occult 2

Spheres: Two at 3

Backgrounds: Avatar 2, Arcane 3, Talisman 4

Willpower: 8

Arete: 3

Gray Men

The most common duties of Gray Men are supervision of Men in Black and infiltration. This type of agent is usually a trained spy rather than a more generic "policeman" of Reality. Female agents often work in this rank, but rarely work among the Men in Black.

Attributes 7/5/3, **Abilities** 13/9/5, **Backgrounds** 4, **Willpower** 9, **Spheres** 6, **Arete** 4

The Hive Mind

One of the most legendary aspects of the Men in Black is the phenomenon known as the Hive Mind. Many mages outside the Technocracy believe that all Men in Black in an amalgam share a communal intelligence, allowing an amalgam to act as one. This is only marginally true, but makes for great press.

Not all Black Suits are robotic fascists, nor do all of them utilize a Hive Mind. The Unit Leader must decide how to structure his group. Usually, the training of the amalgam is thorough enough that the group practically acts as one. Since most Enlightened agents also have at least enough Mind influence to use simple telepathy, working in conjunction with another agent without openly communicating is quite easy.

If most of an amalgam is composed of semiconscious constructs, however, the Unit Leader may decide to link all the minds to his. This requires that all the participating agents have at least two levels of the Mind Sphere and an Arete of at least 2. The Unit Leader only needs to perform the **Multitasking** Effect. A successful roll by a Man in Black means the agent can interface with the mental control of the Unit Leader, who can then direct all his agents by remote psychic control.

Rogue Agents

The Ascension War is not the strictly bipolar conflict many make it out to be. Anyone fighting in the war, whether Traditionalist or Technocrat, must have a personal reason for fighting. There are some who would rather remain independent of the conflict than subscribe to either philosophy. These independent agents are known as Rogues.

A Rogue will typically place his own survival over any consideration for mages on either side. If this means selling out information from one side to the other and jeopardizing the lives of others to ensure his own survival, so be it.

Rogue Technomancers are often motivated by a need for individuality and privacy. Prolonged espionage work in particular can have an especially deleterious effect on an individual's personality, often stripping him of his ability to feel honest emotions or develop sincere relationships with others. Rogue Traditionalists are often motivated by contempt for the bitter fighting between Traditions. Prolonged service to the Traditions often results in an inability to subscribe to any one political philosophy.

In either case, Rogues will usually either pretend to be working for both sides to keep tabs on their enemies or associate with groups like anarch vampires, Ronin Garou and Hollow Ones. Regardless of which option they choose, when they are discovered by either side, most would rather subject them to death or Gilgul than try to rehabilitate them. (For another interpretation, see Secret Agent John Courage in **Digital Web**.)

Intelligence Analyst

Any Security Construct will have at least one of these masterminds of espionage present. They often have specialties relating to the areas they survey, including knowledge of local politics, street activity and occult activity.

Attributes 8/6/3, **Abilities** 15/10/6, **Backgrounds** 5, **Willpower** 9, **Spheres** 6, **Arete** 4 or 5

Men in White

Only through decades of dedication and repeated demonstration of loyalty does an agent rise to the rank of the inhumanly devoted and ruthlessly efficient commanders of the shadow warriors.

Attributes 9/7/4, **Abilities** 17/13/10, **Backgrounds** 6 **Willpower** 10, **Spheres** 9, **Arete** 5+

The Ivory Tower

Consider the Ivory Tower to be a "catch-all" Methodology of devoted workers for the New World Order. Many sympathizers will have typical "mortal" stats, especially those performing menial functions. Of the variety of Servants working for the Union, two are listed below.

Educators

These agents must be able to travel freely between Conventions if necessary and hold as wide a variety of Knowledge-based Abilities as possible.

Attributes 7/5/3, **Abilities** 14/8/6, **Backgrounds** 3, **Willpower** 6, **Spheres** 5, **Arete** 3

Mission Specialists

This type of agent will often have several ratings of 4 or 5 in various Abilities, as well as high Mental Attributes.

Attributes 8/5/3, **Abilities** 13/9/5, **Backgrounds** 3, **Willpower** 7, **Spheres** 6, **Arete** 3

Watchers

Whether covering interviews in the field or surveying from the Horizon, these agents keep a watchful eye on the Masses to protect them from harm.

Government Infiltration: The World Advisory Council

Popular misconception holds that the NWO controls most of the world's governments and pulls the strings of national policy from North America to Tibet. This is fancifully paranoid — there are hardly enough Technomancers alive to do the job — but there is some truth to the idea.

Each world power has a small cell of Technocracy "advisors" within its high governmental staff. This multi-Convention organization, the World Advisory Council (WAC), dictates policy to various government leaders through bribery, intimidation, ideological appeals or violence. The Council is small — the current roster lists sixteen Technomancers and forty-two unEnlightened acolytes — but influential. Within their chosen countries, Council members have almost unlimited access to information, high society and policy.

The Advisors do not make or dictate laws. Hands-on involvement is too risky and time-consuming to be effective. Instead, they drop "suggestions" among a slew of contacts, planting ideas and decisions that will come to fruition over time, subtly bending legal, philosophical and economic systems to the Ivory Tower's plans.

Although the Council contains members of Iteration X, the Syndicate and the Progenitors, it ostensibly works under the guidance of the Ivory Tower, with input from the Statisticians' Committee of Autochthonia. Each chosen country has at least one Advisor, and each Advisor has three powerful unAwakened underlings and a circle of lesser contacts and allies. The Advisors, though potent mages in their own rights, do not go into combat themselves; in fact, members of the Council are advised to avoid violence whenever possible. Conflict breeds risk, and the Council's plans are too important to be exposed by mere force. Those who cross the Advisors' path are more likely to disappear from all official records than to be greeted by hails of bullets.

The United States, Great Britain, France, China, Russia, Germany, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, Japan, Switzerland, North Korea and Israel each have "representatives" in the World Advisory Council. The old advisors to Iraq, Sweden, South Africa and India have been rooted out and killed in recent years; their successors are just beginning to establish a hold in these countries. Most nations have one Awakened Advisor, though the most powerful (the USA, Russia, China and Japan) have two. "Favored" nations are chosen for their size, governmental structure and technological advancement potential. The Advisors then add their expertise to programs and concepts already in motion, and profit through access to their "host's" judicial, intelligence and economic channels.

The Council is deeply confidential. Although many people suspect that some sort of global conspiracy exists, the WAC and its members are a tightly-guarded secret, even within the Technocracy. The subtle infighting among the members is even more secretive than the Council itself; such rivalries are fatal if discovered. The Traditions have uncovered clues of the Council's existence, but the facts are shrouded in mystery, misdirection and Arcane magicks.

Reporters

These investigators must have a high degree of technical proficiency, excellent Social Attributes and the skills to circumvent danger in the field.

Attributes 7/5/3, **Abilities** 13/9/5, **Backgrounds** 5, **Willpower** 7, **Spheres** 6, **Arete** 3

Gatekeepers

Supervisors of the media and this Methodology require excellent Manipulative ability and technical Skills, as well as mastery of Correspondence and Mind.

Attributes 8/5/3, **Abilities** 13/8/5, **Backgrounds** 6, **Willpower** 8, **Spheres** 7, **Arete** 4 or 5

Field Observers

A variety of skills related to the investigation and destruction of the occult are critical. The field observer is often the New World Order representative when a Man in Black is not needed in an amalgam.

Attributes 6/4/3, **Abilities** 11/9/5, **Backgrounds** 3, **Willpower** 6, **Spheres** 3, **Arete** 2
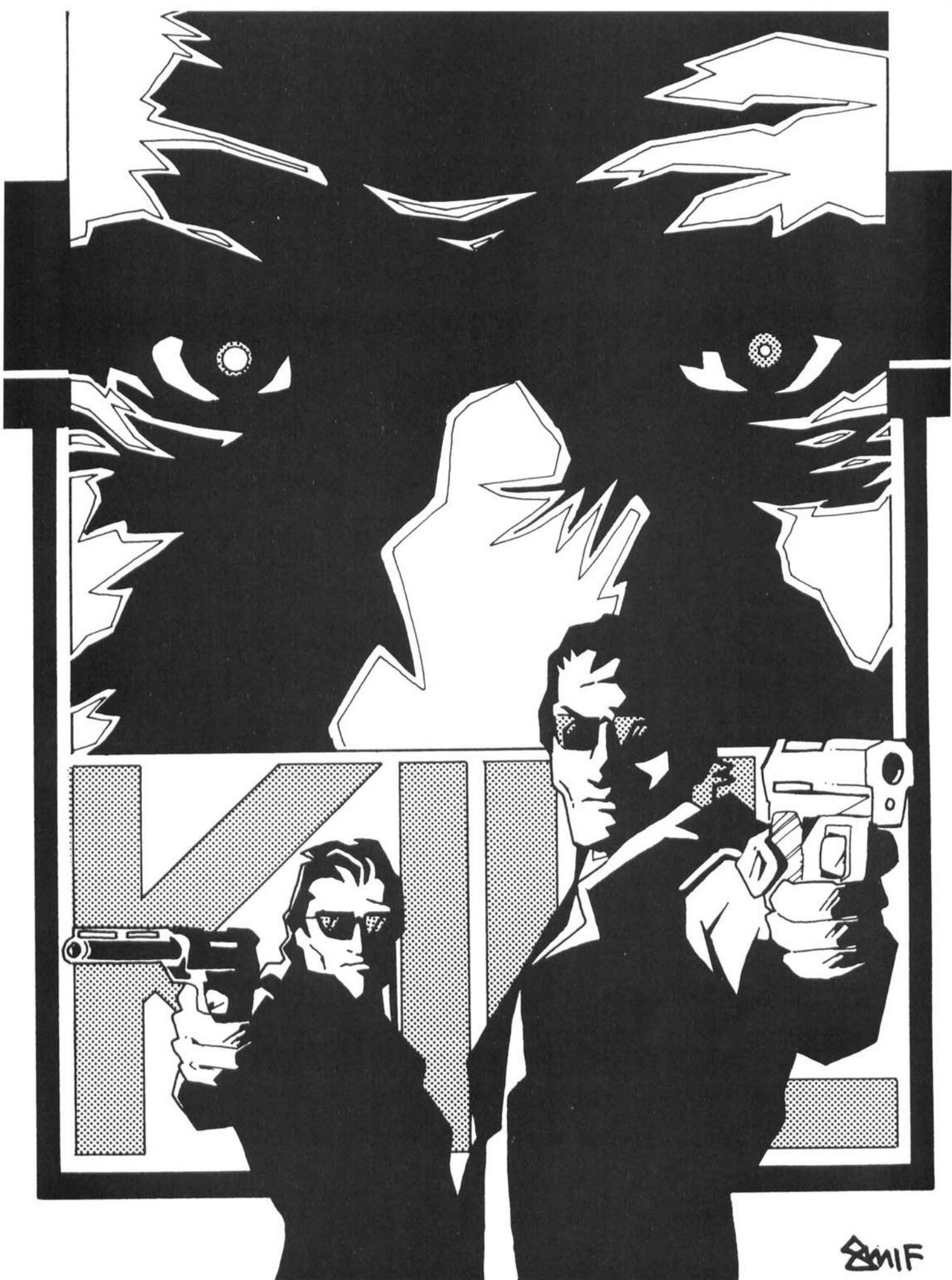
Chapter Four: The Divisidero Safe House

Let's be careful out there...
— Hill Street Blues

Any espionage organization needs a base of operations. When the average Sleeper pictures a "secret spy" base, various images may come to mind. Four-color spy adventures could easily be set in a massive underground bunker: a fortress with secret tunnels, hydraulic lifts under telephone booths, death traps, heavily armed guards, and so on. The base of operations in *La Femme Nikita* would be one example. Sedate British spy novels often involve posh sitting rooms where elderly men behind large mahogany desks review the reports of dashing young agents, and look askance at agents who flirt with the secretary in the lobby. The novels of John LeCarre rest comfortably on these padded chairs, although James Bond stories would fit in just as well.

Technocracy bases don't have to be comic book fortresses or comfy waiting rooms. The first two types of bases exist, but reviews with Intelligence Analysts are sometimes easiest to conduct at Horizon Constructs, and although massive training bases are useful, they're easier to protect in Horizon Realms. In the field, a safe house must be mobile; in case of discovery, the agents must be able to move out quickly and erase any traces of their presence. Incriminating Devices and evidence must be minimal, and because of the covert nature of their infiltration, most establishments should have a front, or series of fronts, to cover the true nature of the operation.

This chapter gives examples of locations in a Technocracy-based campaign. The first section details a Construct on the front lines of San Francisco. This "commune" of businesses and apartments is located in a series of Victorian rowhouses. The second section of this chapter gives more information on letting characters interact with a Horizon Construct, as well as a few more details on the Northern California Security Collective. Finally, the chapter concludes with some ideas for combining this framework with other sourcebooks. Storytellers can easily use this information to introduce their players to the winning side of the Ascension War.

The Schism

There's a schism in the New World Order, a dichotomy between the theorists who are kept safe from harm and the operatives who fight an endless war. Isolated in the Ivory Tower, the administrators and academics of the Technocracy debate their philosophies of Ascension and refine their dogma. To them, many of the problems of the world are abstractions. Reasoned discourse and tempered intellect find the solutions.

The real world is different, and the city of San Francisco is no exception. The city has been infested with supernatural creatures of all varieties, each with their own twisted view of how to reshape the world. The Traditionalists, Reality Deviants who would reshape the world to fit their own views rather than respect the safety of humanity, are the most virulent aspect of this infestation.

There are, however, bases of operations where agents of the New World Order, with the assistance of other Conventions, can monitor Reality Criminals, orchestrate their capture or conversion, and cleanse their taint from the world. They're called safe houses, and the Open Arms Community, a complex of buildings on Divisidero Street in San Francisco, is one example of a safe house in action.

The Divisidero Safe House

Personnel

If you're going to San Francisco
Be sure to wear some flowers in your hair
If you're going to San Francisco
You're going to meet some gentle people there
— Scott McKenzie, "San Francisco"

Because of its location, the staff of the Divisidero house (or "Div City," as Sarah calls it) are more casual than many of their fellow ground agents. Camouflage and a local recruiting base (to reflect the surrounding culture) are SOP for New World Order houses; a predominance of black-suited stonefaces would draw too much attention to the safe house. Ground agents are often allowed their little idiosyncrasies when in the field. Such liberties are rarely tolerated in the clean-run Horizon Constructs.

People come and go from the Divisidero Safe House, but a few notable agents are settling in as somewhat permanent fixtures.

Arthur Fotheringay

Essence: Pattern
Nature: Judge
Demeanor: Conformist
Methodology: Operative (Gray Man)
Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3, Perception 2, Intelligence 4, Wits 3
Abilities: Alertness 1, Awareness 1, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Expression 3, Intuition 2, Interrogation 4, Drive 2, Etiquette 2, Firearms 3, Leadership 2, Meditation 1, Melee 4, Stealth 3, Technology 3, Computer 3, Investigation 3, Law 3, Linguistics 2 (Latin, German), Medicine 1, Occult 3, Science 2
Spheres: Entropy 2, Life 1, Mind 2, Prime 1
Backgrounds: Avatar 2, Allies 1, Library 2, Mentor 1

Willpower: 6
Arete: 3
Quintessence: 5
Paradox: 1

Image: Clearly the detective game is profitable for Mr. Fotheringay. His pinstripe suits are impeccably tailored, his beard and mustache are immaculately groomed and his affectations carry the mark of a sophisticated gentleman. Well done! No one knows his job also involves hunting blood-drinking freaks and maniacs with chainsaws.

History: As a student of political science at Yale, he was following in the footsteps of many wealthy college students with the dedication and education to make it into the C.I.A. The fraternity he belonged to also taught him some secrets about the true history of the world, secrets that led him to Enlightenment. The C.I.A. made him a nice offer, but he got an even more tempting one from someone else. The fringe benefits were amazing. Now the family fortune supports his "Private Investigations" agency.

Roleplaying Hints: Act like William F. Buckley would if he finally woke up. You are precise and discriminating, smooth-talking and erudite, but you aren't afraid to bloody your hands when necessary. Your vocabulary leaves people scrambling for their copies of the Oxford English Dictionary, but your panache gets you so many points for style that it wouldn't matter if you were speaking in Latin. Then again, sometimes you are. Bra-vo.

Your actions and efficiency almost cry out, "Promote me. I'm really an Intelligence Analyst." Despite this, you seem to have problems relating to your partner…

Eddie Carmichael

Essence: Dynamic
Nature: Visionary
Demeanor: Bravo
Methodology: Watcher, Reporter
Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2, Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4
Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 1, Awareness 3, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 3, Firearms 4, Research 2, Stealth 2, Computer 1, Investigation 4, Medicine 2, Occult 4
Spheres: Mind 3, Prime 1, Spirit 2
Backgrounds: Avatar 2, Arcane 2, Allies 2, Library 1
Willpower: 8
Arete: 3
Quintessence: 4
Paradox: 3

Image: That mustard stain on Eddie's tie is just part of his disheveled charm. He needs a shave, a haircut, a new suit, better shoes and a decent cologne. A shower probably wouldn't hurt either. Eddie usually looks like he just woke up from a nap. He'd be six feet tall and 180 pounds, if only he didn't slouch all the time and live off breakfast cereal and hot dogs.

History: For years, Eddie was a hard-working, hard-boiled detective working a scam in San Diego. From his office over a struggling comic book shop, Carmichael billed himself as a "parapsychological investigator" and made an modest living while collecting stories of the occult, soothing the nerves of paranoid clients and slowly

working his way through every comic book in the store below him. Eddie had a knack for finding the unknown as only the Enlightened truly do. Sympathizers finally hired him on a long-term job he couldn't refuse.

Although Eddie is a slovenly maverick as far as many of his superiors are concerned, nobody doubts his ability to find trouble (or get out of it) with little difficulty. Eddie's street smarts and sheer luck persuade his "upper management" to overlook his most un-Technocratic idiosyncrasies. Still, Eddie's on Mr. Smith's bad side. The head man is not willing to scrap so useful a pawn, but Eddie is simply being saved for an appropriate endgame. Whether or not the detective realizes this is a mystery, but Eddie has cultivated a few useful "contacts" outside the NWO, just in case…

Roleplaying Hints: Take your best New York accent, throw in a dash of Columbo, act like nothing fazes you and talk with your mouth full. Hey, you're slouching! You've got the idea.

The spit-and-polish ideals of the Technocracy never sat well with you, but after all your years on the street, you realize how badly their kind of job needs doing. Those Tradition freaks are the last thing the Bay Area needs; you've seen where that kind of craziness ends up.

By the way, the red-headed reporter in the building next door is really cute…

Sarah McGregor

Essence: Dynamic
Nature: Fanatic
Demeanor: Loner
Methodology: Watcher, Reporter
Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4, Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 2
Abilities: Alertness 3, Brawl 2, Dance 2, Dodge 3, Expression 4 (Videography), Intimidation 2, Firearms 1, Stealth 4, Technology 2, Investigation 4 (Surveillance), Science 3
Spheres: Correspondence 2, Entropy 1, Forces 2, Spirit 1, Prime 1
Backgrounds: Avatar 2, Talisman 5
Willpower: 3
Arete: 2
Quintessence: 2
Paradox: 2

Image: Intense. Shocking red hair, a slightly wild stare, tall, thin and feline. She must have espresso in her veins. Her jeans are ripped, her boots are thrashed, and her ever-present leather jacket has been through hell. Sarah is in a continual state of momentum, and anyone who interferes when she's trying to get a story will get hurt.

History: A film student turned Reality cop, Sarah mixes a defiantly casual personality with a surgeon's attention to detail. A vid kid from the start, Sarah took her parents' strict perfectionism to heart while rebelling against everything they stood for — in their case, unlimited civil liberties, legalized drugs, free love (read "sex") and a hostile attitude towards everyone in authority. The deviance and drug parties she had witnessed in her own living room over the years convinced Sarah that the Berkeley style of radical living was a short road to destruction.

Never a religious person, she nevertheless felt the tugging of her Avatar guiding her craft. When she scored a job at a KWLF, Sarah quickly fell in with Merika Seth (see **Loom of Fate**), a reporter and meteorologist at the station. The photographer longed to work with her friend, but was assigned instead to a waste of gray matter named Crissie Pendarvis. Frustrated, Sarah hung out with Merika every chance she got, and the two of them raised all sorts of hell. When the newscaster recognized her friend's potential, she "programmed" a thunderstorm to hit the beach while the two of them were out for a party. The otherworldly experience brought Sarah's Avatar forth, and Merika introduced her to Dr. Ken Himiitsu (also in **Loom of Fate**). In turn, the Progenitor recognized her aptitudes and temperament and introduced her to Mr. Smith.

Now Sarah works on her own, chronicling, and in some cases, preventing, the deviance that sickened her as a child.

Roleplaying Hints: You hate being called a "photog," and can't stand to see people waste the gifts that the American system has given us. Though not a flag-waver or a prude, you have strong values and an almost defensive patriotism. Your ex-partner was a glorified mannequin who kept her job by sleeping with the boss and living up to every bad stereotype of working women. You're determined to prove everyone wrong by showing how an attractive woman can succeed *without* exploiting her sex.

You're not really hostile; "animated" would be a better word. You pace, tap your fingers, sigh repeatedly and fidget when there isn't something to do. You also tend to disappear for long periods of time, often to a place where you can set up surveillance. Once the vid-cam starts rolling, though, you focus your attention completely and utterly on your job.

Roland Cassault

Essence: Pattern
Nature: Judge
Demeanor: Traditionalist
Methodology: Ivory Tower Educator
Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3, Perception 2, Intelligence 5, Wits 3

You love to lecture, even though you do occasionally fall prey to imitating the professors you admire and parroting buzzwords. You deal with some horrible things, but to you, witnessing betrayal and backstabbing is just part of academia.

Oh, and by the way, don't let anyone ruin your chances with Sarah. After your tragic affair with Alexandra Takahashi, you've thought of working a bit more… closely… with Sarah. You're obviously really taken with her. Unfortunately, getting away from your past can be kind of difficult sometimes…

Ivan, #AT424

Essence: Pattern
Demeanor: Fanatic
Nature: Martyr
Methodology: Operative, Man in Black
Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 3
Abilities: Alertness 3, Awareness 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Interrogation 3, Intimidation 4, Drive 2, Firearms (Shotgun) 5, Leadership 1, Stealth 3, Investigation 3, Occult 2
Spheres: Forces 2, Matter 2, Prime 2
Backgrounds: Arcane 2, Talisman 2, Allies 3
Willpower: 6

Abilities: Alertness 1, Athletics (Surfing) 4, Brawl 1, Dodge 1, Instruction 2, Intuition 3, Subterfuge 2, Meditation 3, Research (History) 4, Computer 3, Investigation 2, Linguistics 3, Occult 2
Spheres: Entropy 2, Mind 4, Prime 1
Backgrounds: Avatar 2, Talisman 3, Library 2
Willpower: 7
Arete: 4
Quintessence: 8
Paradox: 1

Image: A relaxed graduate student in his mid-20s, Roland hangs around the house in sweat pants and university T-shirt. His hair's a little long, his beard's a trifle scraggly, and he's getting a slight paunch from sitting at a computer. He's also picked up the habit of smoking a pipe, which doesn't make him look any more sophisticated… it makes him look like a wanna-be professor trying to smoke a pipe.

History: (See Book One).

Roleplaying Hints: Maybe you've grown a little callous, but you've had to occasionally let friends and competitors fall by the wayside for the sake of your career. You're a very affable guy, with a tendency to approach issues as abstractions. Now and then your tendency to intellectualize allows you to ignore the morally shady things you sometimes do. Then again, a scientist must remain detached.

Arete: 3

Quintessence: 2

Paradox: 4

Image: Cold. Inscrutable. He's seen some of the worst things the supernatural world has to offer, and lived through it. He appears to be in his early twenties, but his blond hair is already turning white. Ice-blue eyes hide his true emotions, and his stony face displays a composed disposition. Not all his suits are black, but he has a strange quirk about wearing boots instead of shoes. No one knows why. He gets a slight facial tic when anyone dares to ask.

History: Biologically, Ivan and his "brothers" are about three years old, grown in the EcoR Progenitor facility (see Chapter One). One of the surviving units of AT#4, "Ivan" is determined to stay alive. There are three of his "line" left, and the rumors about what happened to "Gene," #AT422 are troubling despite Ivan's dedication.

At this time, Ivan simply does his job, trying to comprehend the appeal of San Francisco's chaos. People flock here from all over, despite the dangers of earthquakes, crime and radical ideas. Ivan does not understand why they do, but he has resigned himself to the vagaries of human nature. His job is to protect the innocent.

Roleplaying Hints: Stay calm. Speak precisely. You have a slight Ukrainian accent, and you get offended if anyone calls you "Russian." You have a tendency to be a little too loyal, to the point of repeatedly endangering your life for the sake of your missions.

The Grounds

Four buildings on Divisidero Street currently act as a front for one of the local safe houses. The buildings on either side are residential; the two in the middle are for "businesses."

Each unit is laid out as a simple three bedroom apartment. There's a foyer in front, followed by a long hallway. The hallway passes three doors, all on the left hand side. Beyond that is a living room, and behind an arch at the far end of the living room is a kitchen.

