



MAGE
THE ASCENSION



**DARK
PACK**

AWAKEN
Change your world
BELIEVE
And that world changes you as