On the Importance of Nodes

Because an amalgam may have to relocate quickly, there is little use in stationing near a permanent Node. One of the prime considerations is that the front is discreet; placing a base near a Node that can be sensed by the Awakened is like placing a neon sign outside the establishment saying "Mysterious Gathering of Magickal Energies Here!" If Quintessence is needed, it can be ported in through Talismans or accessed back at the nearest Collective or Construct.

Building #1

Ground Floor: Nuclear Family

A family of four lives in this apartment. The family is a group of sympathizers. The father works at a local radio station, the mother is a substitute teacher and the kids go to junior high. All four have been Processed, and as such, do not count as witnesses for vulgar magick. The parents are involved in minor operations at their places of employment. The eldest son is slowly working his way into a local environmentalist group, and the daughter has started playing roleplaying games with a group of local pagans she suspects of being Acolytes.

Second Floor: Mission Support

This is the apartment of Roland Cassault and Sarah McGregor. Roland has set up his room as a glorified study, complete with a Trinary computer against one wall. Sarah has turned the third bedroom into a production studio, complete with an editing bay and various Watcher Devices (see Chapter Three). On the bookcase, video tapes compete with history textbooks for space. The kitchen has a high pile of dishes, and ten or fifteen empty TV dinner boxes are usually stacked beside it (the folks aren't known for their housekeeping). The living room is lit by a single lava lamp.
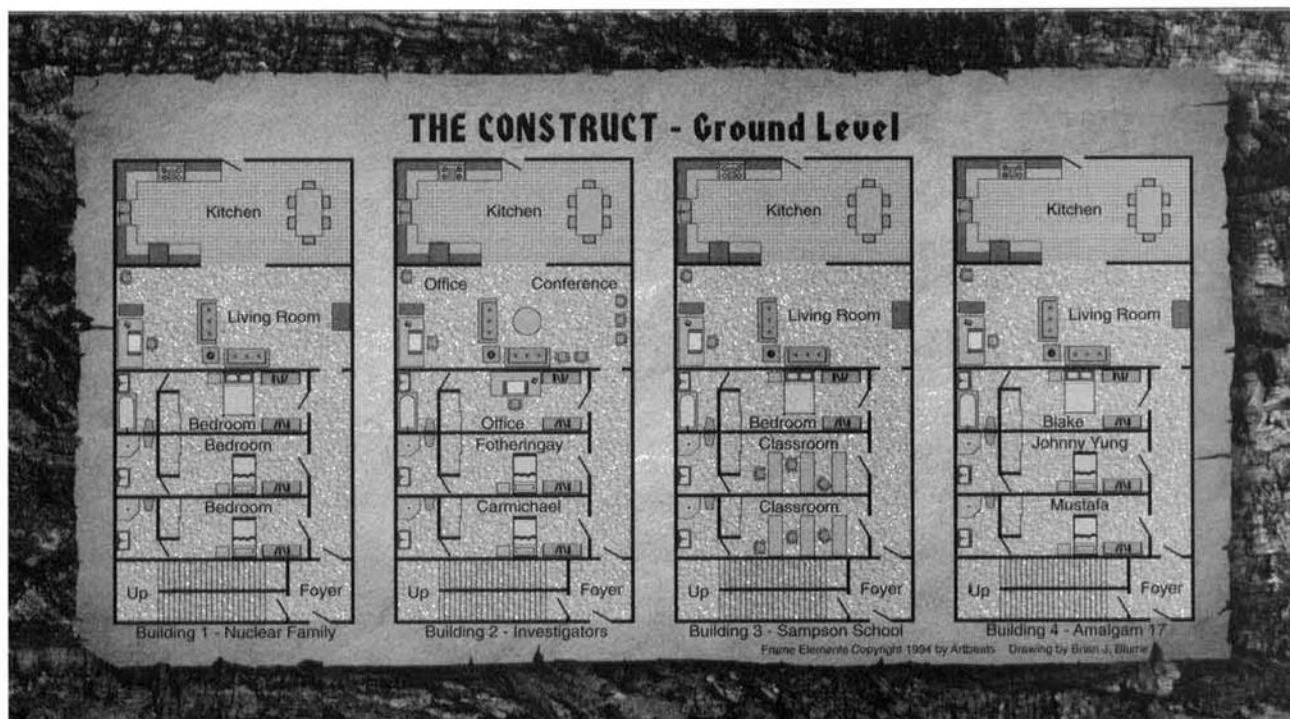
Building #2

First Floor: Fotheringay and Carmichael Investigations

Two private investigators share office space here. Of course, a lot of P.I. work is tedious, uninteresting and repetitive. That's why the two agents here switch off. While one handles the mundane side of the agency, the other handles the paranormal cases, occasionally with the support of other agents. A Gray Man's work is never done.

Second Floor: Atlas Accounting

The gentlemen who work here appear to lead a rather drab life. The apartment has been converted into three offices. The three employees show up in their dull gray suits precisely at 9:00, leave for lunch at 11:55, return at 1:05 and leave at 5:00. Occasionally, one or two will need to leave the office for a consultation, or all three may need to stay late for a special project. No one really pays the three accountants much attention.

The three Men in Black do not wear fedoras and trench coats and do not arrive to work in a black luxury sedan. Ivan, the head of the office, drives a Yugo, and the other two agents carpool in a Toyota. The three agents are on call in case emergency support is needed, and can also act as security in the case of a raid. A few local mages suspect that some of the local accountants and CPAs in San Francisco may secretly be government agents working as part of an international conspiracy hiding a massive secret society of Enlightened magicians, but oddly enough, they seem reluctant to go to anyone with this information.

THE CONSTRUCT - Ground Level

Building 1 - Nuclear Family
Building 2 - Investigators
Building 3 - Sampson School
Building 4 - Amalgam 17

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Building #3

Ground Floor: Sampson School of Languages

The owner of this school maintains a low overhead by living in one of the bedrooms. The other two are equipped with rows of chairs and desks. Each desk is equipped with a tape deck and an assortment of language cassettes. Two instructors help to run the school from 9:00 to 5:00.

Of course, some of the tapes are used to relay messages to agents who stop by, and others are used as part of a subliminal indoctrination program. The students of the Sampson School have an extremely high learning curve, and some return again and again. Some also have a tendency to look out for certain things, unwittingly send checks to unusual addresses or wake up half-asleep in the middle of the night to phone in "reports" to 1-800 numbers. Still, knowing a second language is useful in this day and age, and despite what some may think, the five students who are studying Esperanto really aren't wasting their time.

Second Floor: Sprockets Productions

A group of Watcher sympathizers run their low budget film and video company out of this apartment. The four artists working there keep odd hours, but true art can require an artist to put in long hours. So does monitoring a manar station around the clock, monitoring local police and fire calls, broadcasting piggy-backed subliminal messages on radio signals and manufacturing propaganda films. Getting funding isn't as hard as it used to be.

Building #4

Ground Floor: Amalgam 17

Three Technomancers currently live here. Johnny Yung is a Syndicate representative working as a courier for the local Triads. His connections with the local protection racket also keep the commune safe. Mustafa is a Rastafarian soccer player who's really an Iteration X cyborg. He has a fierce rivalry with Ivan, especially after Black Suit Unit #AT4 showed him up on a recent Chantry raid. The leader of the team, Blake, is a Pharmacoepiast trying to infiltrate the local Hollow Ones by getting in on the local drug trade.
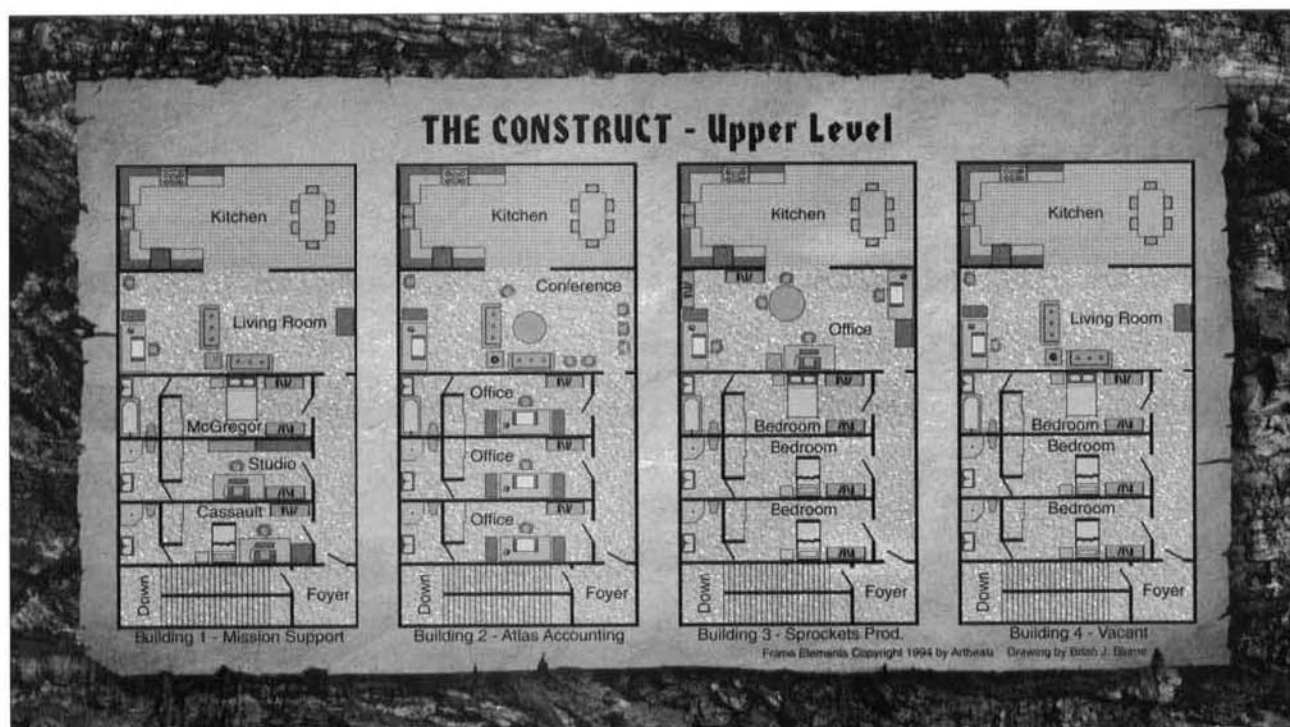
Second Floor: Vacant Apartment

This apartment is also vacant, awaiting the arrival of another amalgam in the area. After the recent furor over the Cataclysm, the Research Collective has decided to increase the number of amalgams in the area.

Wanted: three Enlightened individuals to share 3BR, easy access to support staff, no smokers, lt. procedural activities.

There are other apartments available nearby from Sleeper landlords for extra amalgam members.

The job also entails occasional work on the Horizon…

THE CONSTRUCT - Upper Level

Building 1 - Mission Support | Building 2 - Atlas Accounting | Building 3 - Sprockets Prod. | Building 4 - Vacant

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The Northern California Security Collective

In geosynchronous orbit in a Horizon Realm above the city of San Francisco, the headquarters for this region are based in a station holding over eighty sympathizers and Technocrats. The dominant Convention is the New World Order, but the base also includes a small Progenitor lab staffed by one Research Director and two students, a ready-room for four HIT Marks, quarters for four cyborgs, a business office for four Syndicate executives and a monitoring station for four Void Engineers.

The Collective is under the direction of Intelligence Analyst Daniel Smith. The Operative Methodology is well represented here. Three to ten Gray Men are stationed here at any time, ready for assignments in the field. Twenty Men in Black, ranging from Enlightened agents to mindless constructs, are on standby. The immediate superior to Mr. Smith is Catherine Salazar, a coolly efficient White Suit who visits the station an average of three times a month.

Fifteen Servants of the Ivory Tower are here. The station has an extensive database for storing information of use to Operatives and Field Specialists, and security on intra-Construct communications is especially high. Among the resources here are a full Reality Programming station capable of indoctrinating up to three mages at once, administrative offices for the California region, extensive computer systems to monitor activity in Silicon Valley,

and detainment cells for up to seven mages or other criminals. Classrooms are available for the occasional visit by a Collegium representative.

The Watchers have several operations in progress. Ten surveillance specialists maintain manar overwatch around the clock, three Gatekeepers determine policy for the local media, and four technicians handle Correspondence Jamming and vulgar extraction.

No media production facilities are here, as there are plenty of places for such activity in the city of San Francisco.

Other facilities include an arboretum, a bar, a gymnasium, a combination aquarium and swimming pool, a cafeteria, two kosho courts and an observation deck. There's even a docking station for a Void Engineer scout craft and a garage for vehicles. Mr. Smith's most common complaint, however, is that the station requires more resources. The construction of a second Collective is in progress.

Reaching the Horizon Collective

Accessing the Collective is done in one of two ways. The first is by the principle of the Schroedinger Gateway (Chapter Three). Each row house in the Construct has a garage on the ground floor. Transporting criminals to the NorCal Collective is a simple matter of driving a vehicle into the garage and evoking the **Shroedinger Effect**.

The second method is by a Correspondence Portal in the offices of Atlas Accounting. The portal is kept in a closet in the back of the building. The portal, however, will use a conjunctional Effect of Life to do a DNA scan

of anyone walking through it. It's highly selective about who it lets in. The third method is dangerous: vulgar extraction from the Collective itself.

The Collective doesn't like agents to just "pop in." All local agents know that an amalgam must have a damned good reason to stop by. The Collective also has the option of jamming any means of entering the station, and will cut off an amalgam from the Construct if they're worried about compromising its Security. They will try to identify any prospective visitors before letting them in. Any door has two sides; better to lose an amalgam than to lose a whole station.

Cell Structure

It should be noted that most of the agents on the front lines don't need to go to the Horizon Realm very often, or even know how to get there, for that matter. Remember, there are a lot of sympathizers who don't realize they're working for the Technocracy, or even that they're Enlightened!

Many field agents are organized into what is known as "cell structure"… for their own safety, of course. A cell will typically only have contact with one or two other cells. An amalgam will usually only be assigned to work with one or two other amalgams. If a Man in Black, a sympathizer, or any other low-ranking field agent is captured, the most he can usually reveal is the name of his immediate contact and a few meeting places. If a Horizon Construct seems a little wary of granting admittance to an agent who decides to pop into the Collective with four or five new friends, the enemy agents really shouldn't be surprised.

Moreover, some agents actually dread going to the Horizon. It's easier for their masters to observe them there, there's actually less freedom than on the front lines, and there's always the chance of being subjected to "further training." This distrust that slowly builds between field agents and their isolated masters makes for a growing schism within the Technocracy.

Life on the Horizon

The citizens bold enough to live on the edge of the future know the qualities that breed strength and vision. Life on the Horizon is a model of the society to come, and the New World Order has orchestrated a society that reflects the optimism and energy of a bright new tomorrow. Trust me, the future is a wonderful place! Agents who visit the Horizon will see dynamism in action.

Brilliance

Agents will meet the visionaries who guide the future. The Horizon is home to scientists who know they can pursue pure research in an Enlightened environment. A

Horizon Construct will often contain academic havens, and academics are used to living in economical dormitories and fraternities for the sake of maximizing resources. They must occasionally sacrifice for knowledge, but such is the way of the pioneer! Each lecture administered by these enthusiastic tutors is a chance to learn.

Operatives can also participate in the scientific process by volunteering to test Talismans in the field. Admittedly, some Analysts don't like gadgetry in espionage and don't trust the men and women who invent such gadgets, comparing their beliefs to those of the Sons of Ether. Doubt, however, is the watchword of failure!

On the Edge of Eternity...

At the boundaries of the Deep Universe, on the edge of tomorrow, and fully armed to meet any possible threat from the depths of space, the citizens on the Horizon welcome visitors from the front lines. No doubt when a soldier is ready to retire, she'll gladly take the opportunity to settle into a safe and prosperous life in a Horizon Construct. Prepare yourself to abandon the danger and chaos of the world below, for life on the edge of eternity is chance to embrace the future.

Show your trust. Show your courage. The future is yours for the taking.

Documentation

Terminology

Apparatus — A device used by the Enlightened to focus influence; known to Traditionalists as a "focus."

Black Suit — Man in Black. Also MiB.

BTW — E-mail shorthand for "by the way."

Collective Will — The consensus achieved by humanity, and hence, the reason that Reality is the way it is.

Construct — A genetic construct, one that has been cloned or genetically engineered. Also, when capitalized, the name for a Technocracy Chantry.

Collective — A societal Construct, a social Union created for the common good.

Convention — A political faction of the Technocracy (i.e., The New World Order) specializing in a particular Technocratic philosophy and craft.

Deep Universe — Known to some as the "Deep Umbra"; a hyperspace hidden behind deep space.

E-mail — A method of textual communication using computers as intermediaries, a substitute for actually to talking to someone else face to face. Also used as a substitute for social interaction.

Enlightened — Skilled in the techniques of using technology to alter reality, aware of the greater potential of humankind, and Awakened to the true nature of reality.

FTP — "File transfer protocol," a language used to access and download large amounts of information.

Gengineering — Genetic engineering, a science perfected by the Progenitor Convention.

Gray Suit — Gray Man, a type of Technocracy Operative.

Influence — The capacity to reshape reality along particular guidelines; known to Traditionalists as "Spheres."

Kirlian lens — An apparatus used to allow Enlightened Watchers to observe spiritual and magickal activity.

The Masses — The body of Sleepers who comprise humanity.

Methodology — A philosophical/practical camp within a Convention; a paradigm of science.

Mindscaping — The magickal process of using technology or espionage to alter an individual's perceptions of reality.

Mistridge — The first covenant of mages to be destroyed in the Ascension War. The Liberation of Mistridge occurred in 1210 A.D.

Mythic Age — More properly called the High Mythic Age, the time period between the Fall of Rome (A.D. 477) and 1500.

Natural — A natural human, one who was born and raised among Sleepers.

Newlife — A life spent in service to the Technocracy, when an individual realizes the place he or she has in society.

Oldlife — Life before recruitment, a selfish life in which one does not realize how dangerous the world can be.

Order of Reason — The infant Technocracy, which spread its influence across the globe from approximately 1325 to the 1890s, when a massive reorganization rechristened the group "The Technocracy." Sometimes referred to as "The Order of Things" in the Victorian era.

Paradox — (1) A manifestation of humanity's hatred and fear of those who threaten their safety by altering reality; (2) Reality's resistance to the science of making the impossible possible.

Procedure — Techniques of altering reality; what Traditionalists call "rotes" and "spells."

Processing — Influencing consensual reality; what Traditionalists call "technomagick."

Processed — Describes a Traditionalist whose paradigm no longer threatens static reality, or a Sleeper or sympathizer who has been conditioned to be loyal to the Technocracy.

Reality Criminal — One who has threatened humanity by reshaping Reality.

Reality Deviant — One who reshapes Reality contrary to the consensus and desires of humanity; a threat to the stability of Reality.

Reality Programmer — A Technomancer skilled in altering an individual's perception of reality.

Safe House — A base of operations on the front lines used by the New World Order.

Shroud — A spiritual barrier used to protect humanity from the ghosts of the dead and defeat a spiritual paradigm wherein the dead may control the living.

Sleepteaching — A method of teaching someone who is asleep, usually through subliminal broadcast or induced dreaming.

Social Conditioning — A Mind-influenced procedure used to shape loyalty and trust.

Sympathizer — An unEnlightened ally of the Technocracy, or an ally who does not realize she is Enlightened.

Technocracy — (1) A society ruled by the technologically adept; (2) the process of altering ethical beliefs to serve the convenience of a Technocracy; (3) the proper name for the modern form of the Order of Reason.

Recommended Indoctrination

Fiction

• George Orwell, *1984* — Yes, you read it in high school, but how much do you remember?

• Ayn Rand, *We* and *Anthem* — A model of collectivist dystopic fiction.

• Anthony Burgess, *Clockwork Orange* — A celluloid example of technology destroying humanity.

• *The Collected Stories of Phillip K. Dick* — Phil Dick has some wonderful examples of plots designed to induce paranoia and general skepticism about the nature of reality.

• Robert Anton Wilson, *The Illuminatus Trilogy* — An illustration of how an outsider can slowly discover an ever-expanding conspiracy.

• John LeCarre, *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* — A great treatment of the dehumanizing side of espionage.

Nonfiction

• *The Cuckoo's Egg* by Clifford Stohl — This makes a good general introduction to the principles of computer security.

• *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* by Michael Baigent — A ponderous read, but a good demonstration of conspiratorial history.

• *A History of Secret Societies* by Arkon Daraul — This one has a rather good history of the Templars, as well as a good treatment of secret societies in general.

• *The CIA* by Graham Yost — Numerous tales of American counterinsurgency.

Other Game Sourcebooks

• *Paranoia* by Greg Kostikyan and West End Games — For when your Technocracy game gets *too* serious.

• *GURPS Prisoner* and *GURPS Espionage* — The former because it summarizes the series, and the latter for its in-depth treatment of Sleeper espionage.

• *Nephelim*, by Fédéric Weil and Fabrice Lamidey, licensed and redone by Chaosium — Complete with details on secret societies, including the Templars.

Films

• *Brazil* — One of the definitive New World Order films.

• *Closetland* — A chilling and all-too-realistic look at kidnapping and interrogation in the name of the State.

Also consider these: *Sneakers*, *La Femme Nikita* (remade as *Point of No Return.*; see the original — it's much better), the James Bond films, *Falcon and the Snowman*, *In The Line of Fire*, *1984* (both versions), *The Osterman Weekend*, *Manufacturing Consent*, and, of course, *They Live*.

Television

• *The X-Files* — Why, no, they aren't sympathizers. Why do you ask?

• *The Prisoner* — Far and away *the* best source of inspiration for a Technocracy campaign, as well as a model for mindscaping adventures.

Also consider these: *Max Headroom* and Masumune Shirow's *Black Magic M-66*.

TECHNOCRACY: PROGENITORS™

At Life's Doorway

Queen of Pattern

THE MAGE

THE TOWER

II

By Edward Winters and Judith A. McLaughlin, M.S. Human Genetics

Credits

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Special Thanks To:

Sam "High Priest" Chupp, for raising the power and sweating blood in the Chantry.

Rich "Whiplash" Thomas, for going to the Dark Side.

Michelle "Bull-Dozer" Prahler, for nodding off in phone class.

Chris "Solid Gold" McDonough, for playing us the greatest hits of the '70s.

Josh "Why the Hell Me?" Timbrook, for the pretty fountain we installed in his office.

Jim "Skulker" Townsend, for lurking in dark corners.

TECHNOCRACY: PROGENITORS

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Surrender into the night
Silently take my hand
Nobody knows what's inside us
Nobody understands
They handed us down a dream
To live in this lonely town
But nobody hears the music
Only the echo of a hollow sound.
— The Hooters, "Where Do the Children Go"

Chapter One: The Doors Open

Take the power to set you free
Kick down the door and throw away the key
Give up your needs...
Your poisoned seeds
Find yourself elected to a different kind of creed.
— Annie Lennox, "Money Can't Buy It"

Excerpts from the journal of Andrew Greene

Epiphany
1/12/89

A very strange man approached me today after my presentation. He said he was impressed with my insights into the interaction between metal molecules and G proteins, and that he knew of a scientist who was working in that field. If I were interested, he could arrange a meeting with this gentleman for me. Naturally, I said yes. Making contacts is always important, especially when I'm looking for a good school and a good stipend.

1/15/89

Out of curiosity, I checked Grateful Med today for references to this Dr. Charles Reid. I was extremely sur-prised to find that the man had several hundred articles to his name, not a few of which were G protein papers. This could well be a big break for me. My appointment is in a few weeks, down in Washington. In the interest of making the best impression possible on this man, I've begun to read all his pertinent articles from the last couple of years.

2/6/89

Dr. Reid is a phenomenon! I have never before spoken to someone so intelligent, so incisive, so driving. For hours, it seemed we discussed every aspect of biological science. We started with my research project and how it related to his work. My experiments, which had consumed all hours of my life for six months, paled to insignificance next to the brilliance and simplicity of his theories and hypotheses. He then began leading me down new roads, forcing me to think and rethink scientific applications that I've always taken for granted. It was if he were guiding me down lines of reasoning that he'd long ago explored, but that were radical and new for me.

By the time we were through, I was mentally and physically drained. I hardly remember saying good-bye and setting up our next interview. All night, my mind continued to race through his paths of logic, reveling in the newness and wonder of them.

At night when I try to sleep, I can almost hear him talking to me, urging me to some new conclusions. It's almost as if he were still in the room with me, in the back of my mind. It's driving me nuts, but I've never before felt so driven!

3/15/89

In the month since I met with Dr. Reid, I have been rereading his literature with newly opened eyes, glimpsing the insights and sensing in those paragraphs concepts beyond what I can grasp right now. It's so frustrating!!! I can barely remember any specifics of anything he and I discussed. I can't write them down no matter how hard I try. I know there's a greater truth, some basic principle that lies there, but I can't understand it for the life of me!!!

On Dr. Reid's advice in the letter I received from him not long ago, I sent out my application and letters of reference to one of the universities where he has an appointment.

4/30/89

My scientific paradigms have been overturned, crushed and trampled underfoot. Dr. Reid has revealed to me a whole new realm, the realm of true science. He told me that magic is real, and that with magic, technology can be advanced to heights beyond that which is possible in the mundane world.

The man is either a genius or a lunatic; I haven't decided which. His logic was inescapable, his proofs irrefutable. Magic is real, science is real, and reality is a mixture of both. He said that I can be either a subject of reality or a controller of reality. As his student, or a student of one of

his colleagues, I would have the latter option. It is not without its dangers, he added, for he and his colleagues, whom he calls "Progenitors," have dangerous enemies.

Dangers be damned! This is an opportunity for me to be everything that I ever wanted and more than I ever dreamed. I want this position, this life, and this power more than life!

5/1/89

I don't know how to describe how I feel. I would say that I've got the world's biggest hangover, but I haven't been drinking, and feel too clear, too awake, too sensitive to everything around me in any case. I feel intoxicated, but not drunk; let down, but still higher than I've ever felt in my life. Everything is a blur; I remember just enough for it not to make sense.

It is real, what we talked about, what he said. What Dr. Reid said, I mean. I mentally reviewed our conversation over and over and over, and it was as if he were standing right there, urging me toward some inescapable conclusion, and I reached out, physically reached out to where I thought he might be. It was like a trance, and I don't know what I was doing. Then the room seemed to bend around the edges, like I had ingested some hallucinogen (but I know I hadn't), and I started trembling and fell down on the bed, and the room seemed to spin, and I swear that when I closed my eyes I had this vision of myself as Prometheus, accepting a torch held out to me by some unseen hand.

Ever since I woke up this morning, everything seems so sharp, so vivid, so overpowering. I don't even pretend to know what happened, but maybe this is what people mean by "a stroke of genius," an insight so powerful and profound that it changes your life forever.

Dr. Reid is right. There is more than I ever imagined at work in the world. I want a piece of it so badly I can taste it!

6/15/89

What a grueling gauntlet of interviews! I think I've managed to talk to every biologist on the face of the Earth, or at least at this college, today. Question after question, lab after lab, professor after professor. Every professor asked me the same set of questions. "Why do you want to come here?" "In what area of the field are you most interested?" "How would you be a positive addition to our department?" "What has your previous experience been like?" Argh!

It seems to have gone well, however. The end of the day is pretty much a blur, because fatigue set in after I went to lunch with two of the students, Steven and Diane. I get the impression that Steven is one of Them (dare I say Us?), but something about Diane tells me that she is not party to the secret. Both were consummately professional, and Diane was particularly kind about my sore feet (from tramping about the campus).

6/20/89

I received Dr. Reid's phone call today. Classes begin August 25th.

8/24/89

Moving to Richmond, Virginia, was one of the most miserable experiences of my life. The apartment is a wretched, roach-infested studio in the Fan — a loud, labyrinthine student sector where I was serenaded with the sounds of gunshots, screams and parties. Classes start today, and I am looking forward to getting away from this place. Nervous though I am about facing my competition and my new mentors, anything has to be an improvement over this....

Classes Begin

8/24/89

Well, all my fears were unfounded. The sizzlingly brilliant minds I was prepared to face as my fellow students consist of a gorgeous blonde Southern belle named Mary Beth and some skinny, zit-faced geek named Rob. Mary Beth is just as charming and intelligent as she is gorgeous. *Summa cum laude* from Duke in chemistry, three years lab experience, and five papers published, plus a poster at last year's American Society of Human Genetics conference. Wow. And she suggested we do some studying together.

Rob stayed quiet, taking cramped little notes on every word that dropped from Dr. Smith-Nevans' lips, even though all she was doing was welcoming us to the school and introducing us around the department. There were a couple of other students, but none of them was in our program. Just the three of us.

....

8/25/89 From the recorded tapes of Dr. Reid's Progenitor History class:

You have completed your reading of the required text chapters and journal articles. Now that you have finished with the basics, we move on to a better understanding of our own Convention, the Progenitors.

From ancient times, our efforts have been aimed at creating order and an understanding of the workings of the universe. Many of the misguided and unenlightened would have us believe that reality is never to be completely understood. The universe contains mysteries to which only supreme beings are entitled to know the answers. Rubbish!

From the genesis of the ideas that like breeds like and that two substances combined can form another substance, our forefathers were there, studying, learning and carving a path of knowledge out of the jungles of ignorance and superstition; leading primitive scientists from all walks of life down the long road of truth and enlightenment. Anyone who truly believes that order rules the universe, and that there is nothing we cannot understand, can be counted as an ally in our battle for Ascension.

Throughout the ages, our enemies have attempted to undermine the spread of our work. At the beginning, our power was new, still being tested. Theories and hypotheses needed to be proved or disproved. Fundamental laws and their applications had to be conceived, created, researched and understood. All this took time. And as our understanding grew, so did our realization that the helpless Masses were not prepared to deal with the unlimited and dangerous powers buried within each of them. They needed guidance and order, means of channeling this energy in a logical, patterned way.

While we struggled for reason and understanding, our rivals rose to power. They corrupted the Masses with superstition and supernatural gibberish. We were so consumed with our own thirst for knowledge that we were unaware of the damage these "free spirits" were inflicting upon reality.

While the ignorant Masses were scouring ditches and gullies for edible roots and grubs, our forefathers were planting seeds. While they were drunk and dancing naked with nymphs, early FACADE Engineers were studying the workings of the human body. And while they were on their knees begging a deaf god to save them, the first of the Pharmacopeists were curing their diseases....

8/28/89 Recorded excerpt from Dr. Reid's Progenitor History class discussion of the impact of early Progenitors:

...Some of the earliest members of our Convention spent their days and nights selectively breeding animals and plants long before the Masses even conceived of agriculture or the domestication of animals. Their actions were based on the observed fact that like mated with like produced like. This, of course, wasn't always true, but it was a good start. These early scientists fed and clothed mankind via careful observation, improved organisms and manipulations of growth and development. With science and magic they ushered in the first of the true civilizations.

As civilization waxed, some of our number began to organize the Masses, helping them by treating their ills with medicinal herbs and the first primitive surgeries. At this time we worked hand-in-hand with the other Traditions; indeed, we were indistinguishable from them. There were no "Traditions" as such in those days; the Traditions as we now understand them had yet to exist. Those who now call themselves the Verbena were our allies and partners. Soon, however, we — the Progenitors-to-be — were set apart by our vision of a safer world where the Masses were no longer in danger.

Thanks to us, the fight for survival was reduced to a mere skirmish, and cities grew. Groups developed within the Masses: the haves and the have-nots. The inheritance of property, money and influence was common, for it was widely believed that children inherit their parents' characteristics, and therefore are only as worthy or unworthy as their forebears.

With the rise of civilization and thought, the Traditions twisted away from us, corrupting our deeds. Soon the Masses believed that their survival was based on miracles and divine actions. In a jealous fit, the early Traditions turned on us, their saviors, and proceeded to manipulate the perceptions of humanity in an attempt to turn them away from science. They spread rumors, half-truths and old wives' tales rather than acknowledging our valid scientific accomplishments.

We felt that the Traditions were misguided adolescents and hoped that by showing them the truth they would join us in protecting the helpless Masses. So we allowed them to continue, to our everlasting regret....

....

8/29/89

Mary Beth and I studied together last evening. She is very insightful about the Progenitors' relationship with the rest of the world. When I commented that perhaps Dr. Reid was overdramatizing our role in history, she pointed out that the Progenitors were probably the first to apply scientific principles to the studies of life. In that light, I can see that we were probably responsible for agriculture, and therefore civilization.

....

9/1/89 Recorded excerpt from Dr. Reid's Progenitor History class discussion of early science and philosophy:

Still science trudged on. During these early times very few mortals approached even a dim understanding of our theories. With the appearance of the Greek philosophers, however, we began one of our most remarkable historical uses of a non-Progenitor think tank, embarking on one of the first pursuits of fundamental genetics. The Greek philosophers spent a great deal of time discussing the concept of heredity; Socrates, Hippocrates and Aristotle were preeminent among those whose theories lasted through the ages. Hippocrates was one of the few who suggested that men and women contributed equally to their offspring or child, and it was from Hippocrates that we took our old name, the Hippocratic Circle.

Aristotle was one of the earliest to suggest that the male contributed everything to the form, while the female simply supplied the matter. He was one hell of a physicist, but he should've left biology alone.

During these troubled times, the group that would eventually become the Pharmacopeists turned its attention once again to the civilizations at hand. Whenever problems arose that would in one way or another complicate our experiments, the Pharmacopeists ran interference for us by inciting some sort of political uproar with poisons and drugs.

However, the Traditions quietly gathered power while we focused our attention on science. They took advantage of our seclusion, for we would sometimes stay for years in our castles and towers, not bothering to emerge and see what the Masses had recently wrought. During these times of cloistering, the Traditions spread their poisonous "truth" throughout the world. And our precious sciences were all but forgotten....

....

9/2/89

In reviewing my lecture notes from Dr. Reid's history class, I can't help but wonder why he takes it all so damn personally. Every reference to the Traditions is laced with such venom. Why despise ignorance?

....

Persecutions of the Circle and the Age of Enlightenment

9/4/89 Recorded excerpt from Dr. Reid's history class discussion of the Middle Ages to Mendel:

...The spread of religious dogma during the medieval era robbed science of hundreds of years of potential progress. The unenlightened ruled, oppressing those who would explain their "divine mysteries" with cold, hard facts. Persecution of the intellectual via exile, excommunication and even murder began then. It has not yet stopped.

Not until the late 16th century did reason emerge from these dark times. Then the light began to dawn. Harvey determined that all things spring from eggs. Spontaneous generation, a widespread belief among the ignorant Masses, was disproved by Francesco Redi's study of spoiling meat and flies.

Anton van Leeuwenhoek, however, was the most influential scientist of those early times. He methodically used a microscope to disprove spontaneous generation, to discover bacteria, and to discover sperm cells in semen. Aristotle's influence prevailed, however, as poor Anton believed that there was a tiny, fully formed being in each sperm cell, just waiting for a woman in which to grow.

Finally, in 1827, someone found the mammalian egg. Hertwig then observed the fertilization of the egg by a single sperm. Having finally shaken off the religious debris of the past, we had reached the Age of Enlightenment.

Going back to our basics of breeding, a number of scientists began trying to calculate the mathematics of inheritance. There had to be rhyme and reason to this seemingly chaotic phenomenon. Gregor Mendel published his work in 1865. Though a monk, he had one of the greatest inspirations and greatest strokes of luck available to any of us. He theorized the concept of genes. Each organism's gene has two copies, called alleles. An offspring has a 50% chance of inheriting either allele from each parent, leading to a new and different combination of genes.

Unfortunately, Mendel's work was buried under the novelty of Darwin's evolutionary theory, only resurfacing posthumously.

The Modern Progenitors

From my heart and from my hand
Why don't people understand
My intentions?
— Oingo Boingo, "Weird Science"

....

9/7/93

I can't believe that these "Traditions" weren't wiped out a long time ago. Ignorant idiots! I understand now why Dr. Reid hates them. It's a good thing that we took control of reality. Things are pretty bad now, but they were so much worse then!

These "Traditions" sound like those moronic New Age types or those idiots who dress up like knights and queens and beat each other up with padded weapons while playing King Arthur. Fun's fun, I guess, but I'd love to send a few of these dingbats back to those Middle Ages they prize so highly and see how they'd like wading in raw filth or bathing once a year.

Don't any of them realize what we've done for them!

....

9/10/89 Excerpt from *Progenitors and Modern Culture* by Cameron, 1899 (in preparation for my seminar on past failures of Tradition projects):

...It is commonly believed among those involved in the Oxford laboratory group that the creature fictionalized by Mary Shelley earlier in this century was the result of material stolen from the laboratory of a well-known Graft Specialist on the Continent, a Dr. N. According to sources at the time, a conference held in Paris permitted Progenitors, Sons of Ether and scientists from other fields to gather and present their current research. During this conference, it is believed that an Ether scientist of ill repute, named Frankenstein, who was fiercely jealous of Dr. N's seminal work on the rejoining of disconnected tissue, attempted to acquire Dr. N's personal notebooks. His attempt was interrupted by a student of Dr. N's, and Frankenstein escaped with but a single book.

Frankenstein slipped out of Paris and returned home. Using the radically advanced, but incomplete, information the notebook contained, he created the monstrosity that caused his death....

....

9/10/89

It is interesting to note that neither Dr. N's stolen book nor Frankenstein's notes were ever recovered. What could have happened to them? It would be interesting to find those papers and study this entirely misguided experiment.

....

9/12/89 From Dr. Reid's history class discussion of Mendel through W.W.II:

...While Mendel was breeding his pea plants in the monastery garden, scientists were generating mathematical formulas to analyze certain traits. In 1865, Galton published his major work on statistical genetics, establishing himself as the father of eugenics. In 1895, Ploete published *Rassenhygiene*, a text on eugenics that contained some of the seminal ideas of the Nazi movement.

In 1900, Mendel was rediscovered, despite the convenient disappearance of his work from the scene. Different names appear in this time period, some of them great Progenitors: Garrod, who applied Mendel's laws to humans for the first time; Hardy and Weinberg, who explained mathematically why there is an equilibrium between the existence of dominant and recessive genes; Sutton, who observed that chromosomes from the sperm can be matched to nearly identical chromosomes in the egg, suggesting that the particles of inheritance, the genes, were carried on the chromosomes.

Before I continue, I must state that we were unused to the politics of the 20th century. We were scientists, the intellectual elite, and we didn't dirty our hands with such underhanded, illogical manipulations. Our past manipulations were far more sophisticated and elegant.

The rise of Nazism was a fantastic opportunity to experiment openly upon the Masses. Maybe Mengele was one of ours, maybe not. Not even our oldest members know for sure, but the consensus is that he probably couldn't manage the leap of faith, so to speak, to grasp our most basic principles. The concentration camps, our first gross manipulations of the 20th-century society of the Masses, were roaring successes. The data gleaned from these places set our Convention well ahead of any science that was subsequently revealed to the Masses.

This was a turning point in Progenitor history. Here, our knowledge pool grew to such a proportion that we were forced to specialize. Until Nazi Germany, we were "jacks of all trades," so to speak. The possibilities for research blossomed, and lab groups diverged in all directions, eventually forming the three basic Methodologies: the Pharmacopeists, the FACADE Engineers and the Genegineers.

However, our persecutors struck during the 1930s, destroying one of our largest holdings in the world, a facility in the Soviet Union. The Genegineer director of an enormous medical genetics institution in the USSR mysteriously disappeared. Human genetics was declared a Nazi science, and a methodical purge of the intellectual community took place. All who did not subscribe to the state version of

genetics were somehow eliminated, and a figurehead of "science" was set up to control experimentation and beliefs. It is believed that this last-ditch effort to destroy our influence was implemented by either the Traditions or the large contingent of vampires who preyed upon the sheeplike Soviet populace. True science, however, can never be restrained....

....

9/13/89

How could Reid be so blatantly callous about genocide? How could he insinuate, no, proclaim the slaughter of the Jews "a roaring success"??

Vampires? I know that I heard him correctly. This whole thing has taken on a weird cast, and I'm not always sure just what to think of it. Still, deep down, all of this rings true somehow. I think that I'll reserve judgment, at least for now.

....

9/15/89 From Rob's paper on the beginnings of modern genetics:

...In the 1940s, Beadle and Tatum proclaimed the "one gene, one enzyme" law, which states that each gene encodes a single enzyme or protein. Avery, MacLeod and McCarty discovered that the stuff of genes was deoxyribonucleic acid...otherwise known as DNA. DNA is made up of four "bases": adenosine, thymine, guanosine and cytosine. A, T, G, C. Chargaff found that the quantity of A equaled the quantity of T, and that the same relationship was true for G and C. Franklin, in the early 1950s, discovered that the DNA molecule had some kind of helix shape.

1953. Watson and Crick discover that A molecules bond with T molecules, as do G and C. Great reason for the equal ratios, right? DNA is a double helix that "unzips" to make templates for replication.

1956. The human chromosome count is finally determined to be 46.

1966. It is discovered that three bases in sequence encode a single amino acid in a protein. The genetic code is broken and is determined to be the same in all life....

9/19/89 Recorded excerpt from Dr. Reid's class on Modern Genetics:

The era following the discoveries in 1956 through 1966 was a logical extrapolation of steadily improving techniques and equipment. Now, understanding more about the human makeup, we could move away from seat-of-the-pants herbalism into true drugs, vaccines and antibiotics. With the advent of this technology, we easily convinced the Masses that we had a treatment for every ill, a drug for every pain and mood swing. From the 1940s onward, our medicines and even our street drugs have been panaceas for the Masses, who seek a quick fix for the stress of chaotic reality.

This is easy to understand when we realize that the Masses have no coping mechanisms for the supernatural,

and few even for the natural. The Masses will seek to medicate themselves with or without our help, as they have done for centuries, so we have done no wrong in applying our science to their urges. We have tried to atone for centuries of failing to wrest control from the Traditions by buying the Masses a little more sanity.

Of course, some people were initially reluctant to use our "products." The Traditions had been shoving hogwash down their throats for a millennium, and still attempt to do so today. But when Bette Davis lit a cigarette and sipped a martini on screen, everyone knew it was acceptable, eh?

We now have enzymes that cut DNA wherever we need it cut. We have bacteria and viruses whose DNA we can manipulate. We have techniques to produce large quantities of specific DNA sequences rapidly. Of course, we have had all this for a very long time, but some of the trade secrets have been leaked to the Masses: intentionally, or by the disgruntled or the spies that riddle our expanding science.

It was sometime in the 1970s that we allowed non-Progenitors to become relatively successful biologists and chemists. Until then, we had retained a relative chokehold on the biological community, keeping our science for ourselves, with a few chosen pawns to use as our Technicians. We realized that we needed to give these new scientists something toward which to work, and we ourselves needed a modicum of relief from "grunt work." So we created the Human Genome Project to occupy the tiny minds of the unenlightened.

The Sleeper scientists of the Project grind through millions of base pairs and generate a complete map of genes' locations on the human chromosomes. It keeps them happy, and when we have the complete map, we will be able to control every nuance of human life, from eye color to mental illness to the way the Masses wear their hair. Genes are the stuff of life, and their influence is all-encompassing.

In return we give the Masses "cloning" techniques involving frogs, transgenic mice, test-tube babies, and gene therapy. We give them genetic testing, cancer treatments and amniocentesis. Watch their culture change and grow around these things we allow them to have! We are the eternal guardians of knowledge. We are like Prometheus with fire. If Prometheus had handed his torch to a child, that child would have burned himself. But he handed it to a grown man, who could realize the potential of this gift even as he burned himself. If the Masses knew what we know, they would destroy themselves. And so they must be protected from the universe as we know it to be....

....

9/29/89

Our potential gains are clear. How could I have ever thought of being just a biologist? Mary Beth and I agree that if even half of what Reid has told us is true, we can be gods.

Why don't we just take the world and shape it directly, make it logical and orderly? What keeps us from being all that we could be?

....

Structure of the Convention

10/5/93 Excerpt of lecture notes from Dr. Martinez' Overview of the Progenitors class:

Students:

A prospective Student can be any young person, from a dedicated adolescent to a graduate-level student, that is recruited by Progenitor field operatives. The recruit is always an individual with an unusually enlightened grasp of biology or chemistry. Recruits are sometimes chosen to placate certain laboratories that are actively seeking Students; more often, however, recruits are simply "discovered" and later placed according to their interests and aptitudes.

Students pursue a general course of study, which varies in length from two to eight years. Students' progress is followed closely by the Primary Investigator assigned to advise the Student. This advisor reports to a chosen committee on the Student's progress. A Student will either graduate or "burn out." Burnouts are dealt with, in one way or another, by Damage Control. Graduating Students finish by writing a thesis or dissertation on their research and defending its contents to their committees. New theories are crucial to our continued success.

Research Associates:

A graduate Student then becomes a Research Associate in a laboratory working in the Student's field of interest. The RA performs research as dictated by the lab's Primary Investigator. Ambitious and creative RAs can pitch informal proposals to their PIs, who can then integrate this potential research, if acceptable, into their own grant proposals for funding. RAs use this time to build their reputations and support bases in hopes of eventually supervising their own laboratories. Networking is essential; it's not what you know but whom you know in the world of science.

Less ambitious or able individuals often remain RAs for life, stagnating as they watch their peers surpass them. They often become bitter, cynical and recalcitrant. These are the people to watch carefully, because they sometimes begin feeding information to competitors or the Traditions. If this occurs, Damage Control must be notified immediately.

Primary Investigators:

A Primary Investigator has extensive abilities in her own areas of expertise. Primary Investigators teach and counsel most Students. Failing either to instruct or to guide is intolerable and may result in an "opening" in a particular lab. Funding, type and quality of research, and the ability to attract new Students are the criteria for status at this level of the hierarchy. Those who stop on this rung of the success

ladder are usually those who annoy the review board or Administration, obsess into a tiny corner of virtually useless research, or lack the magical competence to proceed further.

Scholarship, research and service are the tenets of our science. Those individuals who excel in the service aspect (i.e., serving on committees to increase productivity and reduce bureaucracy), but who lack the drive to succeed in research, are removed and groomed for a post in Administration.

PIs run laboratories of their own; these include at least one Technician and a couple of dedicated Students, and possibly an RA as well.

Research Directors:

Research Directors are the respected and revered masters of their trade. Some are centuries old; some just seem it. All Research Directors share two things: uncanny knowledge of their magical specialty and an amazing perception of how research can proceed in new and effective directions. These scientists have often transcended the human need to overcomplicate the matters of the universe, instead living by the principle of KISS: Keep It Simple, Stupid.

Research Directors oversee a number of laboratories that are associated either geographically or by collaborations and joint appointments. The least successful RDs have a pair of joined labs, two PIs, and the RAs, Students and Technicians associated with the PIs. The most successful run a large department in a university, possess enormous laboratories of their own, and collaborate with, or have joint appointments at, other universities and corporations.

A Progenitor-run department is easy to find. The PIs are held in tight control, they have plenty of funding, the Students are happy, and the Administration is quite partial to them. Non-Progenitor departments tend to be chaotic, filled with petty battles for petty recognition, riddled with funding problems, and the subjects of frequent reviews by Administration. The students (note the lower case; Martinez called attention to it) are generally unhappy, underachieving and uninspired. Our recruiters periodically tour these departments as reviewers, trying to pick out the few promising students who slipped through our fingers at the undergraduate level.

The Administration:

Little is known of this secret Progenitor order. However, the Administration pervades all aspects of Progenitor existence. The Administration has final say on all projects. The Administration provides funding or takes it away. The Administration organizes and supervises large Progenitor movements in the world of the Masses, or against the Traditions. Administration's enforcement arm is called Damage Control, and can be activated with a single phone call.

The Administration is the most secretive and powerful section of the Progenitors. Recruiters, secretaries and administrative assistants are the only visible agents of the Administration. No one sees, meets with, or speaks directly to the Administrators. Their instructions come through showers of memos, e-mail and messages through agents.

The Administration has absolute control over all Progenitor laboratories. With the constant perils to our Convention, this is, perhaps, the way it should be.

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10/5/89

Dr. Martinez insinuates that the Administration is part of the government, or even runs the government. I know that there are several large health and science departments in the U.S. alone, but the Progenitors couldn't have complete control of the FDA, NIH, CDC and all the smaller departments, could they?

Martinez also suggests that we all walk a very thin line of secrecy and etiquette. I'm afraid that I might cross that and never know it until "Arnold" is in my face with a sawed-off shotgun, telling me I should never have had lunch with that Buddhist friend of mine. What is the line? Where is the book of rules by which the Administration goes? Have I gotten into something where the word "deadline" has a literal meaning?

Progenitor Methodologies

10/6/89 Excerpt from a conversation with Chain, an RA Pharmacopeist:

"Oh, yeah, Martinez always goes through that "organizational structure" crap. You need to get together with my old advisor, Dr. Burns. She'll show you "organization." We have the same basic stuff, but then there's the important shit. She's got a lab in Church Hill — man, you gotta see it to believe it. Old, rundown warehouse. We gutted it about six years ago and put in state-of-the-art tech. We got one of the sweetest setups on this coast."

All the learning in the world could not have prepared me for meeting a Progenitor scientist named "Chain." What could have possessed me to agree to go with him to see the lab tomorrow?

10/8/89 Note following my visit to the Pharmacopeist lab:

The Pharmacopeist laboratory itself was set up like any other Progenitor lab. Everything was very clean and organized, with machines I couldn't even begin to understand. However, it seems that Pharmacopeist street lab groups are very different from other Progenitor lab groups.

The street-level lab groups deal mostly in illegal or dangerous drugs, and their entire setups are constantly guarded and maintained by well-armed thugs and some nightmares that only the FACADE Engineers could've designed. Street operatives come and go at predetermined times to gather more supplies and drop off the money they have collected. The street operatives seem to be the

Pharmacopeist equivalent of Technicians, in that they know very little of the inner workings of the Progenitors and just do what they're told.

The Students in these laboratories perform the technical work of producing and purifying the drugs. The supervising PI rarely shows her face at the lab, and then only under the cover of night and disguises. For the most part, the lab's day-to-day work is supervised by resourceful and savvy RAs like Chain.

The dealings outside the laboratory proper are very…sordid. Chain tells me that in order to keep a handle on how business is going, he takes to the streets personally on occasion. I wish he hadn't thought it necessary to take me with him last night. No one interacted with me, but just being that close to the lowlife Masses in the street, the stupidity that seems rampant outside the Technocracy, the dirt and grime and darkness, made me come home and take a long, hot shower to try to purge that feeling from my body. I thanked Chain for the experience, but more for showing me an aspect of the Progenitors in which I wanted no involvement.

10/10/89

I don't believe what Mary Beth has just told me. Rob, that pasty-faced, pencil-necked twit, has been invited for a special rotation in Dr. Reid's lab!!! I can't believe I was passed over for *him!* What has possessed Reid?

10/11/89

Mary Beth has attached herself at the hip to Rob. She follows him everywhere, talking in that sickly sweet Southern voice of hers. She's busy, she told me; Rob is tutoring her tonight. I know what kind of tutoring she's talking about. I don't believe this. I'm passed over for a place in Reid's lab, then some power-hungry blond bitch dumps me for a rail with glasses. My last exam was miserable; I scraped an 85 out of 100. My life is coming apart!

FACADE Engineers

10/12/89 Recorded notes from Dr. Linda Smith-Nevans' seminar on the current Methodologies:

"All right, now that you have been taught the basics of how our labs are run and what is expected from each of you, why don't we begin discussing the three individual Methodologies that make up the Progenitors today?

"In all of this, it is important to remember that despite minor skirmishes between the different Methodologies, they all maintain a scientific camaraderie and can usually turn to another lab of any type for assistance. Now, with which group shall we begin!"

Mary Beth, that underfed blonde with the sunken eyes, raised her hand while calling out, "How about the FACADE Engineers?" Brown-nosing little bitch. She knew damn well that Dr. Smith-Nevans is a FACADE Engineer.

"...We are known as the Forced Adaptation and Clone Alteration Developmental Eugenicists, or the FACADE Engineers."

....

The FACADE Engineers have influenced science around the globe for centuries. We are directly responsible for some of the legends of mythological man-beasts and creatures whose bodies combine the features of more than one animal, for the dawn of selective breeding, and for the perpetuation of the ideal of the perfection of breeds and races.

Throughout the centuries, FACADE Engineers have conducted experiments for the purpose of adapting humans to the vagaries of different environments. Early Egyptian Progenitors created hybrids by transposing certain body parts, such as the head. The Masses later mistook these creations for gods and goddesses such as Bast, Anubis and Horus. Later, more elegant, work by Middle Eastern Progenitors involved the mixing of body parts from diverse species, producing such phenomena as angels and many Hindu mythological figures. Greek Progenitors blended the forms of man and beast, producing such creatures as centaurs, the Cretan Minotaur, harpies and aquatic merfolk. It is believed that the merfolk lived on and reproduced in the open sea, which explains the various legends of "mermaids" spawned by sailors. (Note: And I always thought the dugong was responsible for such! Perhaps I should raise the point after class.)

In more recent times, some of us have taken credit for the numerous large, furred humanoid creatures sighted in various parts of the world, including North America, Tibet and Indonesia. Some Progenitors claim that these "sasquatches" or "yetis" are in fact humans adapted to harsh climates. There have also been whispers that the so-called "Jersey Devil" was a goat-footed hybrid escapee from one of our laboratories in the Pine Barrens of New Jersey.

The force of Paradox has, fortunately, made such creatures obsolete. They now die within days. The continued tales of such creatures are legends, nothing more.

The cloning techniques long ago perfected by the FACADE Engineers have been instrumental to the growth of the Progenitor cause. Not only are they used to protect our scientists from betrayal and assassination by the Tradition Mages, but we have in essence achieved a form of immortality. As our bodies pass their prime and begin to deteriorate from age, wounds or disease, we transfer our minds to younger, stronger clones of ourselves, thus allowing us to continue our work forever. Some among us, working with Genegineers, have altered their clone bodies to be more fit, to look different, or even to appear as one of their enemies. Death holds no fear for a Progenitor.

The science of cloning has made the FACADE Engineers an intricate and deadly espionage force. We have become so adept at regrowing lifeforms that we can create replacements of our enemies or members of their families,

reprogramming the clones to act as spies and assassins for the Progenitors.

Usually, the state-of-the-art cloning processes are used only to produce important Progenitor scientists or to clone true Progenitor allies. The difference between the two types of clones is that the most frequently used doppelgangers, the Type Ones, are not 100%-perfect replicas. The bodies are identical all the way down to the fingerprints and DNA, but the personalities sometimes show slight variations or inconsistencies. Type Ones may not replicate every mannerism or personality quirk perfectly. For instance, a Type One may eat eggs even though the original used to hate them, or it may have lost the nervous habit of cracking its knuckles. It might be missing scars of which the Progenitors had no prior knowledge. Such oversights, if noted by family and friends, sometimes necessitate the unfortunate elimination of those hapless Sleepers.

The second method of cloning is a much more effective and costly technique; it requires access to both the donor's mind and body. This is how the Progenitors transfer the mind of one of their dead or aging colleagues into an already prepared clone body. These clones, known as Type Twos, are exact in their appearance, or may be altered to be stronger, more attractive, or possibly even of a different sex or race. The minds of these clones are very carefully transferred, leaving no inconsistencies. Indeed, original and clone share the same personality.

The paranoia such clones create in Tradition mages, and even our colleagues in the Conventions, is extreme. One never knows whether his spouse, child, master or even beloved pet could in truth be a Progenitor agent.

It is not unknown for the oldest, most paranoid FACADE Engineers to activate and interact with clones of themselves because of their distrust of others and their belief that only they (or another "they") can truly understand the brilliance of their work. This has not shown great success, and has in many cases led to infighting and the destruction of more than one Progenitor.

The FACADE Engineers seek to maximize the evolutionary fitness of every organism on Earth. Those we cannot maximize, we eliminate or save for future work. This forced adaptation to a stable environment will eliminate dangerous extremes and perpetuate the safety of the Masses.

We are the backbone of the Progenitors. Our invaluable group is responsible for the prolonged life of some of this Convention's most brilliant and insightful scientists. The power of the Progenitors is not in numbers, but in the accumulated knowledge of centuries of work and the immortality of the masters of their craft.

The FACADE Engineers are a tightly organized and very secretive Methodology. The older scientists prefer a more solitary approach to their research, only meeting or collaborating with other lab groups when absolutely neces-

sary. These ancient researchers are paranoid and protective of their work. Anyone working for one of these hermits may not know why he is required to do a specific experiment or gather particular data until years have passed and his work has been published.

While the ancients seemingly have infinite patience with their plodding, but completely secret, research, the more modern approach of the large lab group churns out data at a much more respectable pace in this publish-or-perish world.

....

10/13/89

Immortality could certainly be useful. I only hope that my work allows me to qualify for it some day. I would also dearly love to see Mary Beth's head on a jackass, instead of the reverse.

But still, it's hard for me to swallow that all the beasts of myth and primitive gods came straight from whatever passed for FACADE Engineer labs. Maybe some of them, like the Minotaur. I could buy that, because it was biological magic that brought it about in the myth.

The clones: now there's a scary thought. Very *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. Your mother, father, brother, sister, lover...the dog, for God's sake, could be a spy for the FACADE Engineers. Maybe they do run the government, all the governments, and the leaders are just brainwashed clone puppets.

Then again, maybe they're exaggerating just a bit.

The Genegineers

Subjectively, to evolve must most often have amounted to suffering from a disease. And these diseases were of course molecular. The appearance of the concept of good and evil, interpreted by man as his painful expulsion from Paradise, was probably a molecular disease that turned out to be evolution.

—E. Zuckerkandl and L. Pauling, *Horizons in Biochemistry*

10/19/89 Recorded excerpt from Dr. Sheffan's seminar on the Genegineers:

"I gather that Dr. Smith-Nevans has told you about the FACADE Engineers, so I will proceed with a lecture on the Mutagenic Engineers," the doddering old man mumbled almost incoherently.

Mary Beth, with a broad smile, piped up, "Aren't they called Genegineers now?"

He glared at her sharply. "Just so, young woman, they are. Trendy claptrap...."

....

This is the newest Methodology. Its members trace their scientific roots from the rediscovery of Mendel's work in 1900, making this branch of the Progenitors less than 100 years old. The Genegineers, however, are fast becoming the leading contingent of our Convention. Its members are young; all of them are children of the 20th century. In

the dark present, where we must defend ourselves against subtle bureaucratic maneuvers, political tides and devastating funding cuts, those spawned and molded by this culture are more likely to survive its violent convolutions.

"Multidisciplinary" is the buzzword among this group. Genegineers constantly collaborate, creating national and even international ties between laboratories and entire lab groups. Genegineer techniques are simple and elegant, drawing on centuries of knowledge held among the Pharmacopeists and the FACADE Engineers. Their technologies are in constant flux because of their close interactions with other Conventions, like Iteration X.

The Genegineers, like the Pharmacopeists, frequently interact with the Masses. Unlike the Pharmacopeists, the Genegineers use non-Progenitor intelligentsia to perform "menial" research, such as mass data collection and statistical analysis, gene mapping and the grinding search for clues to previously unknown proteins. There is a vast spectrum of schools of thought and means of research within their ranks. Practically every aspect of molecular genetic research is represented among the Genegineers. These Progenitors are usually under a certain kind of dynamic tension, making them interesting, if stressful, individuals with whom to work.

Genegineers have been distressed of late by recent shifts in the biological community. With the inclusion of more non-Progenitor intelligentsia into this exploding realm of science, many Tradition mages, particularly the Verbena, have infiltrated the Convention under the guise of scientists, using this facade of authority in an attempt to undermine our work. The Genegineers have more contact with these impostors than the rest of us, and enjoy discovering them, rooting them out and destroying them (with help from their brother and sister Progenitors).

The Genegineers seek complete knowledge of the mysteries of the genes. Knowing everything at this microcosmic level will in turn allow them an understanding of every organism in the world and every phenomenon in existence, for the principles learned at the molecular level can be extrapolated into all else. Ascension and true enlightenment can only be reached when all life has been analyzed and understood down to the very atoms.

It is rumored that some Genegineers in Europe and California are working on an immortality/regeneration gene, deriving their work from the regenerative invertebrates of the world. To my knowledge, they have yet to approach success, though their failed experiments are truly spectacular.

The Genegineers dominate the best genetics departments at universities around the world. They also base themselves among certain corporations that engineer genes and sell genetic products. They have formal conferences about once per year, with informal meetings taking place at large conferences that include non-Progenitor scientists. The informal meetings often include socializing in hotel rooms and congregating amid large poker games. This allows the PIs to touch bases with former Students and strengthen the ties of the academic family.

Students are usually recruited from the ranks of promising graduate and undergraduate college students who take a class taught by a Genegineer, or perhaps do some short-term research in his/her laboratory. In recent years, the Genegineers have become more compulsive about driving potential troublemakers out of departments. Mysterious equipment malfunctions, experiments that continually go awry, inexplicable failing grades, or simple erosion of the student's confidence in his/her ability are all employed.

....

10/20/89

Mary Beth and Rob are all over each other now. Maybe I should become a Genegineer. I could delete the genes for Mary Beth's tongue and whiny little voice, and just delete Rob altogether. From what I understand, his rotation with Dr. Reid is just going swimmingly. He's such a cocky little ass now. He's got the dream job, the brains, the recognition and the blonde.

Stephen came around and asked for cell donations for his most recent project. He was paying $25, so all three of us said "sure." He took a 5mm wide and 4mm deep circular punch out of the skin on the inside of my arm. Hurt like a bitch; he didn't wait for the Novocain to take effect.

I can't say that it wasn't a pleasure to see Mary Beth and Rob in pain. I never knew that I could be such a vindictive sonofabitch.

The Pharmacopeists

10/26/89 Excerpt from Dr. Travis' seminar on the Pharmacopeists:

Dr. Travis looks like the typical picture of Satan, *sans* hooves and horns. His eyes are shadowy and glitter in a really eerie way when he looks at you. He dresses very well, especially for a professor. He was decked out in the latest fashions and looked as if he had just had lunch with a movie star. There wasn't much sanity in his eyes as he glared around at us, and we just kept our mouths shut, something surprising for Mary Beth. He started to pace and talk.

....

The Pharmacopeists are devoted to understanding the interactions between artificially induced chemicals and the intricate biochemical makeup of a living body. It is our belief that the use of drugs both on and by the Masses will better allow us to protect and control the unenlightened, and through them, this reality!

The Pharmacopeist Progenitors are among the oldest and most respected scientists. We began as herbalists and alchemists, first mixing and gathering rudimentary poisons from plants and animals. As this science grew, it expanded to include medicine, recreational drugs and so-called magic

potions. Because of the expansion of our field, we have often been confused with alchemists throughout history; indeed, many of our number came from the ranks of the alchemists.

Our keen understanding of poisons and their applications quickly earned us a reputation as very resourceful and thorough assassins, a field in which we quickly excelled. More recently we have demonstrated our aptitudes in politics, public relations and advertising. We have always had the most contact with the world of the Masses. Unlike the other Progenitors, the Pharmacopeists have always been aware of the Masses' goings-on. Sometimes we stood quietly by and watched with a cold and calculating scientific eye. At other times we have assisted mankind against the ravages of plague and famine, sometimes with great losses among our own, but always to gather data in the name of science.

The members of the Pharmacopeists' lab groups are far more diverse than those of any other Methodology. Members can range from street-level pushers, talent agents, or even sanitation technicians and candy-stripers, all the way up to presidents of pharmacological companies, heads of the Food and Drug Administration, international spies and even the rulers of drug-exporting nations.

The main responsibility of the Pharmacopeists has been to keep the Masses in control and to ensure that they accept the reality that we force upon them. Thanks to our drugs and subtle brainwashing, we have come to dominate reality.

Man is an ape, and wishes to return to that state! He recognizes his bestial side, seeking to embrace it with one hand while the other hides his eyes. From the beginning of time, he has eaten fungi, swallowed potions and chewed herbs in an effort to disguise the world around him or as an excuse to do the things he really wanted to do all along! We of the Pharmacopeists have only refined and channeled a basic primal urge. Whole periods of history have been controlled by the fear or drug-induced muddle that we have spread in an attempt to control the Masses. All this in anticipation of the day we would rise up and save this reality.

We began in ancient times by introducing new drugs, and subsequently, drug addictions, to entire cultures — for example, opium in the Far East. In the Middle Ages, our assassination of kings, queens and nobles became so frequent that the position of wine and food taster was created in an attempt to prevent poisoning....

During a conference in the early 1950s, a bitter fight broke out when an angry group of Genegineers declared that they were the last of the only true scientists, that the Pharmacopeists were no better than witch doctors or Verbena! The Pharmacopeists tried to explain that the mutations their newest pregnancy drug had generated on children were totally unexpected; the drug's original experimental purpose was to cause birth defects or spontaneous miscarriages of lycanthrope-related and other nonhuman children. The Genegineers, certain that the Pharmacopeists were trying to tamper with their work, were not convinced. This opened a rift in the scientific community; battle lines were formed as the youngest Methodology prepared to rise up against the oldest.

We accepted the challenge from the Genegineers. The rise in prescription drug addictions, alcoholism and designer drugs is our demonstration to the rest of the Convention! We are the power controlling the Masses on the large scale! The Genegineers have since been awed by this show of sheer power and by their own greed to possess such power for themselves. They have recently made amends and are now working closely with us in several different fields of interest.

The Tradition mages have just recently become aware of the far-reaching implications of our plans and have begun to launch contingency plans. However, in most cases, the damage has already been done.

We control popular soft drinks, cigarette and coffee companies; we are also involved in governmental and privately owned meat plants such as those used by fast-food establishments. The Verbena retaliated by ensuring that the vegetarian movement gained new popularity; in response, we began to "enhance" fertilizers and commonly used pesticides. The chemical substances in these items are not readily detectable as harmful, but prolonged exposure kills the Masses' sleeping Avatars, thereby making them easier to control and less likely to harm themselves with the awesome powers sleeping in each of them.

We have two direct rivals. The first is our sister Tradition, the Verbena. Our mutual hatred goes back as far as can be remembered. Over the centuries, it has become a deep, consuming loathing. It is not unheard of for a Pharmacopeist and a Verbena to seek one another out for purposes of harassment or destruction.

Our second major adversary is the Celestial Chorus. Because of the recent Progenitor movement to destroy the hibernating Avatars of the Masses, thereby silencing their voices, the Celestial Chorus has seen this as a personal affront and a blasphemy against their "One." The Chorus is seeking a means of halting this "insidious plot," and this brings them into relatively frequent confrontations with our agents.

Well, that's about it. Any questions? No? Good! Ciao.

....

10/26/89

Travis has got to be off the edge. There's no way a subgroup of a small group like the Progenitors could have its collective hands in every major vice and every minor thing that involves chemicals. A conspiracy of that proportion would have been detected long ago.

Or would it? What if someone detected it and became a clone! Or died of a mysterious genetic affliction that no one else in his family ever had! Who would know, espe-

cially with the medical community under the control of the Progenitors....

....

Media Infiltration and Indoctrination

As the spectacular triumphs of technology mounted, something else was happening: old sources of belief came under siege...The thrust of a century of scholarship had the effect of making us lose confidence in our belief systems and therefore in ourselves. Amid the conceptual debris, there remained one sure thing—technology.

— Neil Postman, *Technopoly*

10/31/89 Excerpt from Dr. Ishida's lecture on the Progenitors' interaction with the Masses:

The Conventions use media indoctrination of the Masses to create the cultural belief system. This allows us to pursue whatever aspect of science we wish. Popular science fiction, for example, is thought by some critics to have been a Syndicate creation designed to expand the ability of the Conventions to manipulate reality. Because the Masses' perceptions directly control all reality, books, stories and movies about cloning, biological monsters and genetic engineering have all made possible, through the paranoid beliefs of the gullible Masses, the existence of these spectacular biological practices.

Because of the need to monitor closely what the Masses see, hear and read, the Pharmacopeists have firmly entrenched themselves in key media and medical industries. For most of the last 100 years, they have used their centuries of practiced skill in infiltrating society, as well as their considerable contacts in public relations, advertising and politics, to maintain a tight rein over many individuals in the public eye. This can easily be seen in the stars and starlets of the '40s and '50s, when the studios doled out tranquilizers and other drugs to control their artists. Does the name Judy Garland ring a bell?

The Glamour Trap

Keep young and beautiful,
It's your duty to be beautiful.
Keep young and beautiful
If you want to be loved.

— Annie Lennox, "Keep Young and Beautiful"

We have recently released another joint project upon the unsuspecting Masses, aimed largely at the female half of the population. Several decades ago, some FACADE Engineers created a batch of female clones whose genetic makeup was based on some of the most beautiful and talented women throughout history: Helen of Troy, Catherine de Medici and Sarah Bernhardt, to name just a few.

When this was completed, the Genegineers stepped in, making them perfect human specimens. They gave the clones perfect eyes, perfect hair and perfect bodies. The clones were then introduced to the Masses as models, starlets and other celebrities. The Pharmacopeists, using their considerable talents and influences in the areas of advertising and the media, shot these women into the spotlight, where they subsequently rocketed straight to the top.

We have been observing the reaction among the Masses, as women in every Westernized culture have flocked to the stores for diet formulas and cosmetics, and to hospitals for facelifts, implants and other surgeries — all, of course, Progenitor-controlled processes. These women all attempt to reach the impossible goal of making themselves look like the Progenitor-produced perfect women, thus keeping them relatively busy and out of trouble. The multimillion dollar weight-loss and beauty industries that developed have included the Syndicate and New World Order in administrative aspects, but the seminal ideas and research developments are solely of, and for, the Progenitor cause. This, need I add, has been a very lucrative sideline for our Convention.

Recruiters

11/1/89 Recorded excerpt from Rob's paper on his work with the Recruiters:

It is the Recruiters' primary duty to travel to different college campuses and analyze the potential of rising students in the life sciences. I traveled with a pair of Recruiters to the University of Delaware last weekend on just such a search. We spoke to a number of professors (only one of whom was a Progenitor) and interviewed several students, particularly those in the biological honor society. Two seemed promising, but both had already established preferences as to their graduate schools of choice, so they were discarded.

Because of the mobile nature of their job, Recruiters are also expected to monitor possible Tradition activity. This way, Damage Control can be contacted and any new growth can be nipped in the bud. We moved around the town, meeting with some other members of the Technocracy and speaking with students. One store, which has a number of medieval weapon replicas and some games in the front window, is apparently regularly checked. Another concern is the growth of a New Age store across the street, for it might be a Verbena center.

When we returned to Virginia, we filled out independent reports on our trip. I recommended that the two stores be eliminated to preclude any potential problems.

....

Rob has been contradicting Reid in class lately. It's kind of nice to see that pompous ass's face turn purple when his "prize student" tells him that he's dead wrong about an organic reaction he's using as an example for the class. I overheard the Big R chewing out the stick-figure after class. Rob was just looking at him like he was a moron. Boy, you get laid once by a really experienced (and I mean that) woman and you get attitude....

....

Damage Control

11/3/89 Recorded excerpt from Dr. Sheffan's lecture on Damage Control:

...Progenitors can sometimes be discovered by searching their bodies for small scars where tissue samples have been removed. These are usually hidden in places not readily visible, such as the inside of the upper arm. These samples are then taken and used in some Progenitor experiments. Only the cell samples of Primary Investigators and Research Directors are specially treated for the purpose of growing clones. Sometimes very popular or useful Research Associates are cloned, but only if they have proved themselves invaluable in some way.

The cellular samples taken are not just used for cloning. These samples ensure the safety of Progenitor ideals, plans and personnel. Any member of the Convention who attempts to leave his chosen duties or reveals confidential data will probably find himself a victim of a specially designed retrovirus that targets only the intended victim (and possibly the victim's genetic relatives).

Most major First and Second World nations house DNA libraries containing not only interesting genetic samples taken from people over the last 50 years (JFK, Gandhi, and Elvis, for example), but complete samples of all Progenitors and Progenitor affiliates ever based in that country. The DNA library in the USA is located in Bethesda, Maryland.

....

11/4/89

I've heard jokes around the department that a common rite of passage among the Students who hope to become FACADE Engineers is to perform, as a project in advanced cloning classes, the replication of a famous personality. Apparently, a common subject is Elvis. So the King lives, and lives, and lives....

....

11/2/89 Recorded excerpt from Dr. Robinson's lecture on Damage Control enforcement:

Avoid the enforcers like the plague. If you reveal information about the Progenitors, steal ideas or material objects from a colleague, perform experiments without authorization, assist renegade or blackballed scientists, or in any way betray the Convention to the Traditions, Damage Control enforcers will be the first line against you.

These enforcers range from hired killers with high-caliber weapons to hideous creatures out of the labs of the FACADE Engineers. Damage Control answers only to the Administration. If the Administration has deemed such a brutal method appropriate for the situation, you had best hope that you are not their target.

The enforcers are also called out during dire confrontations with the Traditions, Marauders, Nephandi or any other violent threat to the reality we have molded. Emergency calls will likely produce at least one enforcer, if not a squadron of them.

....

11/19/89

I had the misfortune of seeing the enforcers at work today. They broke into the lab next door at about 3 a.m. I was working on my oral report when I heard a crash and a scream. I stepped into the hall and saw a reptilian tail disappear through the broken door. There was another scream from the room, and then silence, punctuated only by a couple of crunching sounds and the breaking of glass. When all was quiet, I stepped around the corner and looked into the dark lab. Six glowing red eyes glared around at me; I heard a hissing growl and smelled a nauseating stench. I have never run so fast in my life.

11/20/89

It's really odd. Rob wasn't in school today. Even Mary Beth seemed confused. But it occurred to me that the laboratory next to mine was where Rob had been working with the ultracentrifuge....

....

Technicians

11/21/89 Recorded excerpt from my oral presentation on working with Technicians:

Last weekend, my project was to assist in a Genegineer production lab. As a Technician, my duties consisted of mixing fresh reagents, cleaning glassware, pouring electrophoresis gels, and otherwise preparing things for an RA's experiment. When the RA arrived, we began to extract DNA from a cell culture, a very long and involved process on which we spent a good 36 hours. When I asked why we were doing it manually, he explained to me that it was good to learn the basics of the science we allow the Masses to know.

The job of a Technician is to assist the scientists in the lab and to keep the lab clean and functional. Good Technicians are retained and sometimes evolve into Students, even though they are usually older than the usual Students. In small labs, one Technician is sufficient, but in some larger labs, like the one I toured in New Jersey, 30 or 40 Technicians work in an enormous space with a number of Students, RAs and PIs.

....

11/21/89

He wasn't in today either. Mary Beth told me that she's been getting no answer at his apartment, just his answering machine, which is full of messages. She went by his place, and his car wasn't there. When she drove in this morning, his car was in the parking lot....

....

11/22/89 Recorded excerpt from Mary Beth's oral presentation on the control of clones and homegrown agents:

The laboratory in which I worked produces and programs clones and engineered agents. The whole lab looked like something out of a science-fiction movie. There were large cylindrical tanks along one side of the room, pipes, wires, racks for small IV bags, and other stuff that I don't even know about yet.

There were about five Technicians in the lab on each shift, and there were 'round-the-clock shifts. The RA showed me the computer designs for the genetic sequence of the test organism. They were making a dog with near-human intelligence to use as a spy. They were fixing to replace this Dreamspeaker's Cocker Spaniel and use the clone to spy on him and his friends.

They said that one of the other Conventions had requested they make a clone of some priest that was somehow related to a member of the Celestial Chorus. I saw the preliminary preparations of the clone tank, and watched some Pharmacopeists come in and inject some drugs into

the tank after the Technicians had started to grow the body. They showed me the nutrient fluid tanks in the labs next door, and how to refill them with concentrates and such. The PI came in and enhanced the growth on all the tanks; none of us could do that yet. It was all very interesting and educational.

....

11/23/89

Well, it's easy to see who got the most out of his project. Unless, of course, we consider all the bedroom fieldwork Mary Beth was doing with one of the RAs in that lab. "Networking is essential!"

Rob came back today, though. He wasn't quite the same, more like he was when he first came here. Mary Beth was actually pretty upset at being ignored by him (serves the bitch right). He bent over his cramped little notes, brow furrowed and glasses sliding off his face. Reid made a few more mistakes in class, and Rob didn't react.

What happened?

Oh, God. I just realized. They have it, they have me, they have my cells, they have all of us! It's not Rob! It is, but it isn't. He'll never go any further. They could just as easily do the same to me, to Mary Beth, to any of us!

I couldn't leave now if I wanted to....

Chapter Two: The Maze of Secrets

What is this
Is it fear
I am walking away
Wake us up
By the light of the moon
Break the dam down.
— Theories of the Old School, "Walking and Waiting"

11/28/89

I can hardly sleep anymore. I feel the tugging of some inner force, something inside me that beckons me further into this nightmare.

I'm scared. I hate to admit it, but I'm terrified. Rob's "replacement" shakes me so deeply inside that I had to skip class. I'm almost afraid to call in sick, for fear of the type of "cure" Dr. Reid might send.

I should go. I know it, but I can't; more to the point, I won't. I've gone this far and won't back off now. Rob was an idiot, screwing a fellow Progenitor and mouthing off in class to a superior. I won't make his mistakes.

God help me. I've just read what I've written, and it doesn't sound like me at all. So cold, so callous. What have I become?

Merry Christmas, Mr. Greene.

External Relations

12/4/89

We have begun studying the other Conventions of the Technocracy and the way we deal with each other. Some of these other "Technomancers" sound like lunatics or worse. And there are hints, and more than hints, that this "magickal reality" includes more than just humans.

I would never have believed some of this stuff six months ago, but the past few months could shatter anyone's illusions. I can feel the power, feel my growing hold over the reality around me. This isn't just about wild tales by bearded psychopaths. This is real. A sick part of me can't wait for the next curtain to be withdrawn. Whatever is behind it, I think that I'll be ready.

Iteration X

Exterminate!
— The Daleks from Doctor Who

12/5/89 Recorded excerpt from Dr. Martinez' seminar series on our fellow Conventions:

...Iteration X has a simple but effective way of dealing with any who threaten its plans. It destroys them. To this end it continuously needs bigger, nastier, more enduring biological organisms to which it can add bigger, nastier, more enduring cybernetic parts. Over the years, we have worked out an ongoing trade agreement with Iteration X. We provide engineered and genetically enhanced organisms in return for needed technological equipment.

The organisms are grown in cloning tanks after an acceptable genetic pattern is designed and tested. When the clones reach certain stages of their development, specially adapted enhancement drugs are introduced into the cloning system by Pharmacopeists, as are various mind-bending drugs that are administered from the time of "conception."

The FACADE Engineers can generate a single, made-to-order lifeform or a number of identical clones. Rumor has it that the FACADE Engineers maintain a large Horizon Realm linked by Portals to remote areas around the world. This Realm supposedly contains thousands of clone tanks. All of these tanks could potentially be activated within a matter of hours by a concerted effort of associated lab groups assigned to these duties. This would in turn provide Iteration X with an army of mindless, cybernetically enhanceable clones.

Certain lab groups receive a considerable proportion of their funding by providing Iteration X with continuous shipments of HIT Mark-able lifeforms. These subjects range from cats and dogs to adult humans and humanoids. Some are specially ordered, very carefully made using specific DNA samples collected from willing, unwilling or even unsuspecting donors. This allows the Progenitors to create a HIT Mark duplicate of a certain person involved in an Iteration X plot. The clones created for Iteration X and other non-Progenitor Conventions are of a lower grade than those the Progenitors are capable of creating. Other Conventions always receive Type One clones, which often have personality inconsistencies and slight quirks.

As a failsafe, whenever we produce any organism for Iteration X's use, we encode a certain genetic sequence in its DNA. The actual sequence is, of course, unknown to everyone but the top-level Progenitors. This gene can be activated by a fast-acting Genegineer retrovirus or a metabolic poison made by the Pharmacopeists. Once it has been introduced to a HIT Mark's biosystem, it triggers an almost instantaneous organic death by stopping all cellular functions. This precaution has been taken just in case Iteration X decides to end the partnership or, for some reason, turn on us.

The New World Order

Every breath you take
Every move you make
Every bond you break
Every step you take
I'll be watching you.
— The Police, "Every Breath You Take"

12/5/89 Recorded excerpt from Dr. Martinez' seminar series on our fellow Conventions:

The Pharmacopeists are our primary link with the Convention called the New World Order. Both have common interests in the brainwashing and total control of the Masses. The Pharmacopeists provide the New World Order with an arsenal of useful drugs, poisons and chemical substances. The quality and power of the drugs are much higher than those available from any other source.

The FACADE Engineers occasionally assist the New World Order by cloning replacements for individuals. Such a process allows the NWO the extra benefit of replacing a troublesome individual with a productive spy. This also handles the messy problem of trying to explain the mysterious disappearances of their targets....

12/5/89

Iteration X is trying to control people by melding them with computers and such. And it's already starting to happen, with designs for wetware and implants to supersede sensory handicaps. The New World Order seems to have our thoughts on tap, and my own Convention is cloning my classmates. It's hard not to feel paranoid.

Rob has stopped coming to class. Mary Beth says he's a Technician in Reid's lab now. She looked scared. As scared as I feel....

....

The Syndicate

Religion and sex are power plays
Manipulate the people for the money they pay
Selling skin, selling God,
The numbers look the same on the credit cards.
— Queensryche, "Spreading the Disease"

12/6/89 Recorded excerpt from Dr. Martinez' seminar series on our fellow Conventions, with guest lecturer Dr. Vincent Carichi:

Believe me, boys and girls, the Syndicate is very happy with the Progenitors right now. We have handed the entire medical profession into the open arms of the Syndicate. Do you have any idea how much financial control this gives the Syndicate? The population of the world is aging, but we can prolong life until every system in the body fails. We could probably keep it going even then, but when the EEG goes flat, the families have an edge with the justice system. At any rate, the fees for any kind of medical treatment are exorbitant. If it weren't for insurance companies, I'm sure that no one could afford doctors at all....

Long-term illnesses, such as certain cancers, AIDS, genetic diseases, and congenital deformities, are even better. Insurance companies tend to drop people at the most inopportune moments, and bank loans only go so far. Many people stay under the financial thumb of the Syndicate all their lives.

The advent of genetic testing, which we, of course, control, has given the Syndicate even more financial leverage with which to play. A large number of Syndicate-controlled insurance companies have been trying to use genetic predisposition as a condition either to refuse to pay some exorbitant bills or to simply drop people from their policies altogether. This has sometimes proved a useful ploy for Syndicate agents, who enjoy destroying people's lives before actually destroying the people themselves.

The Syndicate shares some direct involvement in our plans. It controls most of the finances and bookkeeping for our plans involving beauty products, the weight-loss industry, and certain "aspects" of our street-level pharmaceutical dealings. It also is a key to our interests in some fast-food chains, soft-drink corporations, and large-scale meat producers, all of which market Pharmacopeist-drugged products.

In the event that the Syndicate were to turn its allegiances away from us, we have prepared a contingency plan to sabotage systematically every aspect of the Syndicate's businesses in which we are involved. If all, or even some, beauty products, food, beverages and drugs suddenly became tainted with extremely toxic and untraceable substances, the Syndicate would find itself in a very nasty corner, shelling out millions of dollars in restitution for the damages. Does anyone remember "Batman"? The Syndicate does!

....

12/6/89

Maybe Travis wasn't exaggerating. Maybe the Progenitors do have their hands in all these things through these other Conventions! I never dreamed that these others existed, much less that they had the control they seem to have!

....

The Void Engineers

Knowledge of the universe bestows awesome power. To understand the secrets of atoms and galaxies is to become like gods. And we fly to the moon, light the fires of the stars, and perhaps someday probe a black hole. Whether we use these abilities for the betterment of humanity or for the devastation of our planet is entirely a matter of our own free choice.
— William J. Kaufman III, *Black Holes and Warped Spacetime*

12/7/89 Recorded excerpt from Dr. Martinez' seminar series on our fellow Conventions:

We generally have very little contact with the Void Engineers, although the Genegineers enjoy the potential challenge of adapting lifeforms to space travel and exploration. Also, some experiments may be easier to perform within a zero-gravity environment. Experimental designs created specifically for zero-gravity environments could result in some truly spectacular results.

As a result, those of us who are interested in different directions or alternative applications of their research, or who just enjoy a good challenge, are rather fond of the Void Engineers. Some labs, especially among the Pharmacopeists, have elected to assist the Void Engineers by developing drugs and vitamins to assist in space travel. The problem of calcium loss in the bones when the body is exposed to zero gravity for long periods of time presents a particularly interesting field of study. Perhaps you, young lady, will find a place alongside the Void Engineers....

The Technocracy in General

12/8/89 Recorded excerpt from Dr. Martinez' seminar series on our fellow Conventions:

Given enough good reasons (money, favors, defense agreements or whatever), we are more than happy to clone other powerful Technomancers. As a rule, all such clones are Type Two, but unbeknownst to the clone recipients, they contain a special self-destructive gene similar to that used in the Iteration X HIT Mark. Thus, instant destruction can be wreaked by Progenitors who are attacked or even simply provoked by the cloned Technomancers.

The Pharmacopeists also happily provide a vast array of helpful drugs (megavitamins, magic-assisting drugs, enhancement drugs, etc.) to anyone willing to use them. Most of the drugs have some side effects, but the Pharmacopeists believe that the pros definitely outweigh the cons. We also willingly cure any mage of a disease or Progenitor virus into which they accidentally happen to stumble — provided said mage is willing to pay the price.

The Conventions may control the world, but the Progenitors control the Conventions. We are integral to the functioning of the Technocracy as a whole, and we never let them forget that!

The Nine Traditions

Looking for a savior in these dirty streets,
Looking for a savior between these dirty sheets,
I've been raising up my hands
Drive another nail in.
Where are the angels when you need them!
— Tori Amos, "Crucify"

1/4/90

Some vacation! Between a crushing workload before the end of the semester, finals, shopping, and my general paranoia, it seemed like I would never relax. Mom was wondering what was wrong with me. As if I could tell her! I'm afraid that I've become a very good liar. At least, I hope that I have!

Mary Beth called me up during the holiday. She sounded upset, but I don't feel as though I can trust her. It was satisfying to hang up in her ear, but I felt pretty bad afterward.

To top it all off, I came back into class to find Chain hanging around. He said something about "extracurricular studies," but I don't buy it. He's here to keep an eye on us. I know it. Dr. Reid started the semester by going into detail about the Traditions. Chain's reaction to the whole subject has been so scary that I'm sure that he's here just to dissuade us from even thinking about defecting.

Not that I would, of course....

The Akashic Brotherhood

....

1/6/90 Excerpt from Mary Beth's extra credit paper on the Traditions:

The Progenitors are disturbed by the recent spread of the Akashic Brotherhood's philosophy into Western civilization through the martial-arts fad. Many Technomancers believe that the Akashic Brotherhood is deliberately trying to spread its word among the world's populace, prompting new explorations of mysticism and mind/body control.

The serene, introspective lifestyle of the Brotherhood could pose a dangerous threat to our hold on reality if it actually captured the imaginations of the Masses. The Pharmacopeists in particular are bothered by the Brotherhood's ideal of the pure body, which encourages holistic and herbalist medicine instead of carefully supervised medications, self-healing rather than frequent visits to medical professionals....

The Celestial Chorus

"Fools!" said I, "you do not know,
Silence like a cancer grows."
— Simon and Garfunkel, "The Sound of Silence"

1/6/90 Recorded excerpts from Chain's class presentations on "Pharmacopeist enemies and Progenitor threats":

...No Tradition more deserves to be crushed by the Technocracy than does the Celestial Chorus. Its members stand against everything we believe. We have targeted their Tradition for termination and have beaten them into submission with our reality. We have repeatedly kicked them while they were down on their knees with the Masses, praying to their false god to save them; all the while they ignored the fact that the "One," as they call it, is deaf to her children's cries.

The Progenitor plan to destroy the Avatars in the Masses, thereby rendering them harmless, is the ultimate blasphemy to the Celestial Chorus. Its members believe that a piece of the One — that is, the Avatar — is represented as a mystic voice within each and every person. If they can manage to get the entire world to sing again in harmony, all will Ascend. Hey, I ask, what about the people who can't sing! I know guys that couldn't carry a tune if it had a handle on it.

But anyway, because our plan to sterilize the Avatars of the Masses would silence those voices, and thus kill a little piece of the One, the mages of the Celestial Chorus have their panties in a bunch. The strict, militaristic members of this group of fruits constantly raid Progenitor labs and continuously assassinate our operatives. I myself have been killed by them four times. They back all sorts of groups that try to stir up trouble for scientists, like the terrorist anti-animal research types: "Don't hurt the cute little fuzzy bunnies, you bad scientists." I mean, please! We don't even use rabbits for our freaking experiments any more. We use children instead...

That's a joke. Get it!

The Cult of Ecstasy

Give yourself over to absolute pleasure,
Swim the warm waters of sins of the flesh.
Erotic nightmares beyond any measure,
and sensual daydreams to treasure forever.
— Dr. Frank N. Furter, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*

1/9/90 Excerpt from Mary Beth's extra credit paper on the Traditions:

The Cult of Ecstasy is one of the few Traditions over which we have some control. Its members' free use of drugs allows us to infiltrate and manipulate them. On the other hand, the Cult's "open-your-mind" ideal has had a lot of effect on the Masses. This is the Tradition that supposedly made psychoactives fashionable in the first place.

Not all of members of the Cult use drugs, but all of them firmly believe that drugs allow humans to explore reality in new and different ways. They often use our hallucinatory and magick-affecting drugs to enhance or control their perceptions. We freely allow them access to our drugs, even our enhanced varieties, though they often do not know that they are receiving these drugs directly from us. How ironic that the Pharmacopeists now use the Cult of Ecstasy's vaunted tool of enlightenment to dull the Sleepers' collective consciousness. Our street drugs would not be nearly as popular without the cult's "help," and the mages know it.

....

The Cult of Ecstasy probably isn't as simple to control as Mary Beth makes it seem. Chain hates the Cult with a passion. It seems that the Cult's control extends to anything that makes the youth of the country rebel against the staid, ordered world of the Technocracy. Turn on MTV and you'll see its influence. Some influence! No wonder we're on opposite sides.

....

The Dreamspeakers

What is life? A frenzy. What is life?
A shadow, an illusion, and a sham.
The greatest good is small; all life, it seems,
Is just a dream, and even dreams are dreams.
— Calderon, "La Vida Es Sueno"

1/9/90 Recorded excerpt from Chain's class presentations on "Pharmacopeist Enemies and Progenitor Threats":

The Dreamspeakers believe that science is slowly killing both the world and them. While they wasted their time attempting to commune with an Earth-spirit whom they believe to be the world itself, we instituted science and technology. Now that they have bothered to stop daydreaming and look around them, they notice what has happened and say that the Earth is not happy.

So now they attempt to reclaim "Mother Earth." This places them in direct conflict with all aspects of the Technocracy, especially us. I heard somewhere that the Dreamspeakers started that "Gaia hypothesis" that was so popular a few years ago. They're not usually organized enough to pose much of a threat, but should be knocked off singly if the opportunity presents itself.

The Euthanatos

40,000 men and women everyday,
Like Romeo and Juliet,
40,000 men and women everyday,
Another 40,000 coming everyday.
— Blue Oyster Cult, "Don't Fear the Reaper"

1/9/90 Excerpts from my extra credit paper on the Traditions:

The Euthanatos are believed to manipulate humanity to their own ends, creating psychotic serial killers and killing individuals who they feel should be removed to provide more options for everyone else. We can understand this approach, combining reincarnation and eugenics; it seems very similar to the actions of the early Pharmacopeists before the advances of the Hippocratic Circle. It is our doubtful hope that the Euthanatos will eventually see the wisdom of our ways and join the fold of the Technocracy. If not, they must be destroyed along with the rest.

....

Since August, I've become a really good liar, even in my papers. I was always good at picking up and regurgitating whatever my professors wanted to hear. My writing on that paper was awfully stiff, though. I hope that they don't suspect....

....

The Order of Hermes

Energy is contagious
Enthusiasm spreads
Tides respond to lunar gravitation
Everything turns in synchronous relation.
— Rush, "Chain Lightning"

1/9/90 Excerpt from Mary Beth's extra credit paper on the Traditions:

The Order of Hermes seeks to turn magick into a easily learned and recorded art, something on which they can depend. They refine their formulas to a real science, one that they can easily teach, reuse and pass on to others. They hate us because we had similar ideas and took them to their logical conclusion, science — a leap they could never make.

Sources indicate that the Order of Hermes had a strong grip on the Masses during the Middle Ages, and threw the Hippocratic Circle out of its fellowship when the Circle tried to dig through the metaphors and find the scientific realities in its craft. These same sources indicate that the Order is not pleased that their old prodigals have replaced them at the top of the reality chain....

....

Speaking of "Chain," I would swear that Mary Beth is snuggling up to that long-haired, greasy bastard now that Rob is out of the way. Am I being paranoid, or is she just ever so the social climber?

....

The Sons of Ether

1/10/90 Recorded excerpt from Chain's class presentations on "Pharmacopeist Enemies and Progenitor Threats":

These pathetic pseudo-scientists who pursue pipe dreams and pots of gold at the ends of rainbows need to be wiped out almost as much as the Celestial Chorus does.

Their "sciences" are not much more than the graspings of the mad at delusionary straws. One need only look at the example of their most famous member, Victor Frankenstein, to see what miserable failures most of their experiments are.

At least their research usually destroys them in the process, keeping their numbers small. When we get some free time, we should probably slip them one of our textbooks and let them wipe themselves out with a genetically engineered virus while they try to cure some disease!

Verbena

1/11/90 Quote from Dr. Reid's textbook *The Progenitors versus the Traditions: An Age-Old Battle*, 1965

In the ancient days, we were very much like the Verbena, but they have refused to progress as the ages have worn by. They are primitive, barbaric, and useless in this age of understanding. They play in blood and sap, dance naked around trees, and chant to the open sky. They battle us with ecoterrorism and activism, vainly seeking to block our conquest of knowledge. They are herbalist witches and holistic freaks with no place in our clean, safe world.

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Virtual Adepts

1/13/90 Personal note on one of Dr. Reid's Progenitor science lectures:

Mary Beth raised her hand. "Dr. Reid, I heard someone mention the Virtual Adepts the other day. Why haven't we heard anything about them? Aren't they a Tradition too?"

I have never seen Dr. Reid so angry. He turned scarlet and shouted, "Traitorous scoundrels! They betrayed the Technocracy to join the Traditions, a crime that can never be forgiven. You will kill them on sight!" He calmed down a little after that, but his outburst was really weird. "We are presently working with Iteration X to construct a nanotech virus," he said, "made of molecular machinery as well as DNA, that will destroy any Virtual Adept who contacts any international network. The Pharmacopeists have also been producing smart drugs to burn out the minds of many Virtual Adepts. They made their bed; they'd best be ready to lie in it."

I can't deny that I've thought about leaving, but I know that I'd never get away with it. The walls have ears, the streets have eyes, and that's not much of an exaggeration!

Like Dr. Reid said, I've made my bed. Time to pull up the covers and make myself comfortable.

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Other Supernatural Entities

Monsters and madmen all come alive
And the dead start walking
There's no place to hide
There's no place to hide.
— Oingo Boingo, "When the Lights Go Out"
1/18/90

Now I know that I'm losing my mind. Dr. Reid, the brilliant scientist who blew my world to pieces a few short months ago, has started talking about monsters. I can see why he has waited to broach the subject. With all of the doors that we've opened in the last semester, a few monsters seem almost tame.

Almost.

....

Excerpts from Dr. Reid's lecture on supernatural threats to the Masses:

Vampires

Everything has a mirror image — except, of course, a vampire.

— Morrison and Boyd, *Organic Chemistry*

Some of us have had encounters with the creatures known as vampires. Few have managed to escape an encounter unscathed or with any concrete data. Ancient tales are full of bestial creatures who possess the power to change their form and are consumed with an evil bloodlust. These bloodsucking ghouls are believed to be undead beings who prey on humanity and innocent societies.

The intriguing mystery of the vampire has led many a curious Progenitor on a merry chase. Intent on proving the existence of these creatures, some Progenitors spend years seeking subjects for vivisection and analysis. This has resulted in the loss of many promising scientists.

We now accept as fact that vampires do indeed exist and have for many centuries. This has led us to the conclusion that perhaps the legends of the vampires have some scientific merit. Because we have control over and extensive knowledge of any living thing, it would certainly be in our best interests to gather some concrete facts about these creatures of the night.

Several lab groups have recently devoted themselves to the study of vampiric activity, habits, abilities and biological functions. The only fact of which we are relatively certain is that vampires must consume certain quantities of human blood to exist. Because of the apparent correctness of the legends on this point, the Progenitors must also consider that perhaps at least some of the other legends involving vampires could also be true.

It matters little to these creatures whether they derive their sustenance from one of the Masses or a Technomancer.

This makes them a threat that we must attempt to neutralize, though perhaps our fellow Conventions, like Iteration X, might be better prepared to deal with animate corpses. It has been theorized, however, that true "mage" blood could produce strange and unexpected side effects if consumed by a vampire. These effects are completely unknown, but might be quite interesting to observe.

Some of our scientists within the Center for Disease Control have begun to notice a curious pattern in the transmission of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS; the virus is being passed to some people without any evidence of sexual contact, drug use, etc. This has piqued the CDC's interest in vampiric phenomena and has given them a new means of studying it. Some young Progenitors have sought leads derived from these patterns, but have never returned with their conclusions.

Werewolves

Burning inside with violent anger
bitterly
I speak to my heart
Created from matter,
From the ashes of the elements
— Carl Orff, *Carmina Burana*

For many centuries, we have been aware of the existence of lycanthropic creatures. Many of our oldest members have had an encounter with some form of lycanthrope. Regrettably, these encounters have garnered us little concrete data. All we have to date are a few loose hypotheses and many conflicting personal reports of the creatures' activities and wide range of abilities.

We have managed to discern that there are individual breeds of werewolves, and that their abilities vary depending on pedigree. It is interesting to note that there seems to be at least one group of mongrels that seems intent on the destruction of their own kind. All lycanthropes seem fractious in the extreme, but this breed, called "Black Spiral Dancers," is an oddity among oddities, and dangerous to boot.

Recently, some vague information about these shapechangers has been passed to us at the 1990 International Conference of Progenitor Science. A PI from Developmental Neogenetics Amalgamated (DNA) revealed that several werewolves have recently been captured and examined by his corporation. Our brief analyses have been able to glean some small degree of information before our specimens and records were destroyed by other lycanthropes. Certain peculiarities in the werewolf genetic template have been isolated, but have yet to be analyzed. The company involved is seeking more subjects for study in order to accumulate data on reproduction, the nature of lycanthropes' ability to change forms, and werewolf culture, if such a thing could truly exist.

Two interesting sticking points when studying lycanthropes are the creatures' seeming immunity to Para-

dox and their ability to remain hidden in plain sight. We suspect the former relates to the lycanthrope's traditional place in the Masses' folklore, thus exempting it from Paradox. The latter seems to derive from a sort of mass hallucination suffered by the Masses when lycanthropes appear before them. There is, it would seem, much to learn from deeper studies on the lycanthropic question.

Mummies

The existence of these creatures is mostly rumor and hearsay, though I have spoken to an ancient FACADE Engineer who claims to know one. He claims that they are truly immortal and have lived for thousands of years, perhaps even since prehistoric times. He babbled something about the great science of Atlantis, etc., so one must obviously take all his comments with a large grain of salt. I have.

Faeries

Ouch! It bit me!"

"What did you expect faeries to do?"

"I thought they did nice things, like, like granting wishes."

"Huh. Shows what you know, don't it?"

— Sarah and Hoggle, *Labyrinth*

Yes, I believe in faeries. I have met a few by accident. And no, I am not joking. They are dangerous creatures, and when they breach our barrier against their world, they wreak more havoc than any other supernatural threat — save, perhaps, the Marauders.

Their types are unclassified and uncounted, but they have been observed disappearing, changing form, and controlling minds among the Masses.

Some are affected, as the legends state, by iron, but a true scientist shouldn't count on that. Best to find some way of banishing them back to their world, if high-caliber firepower doesn't take them down first. Remember, these faeries are a danger to the Masses and *must* be destroyed or removed. It is your duty, the duty of every Technomancer.

Ghosts

Ooh, let me have it,

Let me grab your soul away.

— Kate Bush, "Wuthering Heights"

There is some sort of supernatural hogwash about trapped souls remaining on this plane. There are no ghosts. There are entities who occasionally pierce the Barrier with the assistance of the Traditions or the Marauders, and these, of course, must be eliminated. Please remember that you are a scientist of life…we very, very rarely are ever effective against spirits, though we do use them as slightly sentient energy sources for some of our necessary items. However, we can certainly deal with the individuals who summoned them.

....

1/28/90

I wanted science and all I get is fantasy, a fantasy that is as real and hard as science. The Progenitors don't have control, but they do. They hunt people down and turn them into antiseptic horrors, but the things that go bump in the night are still there. These things are real? I don't know if I should go mad or just go. But I can't go. Beyond the DNA, beyond lovers with the eyes of strangers, beyond even right and wrong, I realize that this is the only magic I can wield, the only power I'll ever have....

Everything I hear further convinces me that everyone around me is insane. The world is insane, a nightmare that I'm only now aware of. God help me!

....

The Marauders

2/7/90 Recorded excerpts from Chain's class presentations on "Pharmacopeist Enemies and Progenitor Threats":

The Marauders are totally insane. Above any other threat, these mages are our enemies. The fabric of reality warps and rips around them, freeing spirits and demons from the Umbra. It is our duty as members of the Technocracy to protect the world from the chaos the Marauders spread. Given a choice between battling a Tradition mage or battling a Marauder, the Marauder must take priority, even if it means a temporary truce with the Tradition mage.

Killing a Marauder is always preferable to banishing it or driving it off. First, it eliminates one more of our enemies; second, it gives us something to dissect and analyze, so we can find quicker and more effective ways of killing them.

The Nephandi

The Nephandi are threats not only to reality, but to everything existing in it. If we were ever to assist the Traditions in an endeavor, it very well could be the destruction of the Nephandi. We have already banished their Demon Hordes from earth.

The Nephandi corrupt everything we have struggled to build. They come to the Awakened, tempting us with unholy power and unspeakable promises. The Demon Hordes they serve seek the magical essence contained in each human being, giving us yet another reason to purge the Avatars of the sleeping Masses and be done with it. We have theorized that this will have the effect of rendering the Masses unappetizing and unusable by the Nephandi and their allies.

2/9/90

Vampires, werewolves and worse. The Marauders, the Nephandi, the Traditions. Madness, destruction and ignorance. The Progenitors embody all these and more! Is this what I had in mind? I swear this isn't what I wanted!

Reid has told us to come to his laboratory in Washington tomorrow. There's something he wants to show us all, he says, some final revelation. I'm not sure that I can handle another one! Do I dare see it? If not, how do I avoid it?

The past few weeks have held too many answers for me. I once thought that I wanted all the knowledge I could grab, but now I see the madness in that course. I can still feel that tugging inside, though, even now, dragging me into things about which I'd rather not know. Is this my Avatar? I guess that it is. If it is, how do I deny it?

Deep down, I have to know. A part of me must know, now, everything. I'm going. Nothing can be worse than the things I have already seen and heard.

One final revelation. I wonder how I'll handle this one!

End of journal

Book Two: Systems

Hero — the voice of reason
Against the howling mob
Hero — the pride of purpose
In the unrewarding job.
    — Rush, "Nobody's Hero"

Chapter Three: Order of Battle

This section is divided into two parts; the first deals with the magick and devices used by Progenitor mages, while the second concentrates on Progenitor character templates, home-grown nasties (homework!) and a few beasts from Damage Control.

Magick and Science

When Catholic priests use wine, wafers, and incantations to embody spiritual ideas, they acknowledge the mystery and the metaphor being used. But experts of Technopoly acknowledge no such overtones or nuances when they use forms, standardized tests, polls, and other machinery to give technical reality to ideas...They would have us believe that technology can plainly reveal the true nature of some human belief because the score, statistic, or taxonomy has given it technical form.

— Neil Postman, Technopoly

The Technomancers use magick, to be sure, but their effects must be tied to their conceptions of reality. Few Technomancers can simply whip out their pocket computers and warp reality to their whim. Technocracy magick relies on solid theories, and these theories may take years to perfect.

Progenitor magick, based as it is upon the Life Sphere, must affect some aspect of a living body. Genetic tinkering makes no difference if the subject is long dead. Progenitors can effect changes in living material, however — bacteria, blood corpuscles, etc. Progenitors are not bound to Life magick only, but their spells and traditional effects concentrate heavily on this Sphere; coincidental effects like heart attacks, brain aneurysms and sudden attacks of super flu are a Progenitor's best friends.

Foci

We apologize for the inconvenience.

— Douglas Adams, *So Long and Thanks For All the Fish*

All Technomancers, regardless of their enlightenment, use some sort of focus. Their world-view requires some sort of material basis for reality alteration. Simply snapping one's fingers to accomplish magick will not do in the Technomancers' world. By their own definition of reality, magick without a focus is not possible.

Foci are hardly universal. The nature of a given focus depends largely on the definition of the magickal effect. One Progenitor may swallow a handful of pills to alter his genetic structure, while another might connect herself to a portable GeneTech accelerator. The foci below are suggested samples and may vary according to the pet theories of the Technomancers involved.

FACADE Engineers
Scalpel — Matter/Mind
Clone Tank — Prime
Calculator — Correspondence
Saline fluid — Life/Entropy
Electricity — Forces
Glasses — Spirit
Stopwatch — Time

Genegineers
Vial of bacterial culture — Prime
Fluid with DNA — Life/Spirit
Mini-computer — Correspondence
Electricity — Forces/Entropy
Textbook — Matter/Mind
Stopwatch — Time

Pharmacopeists
Razor blade — Entropy
Chain — Correspondence
Vial — Life/Prime
Drug paraphernalia — Mind/Spirit
Fire — Forces
Scale — Matter
Stopwatch — Time

General Progenitor Life Effects

These effects are common to each branch of the Convention; many are centuries old. Each Methodology takes a different approach to these effects, but the basic structure remains the same.

• Life Sense

This allows the magick-worker to identify and scan Life Patterns. By reading a being's Pattern, the Progenitor can determine age, sex, race, species, health and "signature." The signature reveals if the organism occurred naturally or was modified by Progenitors.

•• Lower Lifeform Manipulations

The Progenitor can alter invertebrates: insects, crustaceans, mollusks, worms, plants, fungi, protozoans, etc. Common manipulations include: increasing an organism to phenomenal size; making minor body modifications (nothing that drastically changes the function or shape of the body); restoring and destroying the Pattern; and, in the case of plants, greatly increasing pharmacological potency.

••• Limited Grafting and Recombination

The Progenitor can now alter her own body, for a limited time and in a limited fashion. By studying the intricate workings of animals' Life Patterns, she can adapt herself in limited ways to different environments or situations. Such adaptation includes: sprouting claws or fangs; growing a fish tail; sprouting webbing between fingers for swimming or from the torso to the arms for gliding. Just because a mage can grow the parts does not mean she knows how to use them, however.

This effect allows the Progenitor to disguise herself, changing her face, body shape or gender. She can also place a Life Pattern in stasis, keeping it alive while she performs vivisection, transfers pieces to and from the body, or prepares a clone.

Grafting new parts on lower lifeforms and small animals is likewise possible. In so doing, the mage may alter the Pattern to maintain the new parts, or sizes to fit the bodies. This allows the creation of hybrid creatures through such processes as grafting enlarged bird wings to a horse or bat wings to a Chihuahua. Heads can even be switched between animals. These unwieldy combinations often have very short lifespans, a problem the Progenitors have yet to overcome.

•••• Higher Lifeform Grafting and Recombination

The Technomancer may now perform major grafts and alterations involving humans and lower lifeforms. Thus, creatures like minotaurs, centaurs, harpies, angels, sphinxes and mermaids may be created. These are not the true mythical beasts and have no magickal powers, but they are more enduring and adaptive to their environment (and make damn startling opponents!). It is worth noting that Progenitor higher-ups frown on such vulgar magick. A Technomancer had better have a good reason for making monsters unless she belongs to Damage Control.

••••• Cloning/Shapeshifting

The Progenitor can reproduce a complete human body from a sample of tissue. The Progenitor must also have Rank Five in the Mind Sphere to transfer or provide an intelligence for the clone body, and Rank Four in the Spirit Sphere to provide the clone with a true identity.

At this rank, the Progenitor gains complete control of her own body and can shapechange freely to any form that she can imagine (this is where Paradox can come into play

with the Progenitors). Many Progenitors pick one or two forms that they want to use and then practice moving and interacting in those forms. The new forms are alien at first, and mages may not be able to do things that the animals take for granted, like flying in bird form, swimming as a fish or dolphin, running on all fours, or jumping from branch to branch like a squirrel.

Methodology Effects

These effects are taught within the separate Methodologies and reflect each Methodology's particular specialty. Members of other Methodologies may learn these effects, of course, but finding a teacher may be difficult.

FACADE Engineer Life Effects

We're all clones,
One is all and all are one,
One is all and all are one.
— Alice Cooper, "We're All Clones"

• Pattern Store

This effect allows the Progenitor to memorize the Patterns of studied lifeforms. Patterns serve as blueprints for future surgeries or alterations; mages can superimpose the memorized Pattern over the section to be altered and make alterations using the stored Pattern as a map or working model.

•• Augment Simple Lifeform

The FACADE Engineer can alter an organism's Life Pattern to increase aspects of its form. For example, she could drastically increase its size. Because most of these organisms are very small — insects, spiders, mushrooms, algae — each success attained increases the size multiple by a factor of 10. (Larger simple organisms, such as plants, are limited in their maximum size by Earth's gravity.) Thus, a single success would result in a tiny creature becoming 10 times its normal size; two successes, 20 times; etc. An augmented animal also undergoes physiological alterations necessary to survive (for example, an insect's breathing spicules are enlarged, thereby enabling it to breathe at greater sizes).

For example, a FACADE Engineer on the run from a band of Tradition mages frantically throws his magic at a nearby hornet. He scores three successes and happily disappears into a nearby building as the hornet, now 30 inches long and thoroughly annoyed, attacks the Tradition mages. The hornet's sting is also enhanced, for the size of its stinger and venom glands have likewise increased. The insect now injects 30 times the amount of venom, enough to kill most Sleepers.

••• Graft Alien Bio-Matter Between Animals

This effect allows the transferal of body parts between animals — for example, adding a frog tongue to a cat. The grafted section functions normally, but the animal must still learn how to use its new appendage. (The aforementioned cat would have an awful time licking its fur in the beginning, and might have to adapt its bathing routine to the new tongue.) Most FACADE Engineers alter fairly young animals, thus allowing them to mature using their new parts and become quite adept with them by the time they reach adulthood.

It is also common practice either to use the Mind Sphere to enhance the creature's intelligence, or to have a Genegineer enhance its potential intelligence by selective gene exchange and manipulation. Example: the otherwise normal cat who has adapted to the use of the tongue might enjoy catching mice from 15 feet away, while a more intelligent cat might try to grab the gun away from a person assaulting his master (for a can of tuna fish later, of course).

All of these effects are temporary unless the Sphere of Prime is used in conjunction with the effect (this restriction also applies to the effects below).

•••• Graft Alien Bio-Matter With Humans

The FACADE Engineer can now exchange human or animal parts in a manner similar to that exercised at Rank Three. More obvious alterations include: adding a human torso to the lower sections of an animal; replacing a human's hands with paws or talons; or giving a human a monkey's tail. Exchanges between human bodies are also possible: for example, adding extra sets of arms to a human or transferring a brain from one body to another.

An example of an elegant transfer within the constraints of a short period of time is the removal of the brain of a human enforcer agent (reducing its size slightly in the process) and the subsequent transferal of the brain into the body of a Hermetic mage's pet Great Dane. The resulting spy dog would have all the knowledge and logic of the agent, with the form of the dog. He might not be able to talk, but he could probably thump his tail in Morse Code.

It bears noting that Paradox takes a heavy toll on such creations. The aforementioned Great Dane might live a week per success before the alien organ was rejected. Such alien graftings survive best in Horizon Realms, where reality can be tailored to the Progenitors' pet theories. Even Technomancers are bound by the static reality they have created.

••••• Clone

The FACADE Engineer can replicate an animal or human agent, given a sample of tissue from the individual. Unfortunately in the case of replacement agent clones, and fortunately in the case of replacement bodies for Progenitors, this cloning does not include any injuries, scars or body alterations not made at the genetic level. If the genetic code of the sample is altered prior to cloning by a Genegineer, the altered DNA will determine the form.

A Progenitor, for example, is infected with an incurable disease and dies. His cell samples, taken when he was a Student, are then used to recreate his body without any trace of the disease or the damage it had inflicted.

Clones, unlike the tissue grafts above, are not subject to Paradox if the clone is properly prepared, and may live indefinitely, though they will age.

FACADE Engineer Mind Effects

• Empower Self

The Empower Self effect listed in the **Mage** rulebook is used often by Progenitors in emergency situations, allowing them to increase their mnemonic/calculation facilities and to formulate new theories on the spot. Such theories need not be too sound and may be disproved later when the danger has passed ("By my new calculations, that should not have worked…").

•• Scan Memories

This allows the Progenitor to scan the memory Pattern of a target, discern any breaks or damage to the template, and use it as a blueprint to transfer those memories to another brain.

••• Transfer Memories

The Progenitor can transfer the collective memories from one individual to the blank slate of a clone's mind.

•••• Manipulate Memories

This effect facilitates replacement of an individual with a Progenitor spy clone. It blocks selected memories: for example, being assassinated in a dark alley or being dragged from the wreckage of a car crash and killed. This effect also enables the Progenitor to program the clone for loyalty. These manipulations sometimes damage the memory Pattern, causing loss or gain of personality quirks and habits.

••••• Move to Clone

The Progenitor with this ability can transfer his own mind into an already prepared clone body from anywhere on the planet without the aid of underlings, assuming that he has some logical scientific theory to accomplish it.

Genegineer Life Effects

• Gene Scan

This effect lets the Progenitor read the genetic code of an individual. She can find damage wrought by disease, age or another Progenitor; detect artificial alterations of the sequences; and perceive race, sex, species, genetic disorders, recessive genes for genetic disorders, and any oddities in the genetic code. The oddities can be identified only if the mage has previously scanned someone with a similar oddity.

Example: Eileen, an RA of Developmental Neogenetics Amalgamated, sneaks a scan of the lycanthrope DNA has managed to capture and vivisect. As a result, she has some idea of what Garou genetic code looks like. She and some of her Students are later confronted by a group of street punks. Eileen performs a Gene Scan while her favorite Student tries to pacify the gang, and realizes that this

"gang" is a pack of werewolves. Completely unprepared for this situation (i.e., no high-caliber weapons), Eileen's party seeks a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

•• Alter Small Sequence

The Genegineer can change a single molecule in a specific gene. This can affect a single cell, as in the case of altering a baby at conception, or the entire body of a normal adult organism. The difficulty of the effect rises substantially with the quantity of cells needing change. The desired effect can range from correcting a single gene error in a fetus (difficulty 6) to causing cancer (difficulty 8) to creating a nearly instant illness (difficulty 10).

••• Delete/Insert/Alter Gene

By genetically enhancing the Pattern of her own body, the Progenitor can significantly improve her own form. Each success allows her to increase a Physical, Mental or Appearance Attribute by one (even above 5). The effect lasts for a number of hours equal to the number of successes. This cannot be a permanent effect unless the Sphere of Prime is used in conjunction with the augmentation.

Similar to the "Better Body" effect, the Progenitor will suffer the loss of one Health Level if she attempts to maintain the new Pattern beyond the predetermined time. She will continue to lose one Health Level each day she maintains the form. Stressing the altered form after the expiration of the time limit can lead to further damage. This damage can only be healed by bed rest and normal medical attention.

As a short-term effect, a sample of DNA from a regenerative organism can be temporarily integrated into the DNA of a wounded person; this effect requires one success. Such a procedure enhances the restorative process, healing one Health Level in one turn. If the DNA is integrated into all the cells in the body (four successes), the body will regenerate one Health Level every three turns. (Another reason that the Genegineers are interested in finding more werewolves is to analyze and use their regenerative properties.)

•••• Genetic Pattern Matching

The Genegineer can add entire sections of preexisting genetic code to another species. Example: Adding to a human woman's DNA the sequences that permit a certain type of amphibian to reproduce asexually (parthenogenesis). This would allow the woman to give birth to a child that would be an exact genetic duplicate of herself — basically a natural cloning process.

Aside from the mad scientist aspects, this effect also permits a Progenitor to adapt someone to a hostile environment. An agent doing undercover work in a cold climate might be altered to grow fur all over his body, or someone working underwater might have seal, dolphin or whale DNA added to his own, allowing him to dive for longer periods, resist cold water and ignore the crushing pressures of the depths.

This effect also allows the completion of fragmentary sequences using current DNA for templates, or the juxtaposing of fragments with other fragments of the same species. Thus, an extinct species' DNA could be recreated and the samples used to grow specimens in a clone tank (*a la Jurassic Park*).

••••• Genetic Mastery

The Genegineer can now completely rearrange genetic sequences to produce a drastically different organism. This alteration does not require any template, merely the Progenitor's imagination. A botch produces a screaming sac of protoplasmic protein, while five successes create a completely functional new creature. This is almost always a vulgar effect unless the Genegineer takes a long time to research and implement a theory.

Pharmacopeist Life Effects

• Life Sense

The Pharmacopeist can identify and scan Life Patterns. By reading the Pattern, a mage can determine what kinds of drugs, poisons or chemicals are present in an organism's system.

The Pharmacopeists' extensive knowledge of biochemistry allows them to determine the age, sex, race and species of the target and gain hints of the person's emotional state. A Pharmacopeist can, for example, ascertain: if a person is scared or lying by reading the level of adrenaline present; if a person is in pain by scanning for large amounts of endorphins in the system; if a female of any species is fertile or pregnant by reading her hormone levels. A Pharmacopeist can also discern the genetic signature of the Progenitors, which reveals if the organism occurred naturally or was in some way modified by another Progenitor.

•• Simple Biochemical Manipulation

This allows the Pharmacopeist to manipulate a substance's effects on a given Life Pattern. Whenever a drug is taken it temporarily changes the Pattern of the user. The Pharmacopeist has the ability to see the variations in the Patterns or the new Patterns the chemicals form in the organism. He can then stretch and reweave the Life Pattern to produce or enhance the desired effects.

At this stage a Pharmacopeist is capable of controlling the effects of chemicals on the body, though this may require Correspondence magick to accomplish over a distance. The uses of this effect are manifold. A person could be made extremely intoxicated with only a small amount of alcohol. The speed with which medication takes effect can be increased or decreased. The short- or long-term side effects of drugs and poisons can be neutralized. It's also possible to induce violent allergic reactions — horrible attacks of sneezing or itching, swelling of the eyes and throat, hives, or even death. Any poison can be made almost instantly fatal as well.

••• Biochemical Regulation

The Progenitor can directly affect the biochemistry and metabolism of the body. On the positive side, he can: speed the healing process; enhance someone's strength, endurance, dexterity or speed; refresh someone who is exhausted; and increase the time a person can hold her breath. On the negative side, he can: deoxygenate the blood; inhibit blood clotting; induce an inflammatory reaction in a body part; or destroy cells via general disruption.

•••• Physiological Rule

This effect has a more defined effect on specific metabolic processes or body parts, permitting the Progenitor to focus on a specific effect. She can destroy cells in a certain area or of a certain type (like destroying an entire muscle or annihilating a cancerous tumor, mostly by enhancing and releasing specific enzymes in the cells), alter cell permeability (resulting in instant dehydration or a sudden influx of water into all cells), or increase the quantity of a certain metabolic product (causing mood swings, insulin shock, or death by increasing the amount of acid in the blood).

This mastery of the metabolism also extends to the Progenitor, thereby rendering her completely immune to the effects of normal drugs and poisons if she so desires.

••••• Metabolic Mastery

The Pharmacopeist can create the effect of any drug, poison or metabolic product without the substance actually being present in the body. This is accomplished by directly affecting and controlling the receptors initiating or halting the chemical reactions for the response. This usually requires coincidental magick ("Oops, you forgot about those six beers you had an hour ago!") and possibly Correspondence as well.

Also, it is child's play to produce refined, purified and reconfigured biochemicals, thus creating super-enhanced substances. These chemicals would have extreme effects. For example, enhancing an enzyme called trypsin to new heights of effectiveness would create something that would basically eat holes in anything made of protein — for example, a living body.

Spells

Enhance Drugs (•• Life •• Matter • Prime)

This is cast on large quantities of a given drug that the Pharmacopeists wish to enhance in some way. This works on typical street drugs and "drugs for the Masses." Some examples of these drugs and their enhanced effects are given in the *Pharmacopeia* section.

Create Mage Drugs (•• Life •••• Matter ••• Prime)

The chemicals needed to make the drugs are assembled in a flask and five points of liquid Quintessence are poured over them as this spell is cast. This imbues the chemical with raw Quintessence usable by anyone who consumes the drug. Examples of mage drugs are given in the Pharmacopeia section.

Create Primessence Drug (••• Life ••• Prime)

Simple saline fluid is used as a medium to transfer a set Life Pattern into a living body. When injected, the fluid carrying the Pattern causes the patient's body to begin producing large quantities of Quintessence. This effect lasts for up to six hours and is very uncomfortable. The patient is usually very queasy and dizzy, complains of headaches or body aches, and cannot sleep well.

Patients' bodies become saturated with raw energy. Their blood, urine, tears and hair are often collected (repeatedly) for "tests" or "study," and The physical matter is then broken down into a liquid form of Tass by a complicated series of centrifuge-like machines. The collected Quintessence is stored for later use in special vials and freezers.

In extreme cases where large quantities of raw Quintessence are needed, whole limbs have been removed and used (the limb "goes bad" quickly, however, and must be used right away). The effects of this spell on mages are slightly different; mages begin sweating Quintessence, leaking it out of every pore of their bodies. To anyone watching them, they seem to be bleeding a glowing golden liquid from their bodies, especially their eyes and mouths. The affected mage can use this Quintessence just as any other, but a Willpower roll (difficulty 6) must be made to perform any action whatsoever.

Generally, three points of Quintessence can be pulled from a Sleeper who is under the influence of Primessence, and only one or two from most animals. Five points can be gathered from a human body if the entire body (or most of it) is used, or three or four from an animal. This, of course, kills the "donor." A mage produces twice her Avatar rating in Quintessence.

Control Nerves (••• Life ••• Forces)

This spell controls the flow of electricity through the nervous system. A repeating loop can be created to cause a movement over and over, to halt all pain reception, or to make the victim feel constant pain. The first increases by two the difficulties of all physical actions. The second allows the recipient to ignore all wound penalties. The third causes the victim to suffer three Health Levels that cannot and do not have to be healed. A person can be killed by this effect if he botches a Stamina roll when reduced below Incapacitated.

Simulate Inborn Errors of Metabolism (•••• Life •••• Entropy)

This allows a Genegineer to create a temporary but severe form of a simple genetic disease (one cannot simulate Down's Syndrome with this spell). The duration of these spells is one hour for each success scored. Coincidental magick is almost impossible with these spells, but they are quite effective. Examples include:

— Imitation Lesch-Nyhan Syndrome: the victim of this version of the spell has his Intelligence reduced to 1, very limited muscular control, and compulsively mutilates himself by chewing on his digits and lips, self-inflicting one Health level per five turns of such abuse.

— Albinism: the victim immediately loses all pigment in his skin, hair and eyes. His hair turns white, his eyes turn pale blue or reddish, and his skin becomes extremely sensitive to ultraviolet light (sunlight). Being in the sun inflicts one Health Level per turn. After the duration has ended, pigment slowly returns to the skin and eyes, but any hard-won suntan is gone, and the hair remains white until the natural color grows out.

— Vitamin Deficiencies: the victim becomes weak and ill, and sores break out all over his body. He loses three Health Levels and is unable to concentrate or summon the energy to cast magick.

—Hemophilia: the victim bleeds uncontrollably when wounded (even bruising counts) and loses one additional Health Level in blood every two turns. Even a Pharmacopeist, controlling the clotting of the blood, cannot stop the bleeding, for there are no clotting factors in the blood to manipulate. Only by negating the spell and speeding the production of the appropriate proteins can the bleeding be stopped by anything short of an entirely mechanical approach (tourniquet, pressure, stitching) or placing the Life Pattern in stasis.

— Color Blindness: the victim sees only in shades of gray as all the pigments in the color receptors in his eyes are destroyed. This effect will last about a week after the spell wears off, when the body will have replaced enough of the pigments to permit color vision again.

— Connective Tissue Errors: the victim takes four Health Levels of damage per success attained in casting, as his connective tissue atrophies and his body literally falls apart. Muscles shred, bones fall out of their joints, and arteries explode. Only the bones, blood, and a heap of shapeless protoplasm remain. This spell has a difficulty of 10 and is exceedingly vulgar.

Nanotech Life Support (●●●●● Matter ●●● Forces ●●● Mind ●● Prime ●●●●● Life)

A joint effort of the Progenitors and Iteration X has produced a means of virtual immortality by using nanotech machines. These tiny machines are produced and mentally attuned to the intended recipient, then introduced into the body. The machines scavenge poisons, drugs and diseases out of the system, destroy abnormal cells, remove the effects of aging, and rapidly regenerate damaged body parts.

Intense trauma, massive loss of blood, asphyxiation and complete bodily destruction can still kill the host. Otherwise, however, the host is more enduring and therefore harder to damage or kill. The machines can temporarily replace damaged organs such as the eyes, eardrums, heart or liver.

The recipient permanently gains a 5 Stamina and regenerates one Health level every two turns. He is immune to normal poisons, diseases and drugs, and does not age. The machines can be destroyed by someone with five ranks in Entropy and at least three ranks in Matter. These devices take considerable time to produce and insert; such an "effect" cannot be produced on demand.

Quintessence Net (•• Life •• Matter •••• Prime)

Many hospitals have a Quintessence Net running through a number of their patients, especially those trapped in comas or in intensive care. At least one of the "life-support" machines, "IV" bags or "feeding tubes" is in truth the physical focus for the Quintessence Net. The Net is designed to channel a portion of the patients' Quintessence into the physical storage device. When the Quintessence is removed from the body, it takes the form of a thick, viscous liquid that can then be stored or shipped to Progenitors in the area.

Pharmacopeia

Note: Progenitors can freely use any of the drugs created by the Pharmacopeists without the fear of any side effects, for the Pharmacopeists have secretly perfected the drugs and deliberately distribute the flawed varieties to non-Progenitor users.

Street Drugs

Cocaine, Uppers, Amphetamines

Administration: Oral, Inhaled, Ingested

Effects: Normal doses of the Pharmacopeist versions of these drugs temporarily boost a character's speed and alertness. Initiative difficulty is considered 3 while under the effects of these drugs, and the difficulties of all Perception-based rolls are decreased by one; this reflects the paranoia the drugs induce. Intelligence and Charisma difficulties, however, are increased by two, reflecting the character's unstable thoughts and behavior.

Extremely potent or extremely high doses of these drugs also bestow two additional Health Levels on the Health Level Chart; these additional Health Levels are considered "OK" for the purpose of assigning wound penalties. This effect allows Progenitor agents to withstand tremendous punishment and not even feel it. Such augmentation is very dangerous; an "Incapacitated" result at this point immediately kills the drug user, as he reaches the limit of his boosted reserves.

Overdoses: A character on these drugs loses a certain amount of tactile sensation. He may not notice a minor (one-Health Level) wound until someone points it out. He may not think that the wound is as bad as it really is because it doesn't hurt as much as it should. The Storyteller may opt to have a character take extra damage for ignoring a bleeding wound or walking on a broken leg. The Storyteller may also decide not to tell a character how much damage a particular wound inflicted.

If too much of the drug is taken, shivering and uncontrollable shaking may result. The side effects of higher or more potent doses are evident once the drug wears off. The two illusory Health Levels vanish when the user comes down off the drug-induced high, and if accumulated wounds reduce the character below the level of Incapacitated at that point, he dies.

Hallucinogens

Administration: Oral, Dropped into eyes, Injected, any way that it could enter the blood

Effects: Enhanced versions of these drugs actually expand the mental awareness of the user, allowing even the Masses to perceive the Umbra. In areas where the Gauntlet is relatively weak, Sleepers can actually peer into the Near Umbra and view the spirit world. The drugged Sleepers have a warped view of reality and the way it functions, and any strange things seen will be believed to be side effects of the drug, not reality-threatening acts. Sleepers will chalk it up to a "really wild trip."

Technomancers or mages who use the drug in the Umbra are able to see into other neighboring planes before actually passing into them (Perception + Awareness; difficulty 7).

Side Effects: A Stamina roll (difficulty 5) is required when the drug is first taken by a mage; if the roll botches, she will experience vivid hallucinations that could range from being attacked by horrible monsters (which, of course, are actually associates/friends/innocent people/nearby walls) to everything melting into puddles of jelly. These visions need not occur right away. They often manifest during highly emotional or stressful times, like in the middle of a fight. A hallucinating mage may not always think twice about magick, either. Have the player make a check to see if the character remembers not to use vulgar magick.

The drugs are also known to disrupt sleep, and a user can be distracted by the most trivial and insignificant things. To the user these things are of the utmost importance—"Have you ever really looked at your hands before?

Aren't they the neatest things? The way they kind of bend and move...."

Mage Drugs

Cognition

Administration: Inhaled

Effects: This substance is stored in small, breakable vials. When someone wishes to use the drug, the vial is broken and the vapors are inhaled. The user must then make a Stamina roll (difficulty 6). No successes increases by one the difficulty of magick use. One Quintessence point is temporarily drained for each botch. Successful use of Cognition decreases by one the difficulty of magick use without the expenditure of a Quintessence point. This is a result of the drug's ability to sharpen and focus the mind. The effects last for one hour.

Side effects: These vapors are very addictive. A Willpower roll (difficulty 7) must be made after each use. If the roll fails, the mage begins to crave more of the drug. Each day an addict goes without a dose of Cognition increases by one the difficulty of magick use (to a maximum of 10, at which point the mage experiences a day of violent withdrawal symptoms and is no longer addicted).

Overdose: Inhalation of two or more vials of Cognition in one day increases the difficulty of the addiction rolls by one for each vial inhaled.

Smart Drugs

Administration: Oral, Intravenous

Effects: These drugs temporarily add one to a single Mental Attribute while simultaneously lowering by one the difficulties of Abilities related to the Attribute. A different form of the drug enhances each separate Mental Attribute. Smart drugs go by various names on the street, but the Progenitors lump them under a single category. The effect of one dose lasts for (10 - Stamina) hours.

Some Virtual Adepts believe that smart drugs were developed by the Pharmacopeists, while others see "smart drugs" as a godsend. The Pharmacopeists know the truth.

Side Effects: When the drug is administered, the user must make a Stamina roll (difficulty 6). Only if at least one success is gained does the drug take effect. A botched roll results in the temporary loss of one point of the applicable Attribute.

The long-term effect of extended use results in the affected neurons "burning out." After (Stamina x 2) uses, the user must make a Stamina roll (difficulty 10) or permanently lose one point of the appropriate Attribute. It takes twice the amount of experience to restore the Attribute to its previous level.

Drugs for the Masses

Steroids

Administration: Oral, Intravenous

Effects: Pharmacopeist-enhanced steroids allow a character to increase Physical Attributes at half the normal development cost. Many Progenitors feed these drugs to their hired muscle to enhance their usefulness.

Side Effects: This drug has only long-term effects. The enhanced steroids cause sterility (this is part of the Progenitor plot to cleanse the gene pool and control the population) and can also cause severe cramping (Stamina roll; difficulty 4) every time the character overexerts himself; this latter effect lasts for a month after the new Attribute score has been gained.

Only one Physical Attribute can be raised at a time, and the user must wait at least one game month between Attribute gains. Steroids can also thin the blood, causing clotting to take longer. Even the bite of a vampire takes longer to seal. The vampire must continue to lick the bite and will drain one more Blood Point than intended.

Overdose: Uncontrollable muscle spasms, difficulties of all feats increased by three for 24 hours.

Nicotine/Caffeine/Alcohol

Some brands of these drugs have been enhanced by the Progenitors to pollute the bodies of the Masses and slowly destroy their Avatars. The Convention controls various companies, using them to produce and distribute these polluted drugs among the Sleepers "for their own good." All varieties are very addictive and dull the mind over time, preventing the affected Masses from having the imagination to believe in anything beyond the Technomancers' vision of reality.

Birth Control/Pregnancy Drugs

Reputedly created by a mage faction to control human overpopulation, birth control and pregnancy drugs have a checkered history. Opinions differ; some believe that the Cult of Ecstasy created potent contraceptives to allow Sleepers greater access to their sexuality, while others claim that the Progenitors control such drugs, using them to control the Masses. Still other stories credit the Sleepers with creating these drugs on their own, as they have so many times before.

It is believed that the Progenitors also use these compounds to detect and destroy nonhumans born into the human population. This would include, in theory, lycanthrope Kinfolk, people with faerie blood, and demonic offspring, should any such exist.

Devices: Technomancer Talismans

• Alley Shades

A (Life •, Correspondence •) effect allows the wearer to detect any lifeforms in the area and know their approximate location and movements. A favorite of street Pharmacopeists.

••• Helix Ring

This is a silver ring with a DNA double helix design around the inside. An item of the Genegineers, this item stores genetic Patterns at Life 1, temporarily causes illness via a random genetic alteration at Life 2, and can heal one Health Level for the Progenitor wearing it at Life 3.

••• Link Collar

This device allows the wearer to maintain a mental link with "pets" wearing a transceiver collar or ear tag. The Progenitor may see through the animals' eyes, project mental images to them and steer their actions. Frequently used for bodyguard creatures and those in the service of Damage Control.

••• Scalpel of Correspondence

The scalpel appears to be of a very old design, with a very solid stainless steel handle and a blade that never needs replacing. When the scalpel (which can cut through bone) is used to sever a body part, the part is co-located with its former attachment and therefore still maintains blood flow and sensation. This continues until the part is firmly attached to its new location. This item uses Correspondence at 3.

•••• Syringe Pharmacopeia

Transmutes water or nonpoisonous liquids that are stored in the syringe to poisons or sedative drugs. Ignoring the effects of these magically enhanced drugs requires a Stamina roll (difficulty 9). Uses Matter at 4.

•••• Q.A.D (Quintessence Absorbing Device)

These machines resemble the respiration or EKG monitors typically found in hospitals. When the Q.A.D is hooked up to a living body (not necessarily a human), the machine slowly siphons Quintessence from the patient. This device is generally used in conjunction with the Pharmacopeist drug Primessence, though Primessence is not necessary for this machine to function.

The Quintessence is drained into a hidden receptacle or vat and stored for later use. When hooked to a Sleeper, the Q.A.D siphons three Quintessence point per week. Each week that a mage is hooked up to the Q.A.D, he loses one point from his Avatar while the Progenitors gather five points of Quintessence.

Use of the Primessence drug allows the Quintessence to be drained at a much higher rate. The machine uses Prime 4, Life 3, Matter 2 and Correspondence 3 (this last Sphere is used to transport the liquid Quintessence to the storage vat).

Battle Roster

It is always through not meddling that the empire is won. Should you meddle, then you are not equal to the task of winning the empire.

— Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, Book Two (Verse XLVIII)

This section details a range of Progenitor characters, some homemade creatures, and a few beasts from Damage Control.

Progenitor Characters

Student

These young Progenitors have low levels of ability in the Life, Prime and Matter Spheres (Ranks One and Two).

Character Creation: Attributes 7/5/3, Abilities 10/6/3, Backgrounds 2, Willpower 4, Spheres 3, Arete 1-2.

Research Associate

The RAs are seeking three things: their own laboratories, status and more power. They have achieved moderate power in their chosen Spheres.

Character Creation: Attributes 7/5/3, Abilities 13/9/5, Backgrounds 5, Willpower 5, Spheres 6, Arete 1-3.

Primary Investigator

These Progenitors have accumulated personal power (at least Rank Four in one Sphere), their own laboratories, and, if they still have funding, a good relationship with the Research Directors, review boards and Administration. PIs employ underlings to work on new theories, which they can then apply to their magick.

Character Creation: Attributes 8/6/3, Abilities 19/10/5, Backgrounds 7, Willpower 8, Spheres 8-15, Arete 4-6.

Student

Research Director

An RD has a broad vision of the reality of the Technocracy, which she applies to the laboratory group under her control. The individual laboratories rarely understand the rationale behind any particular assignment, but usually, the data garnered from a lab group fit together like an intricate jigsaw puzzle.

Character Creation: Attributes 9/6/4, Abilities 22/10/6, Backgrounds 10, Willpower 10, Spheres 15+, Arete 8+.

Non-Awakened Support Staff (Consors and Acolytes)

The support staff of the Progenitors varies from Methodology to Methodology, but generally subdivides into three basic groups:

Technician

These are scientists who have no magickal ability, instead performing menial tasks in a laboratory. They maintain the smooth flow of products in and out of the laboratory and stockroom, and perform "normal" research for the sake of non-Progenitors. Some know whom and what they serve, but many do not.

Character Creation: Attributes 7/5/3, Abilities 13/9/5, Backgrounds 5, Willpower 5.

Suggested Attributes: Assume ratings of 2, except for Intelligence, which is generally at least 3.

Suggested Abilities: Alertness 3, Research 4, Technology 2, Computer 1, Medicine 1, Science (usually specified as either Biochemistry, Genetics or Anatomy, depending on the field of expertise) 3.

Equipment: usually carry at least one weapon at all times.

Street Operative

These are the dealers, distributors, pimps, prostitutes and gang members who work for Pharmacopeist street labs. Few have any ideas about the true nature of their employers. Most of the bruisers are on steroids, with reduced side effects.

Character Creation: Attributes 7/5/3, Abilities 13/9/5, Backgrounds 7, Willpower 4.

Suggested Attributes: Assume ratings of 2 save for Physical Attributes, which can range from 3 to 5 depending on the type of operative.

Suggested Abilities: Alertness 3, Brawl 3, Streetwise 3, Firearms 3, Melee 3, Stealth 2

Equipment: Firearms of all types, knives, machetes, hits of Pharmacopeist-enhanced cocaine and amphetamines, brass knuckles, baseball bats and blackjacks.

The Recruiter

These non-Awakened agents for the Progenitors know exactly whom they serve. They generally are very perceptive, charismatic and manipulative, able to root out the most promising students and wheedle them into joining a Progenitor program.

Character Creation: Attributes 7/5/3, Abilities 10/8/4, Backgrounds 7, Willpower 5.

Research Director

Technician

Suggested Attributes: Assume ratings of 2 save for Social Attributes, which are at least 3.

Suggested Abilities: Alertness 3, Dodge 3, Intuition 2, Subterfuge 4, Etiquette 2, Stealth 2, Culture 2, Occult 1, Science 2

Equipment: Briefcase, cellular phone, supplies of business cards, college propaganda, sky-pager, maps, expensive sedan.

Replacement Clones

These have exactly the same stats as the original templates. Certain personality quirks may appear or disappear. They carry the equipment they are expected to carry. Iteration X replacement clones will have cybernetic enhancements.

Examples of Homegrown Nasties

Many Progenitors, particularly FACADE Engineers, create hybrid "sidekicks" for security, companionship or simple whim. The Convention takes a dim view of obviously unnatural creatures on the loose, so these "homegrown beasties" usually appear totally innocuous until it's too late.

"Pander"

Pander is a sleek, black housecat with fur of medium length. He appears to be completely normal. However, when he was a kitten, a FACADE Engineer Student used him in one of her first experiments with grafting. Through the alteration, he was given the tongue of a frog, adapted for the size of its new host.

Pander escaped from his old mistress and remarkably survived both organ rejection and Paradox. The unsuspecting new tenants of Pander's home have noticed that many small, colorful objects that the cat could not normally reach have vanished or been found on the floor.

Pander's tongue can reach a maximum length of 15 feet. It is covered with a sticky resin on the tip, allowing it to adhere to small objects such as mice, birds and dice. The tongue has an effective Dexterity of 4 and Strength of 2. Pander is a little more intelligent than the average cat, and has been known to snatch objects such as guns, knives or keys from people's hands.

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Dodge 3

Attacks: Claws/1 die

Special Ability: Tongue: Dexterity 4, Strength 2

Willpower: 4

Health Levels: OK, -1, -2, -5, Incapacitated

"Emmanuel"

Emmanuel is a tiny Chihuahua of the "hairless" kind. He trembles with nervous energy all the time, and heartily dislikes anyone but his current master.

Emmanuel's master grafted some characteristics of the vampire bat onto his beloved pet. Emmanuel now has a set of bat wings allowing him to fly at speeds approaching 20 mph. Extendible fangs within his mouth let him lock his jaws into a target almost as well as a Rottweiler can. Because of Paradox, Emmanuel has been through successive clone bodies, and never leaves his master's house.

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Brawl 2, Athletics 1, Dodge 3

Attacks: Bite/3 dice

Special Ability: Flight (see above)

Willpower: 3

Health Levels: OK, -1, -2, -5, Incapacitated

"Lady"

Lady is a normal-looking, but large, black-and-tan Rottweiler. From the time Lady was a puppy, she was dosed on Pharmacopeist steroids to enhance her Physical Attributes. These steroids were of the "pure" variety and therefore did not cause any harmful side effects.

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Brawl 4, Alertness 3, Athletics 4, Dodge 3, Smell 3

Attacks: Bite/7 dice

Willpower: 5

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -3, -4, -5, Incapacitated

Damage Control Monsters

Huddled in the cellar
Fear caught in their eyes.
Daring not to move or breathe
As the creature cries.
Fingernails start scratching
On the outside wall,
Clawing at the windows
"Come to me," it calls…
— Judas Priest, "Nightcrawler"

Cephalopoid

This creature is the combination of a cephalopod (a squid, octopus or nautilus) with parts of a human head and brain. From the upper side, it looks like a relatively normal squid or octopus, but those who view the creature from the underside can see a human face in the center of the array of tentacles. The eyes have been altered for underwater use (additionally, the normal cephalopod eyes have been left intact on the side of the mantle), and the creature's beak replaces the human mouth. The cephalopoid has human intelligence and is used as a scout or guard on marine missions. It cannot speak, but can use its tentacles to write if it knows how.

The average cephalopoid is created from a large octopus or Humboldt Current squid, resulting in a creature about 10 feet long. However, giant squids have also been used for this alteration, resulting in creatures as long as 60 feet.

(Or possibly larger; several asphyxiated sperm whales have recently been discovered on the surface. Strips of flesh and blubber have been torn from their bodies, and the wounds bear the characteristic sucker marks of giant squids. The whales were obviously deliberately held underwater, indicating the work of Progenitor cephalopoids. The scars on these whales, however, far exceed the giant squid's normal four-inch marks, instead reaching 18 inches in diameter; this implies the existence of a species of cephalopoid growing as large as 225 feet in length!)

Attributes: Strength 4-12 (+), Dexterity 3, Stamina 2-8 (+), Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 4, Brawl 3, Intimidation 4, Melee 1, Stealth 3 (plus any bonus from cromatophores; see below), Survival 3, Linguistics 1 (allowing them to read or write), Demolitions 2 (some of these creatures are trained in setting explosives on marine structures)

Attacks: Tentacles/Str dice from crushing; Beak/3 dice (or more in the case of giant squids).

Special Abilities: Several, including:

Jet propulsion — the siphon on the cephalopoid's mantle allows it to jet through the water at speeds of up to 40 mph.

Cromatophores — Cephalopoid flesh contains cromatophores — specialized cells giving it chameleonlike powers of camouflage. Unless the cromatophores have been magically neutralized, assume the creature has three additional dice in its Stealth Dice Pool. Alternately, the creature can assume "attack coloration" — flaming crimson. This display adds an additional die to its Intimidation Dice Pool.

Slow regeneration — if a cephalopoid lose tentacles, the limbs will regrow at the rate of one per week (the molluscoid regeneration process has been enhanced by Progenitor science).

Tentacles — the creature may attack multiple foes without dividing its Dice Pool. Alternately, the cephalopoid may target a single creature with more than one tentacle, receiving an additional die to its attack Dice Pools for each extra tentacle employed. Once a creature has been grappled, it is immobilized (no dodge roll versus the tentacles or beak) until it breaks free (Contest of Strength; the cephalopoid receives an extra die for each additional tentacle employed). An octopus-cephalopoid has eight tentacles; a squid, 10; a nautilus, innumerable. Octopi- and squid-cephalopoids may attack with their tentacles without exposing their bodies to injury; the nautilus-cephalopoid's tentacles are short, however, and any attack exposes the body.

Armor — assuming the cephalopoid was created from a squid or nautilus, its mystically strengthened shell gives it two extra soak dice, unless opponents specifically target the creature's vulnerable areas (attack difficulties are raised by one). An octopus-cephalopoid has no such shell, but its soft body enables it to squeeze through cracks as narrow as an inch wide.

Ink cloud — the cephalopoid can emit a blinding, obscuring cloud of ink of a volume approximately equal to that of the cephalopoid itself. This ink cloud has been enhanced by Progenitor science, allowing it to block all senses, including magical ones.

Willpower: 5

Health Levels: OK, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated (larger creatures receive many more Health Levels). Alternately, two successes scored with a sharp weapon (and against difficulty 8) allow one of the creature's tentacles to be severed.

Sauroids

These creatures were grown from the combined DNA of humans and some of the most fierce and deadly reptiles on the planet. The combination proved to be everything for which the Genegineers had hoped, and more… Because of their obviously "unnatural" nature, these creatures are kept in Horizon Realms or secret pens until needed.

Image: Sauroids appear to be large, vaguely humanoid creatures of a slick green or light brown color. They are most likely to be found in small groups of three to eight members. They have long, sleek bodies and can move and sway like a snake. Their bodies are covered with sleek scales, spines and ridges along the spine and joints. These creatures can slither through openings as small as one foot in diameter. Their heads are long and slender, their eyes large and unblinking, and their toothy jaws capable of vast expansion. These beasts have sharp, retracting fangs that can reach lengths of up to 10 inches. The bite of a sauroid injects a lethal poison.

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 3, Brawl 4, Dodge 3, Stealth 3, Survival 3, Smell 4 (like a snake, they taste the air; therefore, they can "see" heat and detect movement around them)

Attacks: Bite/6 dice, plus poison — one Health Level per success, affecting the victim at a rate of one per turn, unless the victim rolls three or more successes on a Stamina roll (difficulty 8).

Special Abilities: Sauroids are natural climbers and capable of camouflage (use the "chromatophores" special ability under Cephalopoids, above, but without the "attack coloration" ability).

Willpower: 5

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, -1 -1, -2, -2, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Dracosaurs

These rare creatures are quite difficult to create. Dracosaurs resemble dragons; they are about the size of a medium horse at the shoulders and from 15 to 25 feet in length from snout to tail. Being Paradoxical in nature, they are kept in Horizon Realms save during the gravest emergencies.

These creatures are incredibly strong and deadly. They are trained to function like bloodhounds; once one has been put on someone's scent, only death will stop it. Dracosaurs are capable of reaching speeds of up to 80 mph, but can only maintain this pace for about 15 seconds (three turns). Their "cruising speed" is about 30 mph.

Image: Dracosaurs have multiple legs (from four to 10 pairs) and multiple sets of eyes placed all around the head, allowing for 360° vision. Their heads are reinforced with solid bone structures that act as battering rams and allow them to inflict massive damage by charging and butting walls or victims. For every two Health Levels of damage sustained, the victim is stunned a turn and knocked back 10 feet. (One of these creatures once charged a bus at full speed and knocked the bus over on its side, sending it sliding a full 10 feet. The witnesses regrettably had to be terminated for the common good.)

Attributes: Strength 8, Dexterity 3, Stamina 8, Perception 4 (specialized in scents), Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 4, Brawl 5, Survival 3, Scent 4

Attacks: Claw or Bite/10 dice, two attacks per turn at full Dice Pool

Tail/8 dice, free against any rear attackers

Charge/12 dice, but this uses the entire Dice Pool

Special Abilities: Speed bursts up to 80 mph, 360° vision; they can also follow scents with their keen senses (difficulty 6).

Willpower: 8

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -3, -3, -5, -5, -6, -6, Incapacitated

Chapter Four:
Progenitor
Construct

Commonwealth Trio Laboratory: Research Construct of Richmond

*Saving our planet doesn't lie in new tools but in who gets
their hands on them and for what.*
— Letter Page, Issue 9 of Mondo 2000

This cluster of three labs is part of EcoR, a Progenitor Horizon Realm, and is located in central Virginia. The three Primary Investigators have banded together through collaboration and funding conglomeration. The three main laboratories are on the third floor of the biology building at a small university near Richmond.

The labs connect to EcoR but conduct a good deal of business outside the Realm. Little of the Lab's magick is vulgar in nature; most of the research here involves chemical manufacture and animal research. This second facet has caused the lab some degree of trouble, as rumors of inhumane experiments have circulated into the

Sleeper community. Oddly enough, many of the rumors are worse than the actual procedures. The Progenitors have little need for the cruel practices of some non-Progenitor labs.

Dr. Charles Reid
Methodology: FACADE Engineer

Charles Reid is only one of a number of names and aliases this man has taken over the centuries. No one knows exactly how old he truly is, except, perhaps, himself. He evidently came to the United States sometime in the 20th century, quickly establishing himself in a position of control over most of the scientists in North America. As the years went by and bioscience grew, he ceded most of his

Dr. Charles Reid

control over the country to some of his carefully groomed former students. He did, however, maintain his control over his most promising labs, and labs based in government agencies. His lab group is known as EcoR.

Reid now coordinates the tobacco industry, many major food manufacturers, and a large number of pharmaceutical companies. Because he has very little time for his own research and only rarely takes on students, he often gives projects to his labs to satisfy his own scientific curiosity. One such project is the werewolf research at Developmental Neogenetics Amalgamated.

His overall goal has always been and is to destroy the Traditions. To this end, he makes sure that his laboratories maintain constant combat readiness. He also harbors a special bitterness for the Virtual Adepts; no one knows exactly why.

Charles Reid is Caucasian, with an unidentifiable accent; his current body is square, muscular, and just beginning to show the telling signs of middle age.

Amalgam: The Trinity Fellowship

Dr. Yurikazi Ishida

Essence: Pattern
Nature: Fanatic
Demeanor: Critic
Methodology: Genegineer
Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 5, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 1, Awareness 2, Biochemistry 4, Brawl 1, Computer 2, Etiquette 3, Genetics 5, Intimidation 2, Linguistics 2, Meditation 2, Progenitor History 2, Research 2, Science 5, Technology 2
Spheres: Life 3, Matter 2, Prime 3
Backgrounds: Avatar 1, Influence 3, Library 3
Willpower: 8
Arete: 4
Quintessence: 10
Paradox: 1

Background: Ishida came to America in the mid-1950s seeking an education. His brilliance and single-minded research quickly attracted the attention of one of the early Genegineers, and he was recruited as a Technician. Ishida, always eager to learn more, proved enthusiastic and pursued opportunities above and beyond the norm. Hard work and single-minded organizational skill have compensated for Ishida's weak Avatar and incomplete understanding of magick.

Image: The years have been kind to Ishida. Not only is he well respected, if not well known, but he has an excellent relationship with the RD and Administration; he is able to pull off miracles of funding. His manner is quiet and intense; working with him is a joy for many Students who are used to the usual high-strung, fast-paced Genegineers. He is a small, trim, well-dressed Oriental man with a touch of gray at the temples and a habit of practicing T'ai Chi in his office every morning.

Roleplaying Hints: Speak cleanly and precisely, with little slang or profanity. Ishida is spare with his movements and centered in his activity. Remember that flattery and

Dr. Yurikazi Ishida

Dr. Sara Burns

manners can accomplish more than stubbornness or intimidation.

Dr. Sara Burns

Essence: Dynamic
Nature: Survivor
Demeanor: Director
Methodology: Pharmacopeist

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 4, Athletics 1, Biochemistry 3, Brawl 3, Computer 1, Dodge 3, Firearms 4, Intimidation 4, Intuition 4, Investigation 2, Leadership 2, Medicine 2, Melee 3, Science 4, Stealth 3, Streetwise 5, Subterfuge 3, Technology 2

Spheres: Life 4, Matter 3, Prime 3
Backgrounds: Allies 3, Avatar 2, Influence 2
Willpower: 6
Arete: 6
Quintessence: 14
Paradox: 4

Background: Burns was a street kid in Washington D.C., tough as nails and ready to deal with anything. She was picked up in 1977 by a Pharmacopeist RA to work out of a street lab, where she quickly saw her fortunes change. Though not as brilliant as, say, Ishida, Burns' quick wit and street smarts advanced her in leaps and bounds through the ranks of the street lab. Finally, the Convention gave in and brought her on as a Student.

Burns did rotations in a bunch of different labs after she graduated from Johns Hopkins University. She saved the RD when he was ambushed by a well-prepared group of Tradition mages (neither Burns nor the RD discusses the particulars of that battle). In gratitude, the RD gave her a lab in EcoR. She hooked up with Smith-Nevans and Ishida because they mind their own business and because Ishida's a whiz with the Administration. She singlehandedly carved a territory out of Richmond for the Pharmacopeists; she runs her demesne with deadly precision.

Image: Burns is a husky, attractive black woman, about 5'4" tall, in her early 30s. She is made of, if you believe her Students and RAs, solid steel and attitude. Her clothing is usually baggy and casual (the better to run, fight, or hide a .357 in).

Equipment: She carries a dizzying array of Pharmacopeist drugs, including amphetamines, cocaine, Cognition and smart drugs, which she will freely administer to herself and her operatives if necessary.

Roleplaying Hints: No one gives Burns shit. No one dares to. She locks eyes and stares down everyone but her closest friends. Her upbringing has left her with a rather coarse vocabulary that belies her able mind.

Dr. Linda Smith-Nevans

Essence: Pattern
Nature: Conformist
Demeanor: Architect
Methodology: FACADE Engineer

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2, Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 2

Dr. Linda Smith-Nevans

Abilities: Alertness 4, Anatomy 5, Biochemistry 3, Computer 3, Etiquette 2, Firearms 2, Genetics 4, Medicine 3, Research 4, Stealth 1, Subterfuge 4, Technology 2, Zoology 3

Spheres: Life 5, Matter 2, Mind 4, Prime 4

Backgrounds: Avatar 2, Influence 3, Library 3

Willpower: 6

Arete: 6

Quintessence: 12

Paradox: 6

Background: Smith-Nevans began her career in England in 1894. She was one of the first women to gain entry into the ranks of the Progenitors as a full-fledged scientist. She has neither the fire of Burns nor the sheer brilliance of Ishida, but she has a slow patience that allows her to surpass both her peers over the long haul. She is a long-time friend of Charles Reid; he is happy to have someone of her age and experience in his lab group and someone of her quiet dedication as his supporter.

With her magickal abilities, Dr. Smith-Nevans could become an RD if she so desired. She does not, instead being perfectly content where she is. Reid keeps in mind, however, that she is extremely vindictive when crossed.

Image: Dr. Smith-Nevans looks and acts like a mild English housewife. Her third body is now in the throes of middle age, and she will be moving into her fourth body sometime in the next couple of years. She wears wire-rim glasses, and her petite frame is already starting to look a little stooped in the cardigan sweaters she always wears. She dresses in tasteful and conservative clothing and has short salt-and-pepper hair. Her constant companion, Hadji, follows her wherever she goes.

Hadji is a brown miniature poodle that Dr. Smith-Nevans has had cloned at least 10 times since she became a Progenitor. He has a few alterations that make him an excellent companion. Hadji is highly intelligent for a dog; he is able to count, add, and tell time, as well as activate the Talisman collar around his neck. This device allows him to quadruple his size, mass and strength. His empathic link with his mistress lets him know if she is in distress. Who wants to stop a five-foot poodle, especially one that has razor-sharp, retractable cat claws affixed underneath his normal claws?

Roleplaying Hints: Dr. Smith-Nevans insists upon her proper name and title at all times. She is never "Linda" or "Smith-Nevans." She has worked hard to gain her position and demands respect. Her upper-class English accent is clipped and precise, and stands as an odd contrast to Burns' vulgar Americanisms. Strangely enough, the two women are close friends, and anyone who crosses one must also deal with the other.

Chain

The Students and Research Associates

Each PI has one Student. Mary Beth Talley majors in FACADE Engineering, Tim Hughes in Pharmacopeia, and Andrew Greene in Genegineering. There is one RA for each lab: Stephen Thundran, the Genegineer; Chain, the Pharmacopeist; and Gina Milano, the FACADE Engineer. The Students' statistics are fairly typical for Student Progenitors.

Chain

Essence: Pattern

Nature: Director

Demeanor: Rebel

Methodology: Pharmacopeist

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3, Perception 2, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 4, Athletics 3, Biochemistry 3, Brawl 4, Computer 3, Drive 3, Firearms 3, Genetics 1, Intimidation 3, Law 1, Leadership 2, Melee 4, Science 3, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 2, Stealth 3

Spheres: Life 3, Matter 2, Prime 2

Backgrounds: Avatar 5

Willpower: 7

Arete: 3

Quintessence: 8

Paradox: 6

Background: Chain reminds Sara Burns of herself. That's probably why she grabbed the kid as he was snatching her purse. There was something impressive there, just waiting under the surface, and she couldn't bear to watch it wasted. Sure, he's been a pain in the ass to teach, but then it's always more rewarding to teach to someone when you have to beat the knowledge into him.

Chain has proved himself a responsible leader, though he'd never let any of his old gang know that. He is bright, eager to learn and full of ideas. He helped Sara build up the Richmond lab and keeps the streets under her control. She plans eventually to turn the entire thing over to him when she feels he's ready (if the RD will ever let her).

Image: Chain is a tall, muscular white man who dresses his part. If he's at the academic lab, he wears a T-shirt and tight, stonewashed jeans. If he's on the street, he wear appropriate leather, chains, and ripped clothing. He changes his facial hair on a whim, one month growing a goatee, the next going clean-shaven, the following growing a full beard. He changes his hair almost as frequently, though he usually keeps it long. He changes the color of his skin when dealing with ethnic inner-city gangs, and keeps appropriate Hispanic, African-American, and Oriental aliases.

Equipment: No matter where he is, Chain is always armed. At the university, he carries a Heckler & Koch P7M13 pistol in a holster at the small of his back, and a knife in an ankle sheath. On the street, his weapons of choice are a Heckler & Koch MP-5 SMG, a variety of hidden knives and a long section of chain with a nasty meathook at the end; he wears this last weapon around his waist.

Roleplaying Hints: Chain shifts his demeanor to suit the occasion. On the street, he adjusts to the expectations of his "clients." In the lab, he is friendly and open, with just a hint of menace. His anger is cold, jagged, and cuts like a rusty blade.

Stephen Thundran

Essence: Questing

Nature: Jester

Demeanor: Curmudgeon

Methodology: Genegineer

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Perception 2, Intelligence 4, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Biochemistry 4, Brawl 3, Computer 5, Dodge 2, Drive 2, Firearms 3, Genetics 3, Melee 3, Medicine 3, Meditation 3, Occult 3, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 1, Technology 3

Spheres: Life 3, Matter 2, Mind 2, Prime 3

Backgrounds: Avatar 4, Allies 1, Dream (memory) 4

Willpower: 7

Arete: 3

Quintessence: 8

Paradox: 4

Stephen Thundran

Background: Stephen was a bitter "child prodigy" whose photographic memory led his parents and teachers to overestimate his intelligence. After being pushed too far one semester, he suffered a nervous breakdown. His Avatar, a flaming clown who juggled screaming rubber balls, tormented him for nearly a month, goading him into Awakening. This nightmarish vision haunts him still, though he tells no one. Stephen embraced the Technomancers' vision of controlled reality, seeking to banish this specter, but it hasn't worked.

Stephen is bright, with a twisted, sarcastic sense of humor that often puts people off. Dr. Ishida, fortunately, has no sense of humor and therefore does not notice the sarcasm. Stephen's best points, as far as Ishida is concerned, are his amazing spatial perception and eidetic memory, which allow him to assemble gene sequences in his head and thereby derive the proteins which they produce, complete with the protein configurations. This precise calculation keeps Stephen's Avatar occupied. Sometimes.

He has some skill in martial arts, melee combat with swords, and firearms. Previous experience has led him to carry a 9mm pistol to and from the lab.

Sadly, Stephen is unaware that his girlfriend Marcie is a Disciple of the Verbena. Though he has never told her about the juggling clown, Marcie knows of Stephen's Avatar and can chase it away while he sleeps. The RD is aware of Marcie's true affiliation and has plans to eliminate her in the near future. Her clone is already in progress.

Image: Stephen is of average height and trim build, with short brown hair and glasses.

Roleplaying Hints: Stephen is often sarcastic and rude, though he really doesn't mean many of the things that he

Gina Milano

says. It is possible that his Avatar sometimes speaks through him. He is more dependent upon his friends at the lab than he would like to admit, and would react poorly to any threat to them.

Gina Milano

Essence: Dynamic

Nature: Deviant

Demeanor: Avant-Garde

Methodology: FACADE Engineer

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5, Charisma 1, Manipulation 4, Appearance 5, Perception 2, Intelligence 4, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 3, Anatomy 5, Biochemistry 2, Brawl 3, Computer 2, Drive 1, Firearms 1, Genetics 2, Medicine 3, Stealth 4, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 4, Technology 3

Spheres: Life 3, Matter 2, Mind 1, Prime 3

Special Abilities: Gina regenerates nonaggravated damage at a rate of one Health Level per turn and one aggravated level per day. Regenerating aggravated damage, however, causes her such intense pain that her Dice Pools are halved until the damage is healed.

Backgrounds: Avatar 3, Dream 2, Mentor (Dr. Smith-Nevans) 3

Willpower: 5

Arete: 3

Quintessence: 8

Paradox: 5

Background: Gina is actually rather a tragic case if you hear her story before meeting her. She was one of the early test subjects for the Nanotech Life Support spell. The little machines were introduced into her body; as a result, she is difficult to injure, regenerates, etc. However, the nanotech was not attuned to her mind or Pattern, and the payoff is constant pain. This pain varies from a dull ache to searing agony, but it never goes away.

This has had several negative psychological effects. Gina is unpleasant to be around, often makes cruel comments, and displays extreme sociopathic tendencies. She is tolerated only because her PI constantly defends her.

Gina is quite talented in her chosen field, and has one of the best eyes for combinations and grafts that Smith-Nevans has ever encountered. Still, the sheer pleasure the woman seems to derive from decapitation makes the PI shudder at times.

Image: Gina is a beautiful woman with long, black hair, black eyes, and bronze skin. She has permanently fixed herself in a shapely 20-year-old body, and is the object of much desire and jealousy. Because of the amount of fuel the nanotech requires to keep running at peak efficiency, Gina can eat up to six large meals per day and never gain a pound, although the stress the pain puts on her body quickly burns the energy away.

Roleplaying Hints: Briskly efficient, Gina exhibits many of her Mentor's personality quirks around the lab. She presents a cold, businesslike manner to cover her pain and perversity. Off duty, she engages her taste for others' suffering by keeping a stable of men, whom she mistreats mercilessly.

Node for the Trio Laboratory

Dr. Ishida has set up a number of Quintessence-Absorbing Devices (see Chapter Three) throughout a nearby hospital affiliated with the lab. These machines, "donated" by a Progenitor front company, actually leech Prime life force from critically injured and terminally ill patients. After all, why let perfectly good resources go to waste?

The Tass from this Quintessence is channeled through a network patched into the labs through Correspondence magick. Another net connects the lab to the nearby medical school. The Tass flows into a still in Ishida's darkroom (see below).

EcoR (pronounced "echo ar") Lab Group

This is one of the oldest and most sizable Progenitor lab groups in North America. The central laboratories, where the Research Director is located, are based in northern Virginia. All the associated Progenitors in the Mid-Atlantic and Southern region are under this RD's control, as are three laboratories in California, three in Colorado, two in

Minnesota, one in Indiana, one in England, one in Australia and two in Japan.

These groups all collaborate on research whenever possible. EcoR supplies HIT Mark organisms to Iteration X through EcoR Japan, spikes tobacco products with Pharmacopeist products at labs based in the major tobacco companies in Georgia, Virginia, North Carolina and Kentucky, and provides clone bodies for most Progenitors in North America, since the American DNA library is in Bethesda, Maryland, well within the boundaries of control for EcoR.

The RD, Dr. Charles Reid, frequently travels among the different laboratories under his control. He also enjoys teaching at several of the universities where he holds appointments.

The EcoR Horizon Realm

This appears as a huge, white, multistoried building. The hallways are white, like a hospital. The deathly silence, which hangs like a pall, is occasionally punctuated by a scream or inhuman roar in the distance. The entire building reeks of disinfectant. The Progenitors here wear white uniforms. The Students all wear jackets with red trim, the RAs have blue trim, the PIs have black trim, and the RDs wear pure white. A strange acoustic effect mutes all sounds in the hallways; voices always sound like whispers, even if the speakers shout.

Inside the laboratories, the machines raise a racket never heard in the hallways beyond: the people working here must raise their voices above the roar of the freezers, incubators, clone tanks and other high-tech machinery. The offices, by contrast, are quite pleasant, with deep carpeting and spotless surfaces cleaned every night by Progenitor creations. Desks for Students and RAs are provided in the labs, while the PIs and RDs have offices on the upper floors of the building. Each lab on Earth has a counterpart in the Horizon Realm.

The lower levels have containment facilities for creatures, conversion labs for manipulating and combining spirits with living flesh (certain experiments involve turning humans into net-spiders), Quintessence receptacles, and Quintessence furnaces to reclaim the energy spent on failed experiments.

The EcoR Lab Group Realm may be considered a Summer Construct (see The Book of Chantries), at the height of its power and running smoothly. Few Technicians have realized that the machines run a little louder and the accidents grow more frequent each year. Resonance, if such a thing could be said to exist, is not very strong here, but no one knows exactly what the future may hold.

The Portal to the EcoR Horizon Realm

This is one of many EcoR Portals on the Tellurian. It is concealed in a floor-to-ceiling closet in the darkroom of Ishida's laboratory. Several sliding drawers block most of the view into the rear of the closet, which appears to be nothing more than a very dark cubby. These drawers can be swung out of the closet to allow entrance or egress through the Portal, but only when both doors to the darkroom and the drape across the inner door are shut and firmly in place. The drawers are spring-loaded to snap back into place and shut the door when someone enters.

Also in this room, sprouting arcane pipes and wires running behind the benches into the closet, is a Quintessence Still, which collects the energy from the medical school's Quintessence Net. This provides the Progenitors with extra Quintessence and also feeds a requisite quantity to the EcoR Horizon Realm.

The living guardian of the Portal resides within the area under the benches in the darkroom. It has a nasty tendency to sneak through the ventilator shafts of the building, snitching and consuming random sodas, sandwiches and candy bars — and, once in a while, an underclassman. It usually lives on the animals scheduled for euthanization in the animal wing, but enjoys supplementing its diet with invaders or freshmen.

"Fred," The Portal Guardian

Strength 6, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Fred

Abilities: Alertness 3, Brawl 5, Dodge 4, Intimidation 3, Stealth 4, Survival 4

Attacks: Claws/6 dice, Bite/8 dice

Special Abilities: Its saliva reduces blood clotting; this induces excessive bleeding once introduced into someone's body.

Background: "Fred," as the Guardian has come to be nicknamed, is a long, slender, serpentine creature resembling a five-foot-long ferret with scales and fur. The whiskers extend approximately three feet to either side of its face, and its eyes are extremely sensitive to light. The whiskers provide almost as much information as its eyes do, which is a good thing if it has a halogen flashlight shone in its eyes.

It is extremely friendly to anyone it recognizes as a member of the lab. Stephen has reported that "Fred" has spoken to him on occasion, but no one else believes him.

The Construct

Description

The floor plan of each lab is virtually identical. Black-topped lab benches line two walls and protrude into the center of the room in a peninsula. Two freezers roar loudly in the corner opposite the benches, and an incubator and centrifuge are placed anywhere they might fit. Two cubicles for use by Students are placed in the laboratory proper. Two small offices adjoin each lab. One is for the use of the Technicians and Research Associates, the other is for the PI of the lab. The Genegineer, Dr. Yurikazi Ishida, has the lab on one end, the Pharmacopeist, Dr. Sara Burns, has the other end lab, and the FACADE Engineer, Dr. Linda Smith-Nevans, has the center lab.

Ishida's lab also contains another small room, which he has converted to a darkroom for developing photographs. Conveniently, this room also houses the Portal to the EcoR Horizon Realm.

Purpose

Each of the three Methodologies is represented in the Trio Lab group. The Construct works mostly on marine agents. There are two motivations for this: 1) word has recently spread that a large Tradition Chantry is located off the shore of Virginia, perhaps on Assateague, Chincoteague or an associated island, or underwater, and 2) the RD has decided that performing some checks on the periodic Barrier breach in the so-called Bermuda Triangle is within the duties of EcoR and its local allies.

More immediate concerns involve a young, mobile Chantry of Tradition mages that has been nosing around near the Pharmacopeist street lab in Richmond, and some mysterious harassing phone calls the lab answering machines have been receiving after hours. The PIs try to defend themselves and their labs while churning out sufficient data and products to keep the RD happy.

The Laboratory Staff

There is one Technician in each lab: Angela Morten works for Dr. Ishida, Sanjay Koustubhan for Dr. Burns, and Sharon Bailey for Dr. Smith-Nevans. The Technicians match their employers' temperaments relatively well. Angela has just graduated from college and is anxiously seeking to become a Progenitor. Sanjay was a party dude in college, and so has a grip on the culture in which Burns' people mix. Sharon is a housewife and mother of four, quite happy working for Dr. Smith-Nevans. None of them ever questions the orders of the PIs, and all try to the best of their ability to meet any demands of the RAs.

Each Technician has three dots in a combat Ability: Angela carries a cane sword that she has acquired and Sanjay uses the balisong butterfly knives he always carries, while Sharon keeps a Colt Python in her (large) handbag. They otherwise have the standard stats for Technicians.

Dr. Burns has a variable number of street operatives (between 10 and 15) working out of her Richmond lab. They have the average Pharmacopeist street operative stats, and are well armed.

External Relations

The Trio Lab Group maintains cordial relations with many of the other EcoR facilities, though the RD of the English lab carries some old grudge against Dr. Smith-Nevans. Many other Progenitors are scared witless by Dr. Burns, but any objections they have are kept under the table. A Cult of Ecstasy cabal working out of Richmond's bohemian Fan district is aware of the Trio Lab Group, but is afraid to move against it at this point. An earlier assault left two of its members dead and a third in prison.

A large Richmond street gang is preparing for a war against Dr. Burns' Acolytes. The gang members might think twice if they knew the truth about their rivals — then again, they might not.

Other enemies include a vampire reputed to live in nearby Hollywood Cemetery, a local animal-rights group, and Marcie's (girlfriend of Stephen Thundran) three-member coven. The animal-rights activists keep a vigilant eye on the lab (although they are unaware of its true nature), while the coven bides its time until Marcie can persuade Stephen to leave his "job."
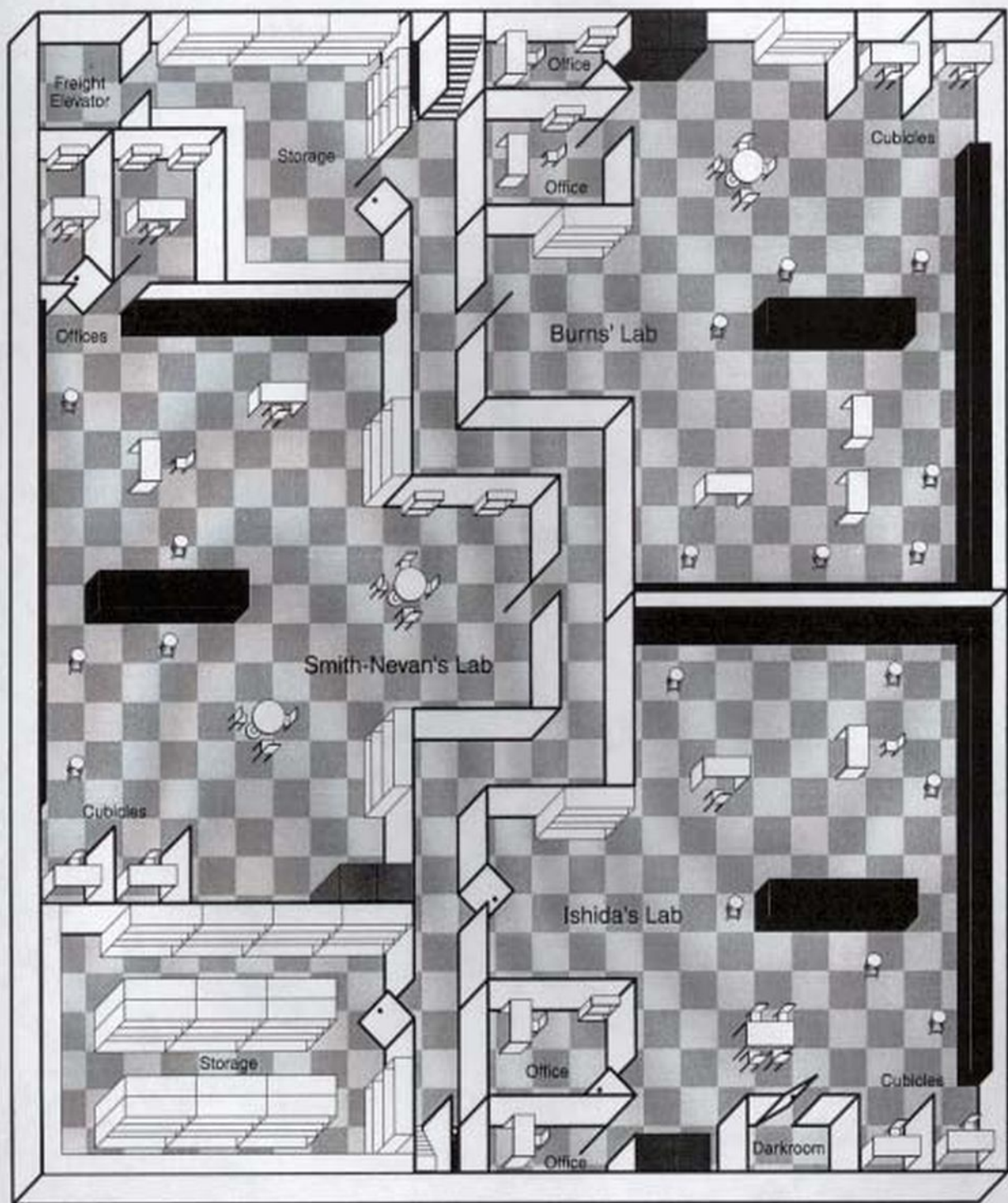
Status and Reputation

The Commonwealth Trio Laboratory is a small local operation, with little real clout in the grand scheme of things. Given time, the three partners may carve a place for themselves in the EcoR lab group, but for now the lab maintains a low profile and a shady reputation, thanks to Dr. Burns, Gina and Chain.

Status: 1

Reputation: 2 (respected with reservations)

MAIN LABORATORIES

THIRD FLOOR

Freight Elevator

Storage

Office

Office

Cubicles

Offices

Burns' Lab

Smith-Nevan's Lab

Cubicles

Ishida's Lab

Storage

Office

Office

Darkroom

Cubicles

5 Feet

Suggested Reading

Notes for the Storyteller

For fiction in the realms of biology and genetics, the authors suggest such books as Michael Crichton's *Jurassic Park* and *The Andromeda Strain*, and Frank Herbert's *The White Plague*. Also excellent are Patricia Cornwell's mystery novels, such as *Post-Mortem*.

If you are interested in easy-to-read background material on the current state of genetics and biology, the authors suggest any essays or books by Stephen Jay Gould, an extremely talented and readable scientist, and strongly recommend *The Cartoon Guide to Genetics* by Larry Gonick and Mark Wheelis. This last book offers jargon, concepts and history in a humorous setting, though some of the actual information is somewhat obsolete; it is 10 years old.

If you want to use current genetic research to give your chronicle an authentic background, your best bet is to find a biology/genetics student or professor who is willing to talk to you about it. Genetics is a science that evolves faster and faster every day; discoveries constantly leap out of the DNA. The possibilities at this point seem endless, and, with the popularity of *Jurassic Park*, articles on genetic speculation are easy to find.

One might almost suspect a conspiracy of some kind.....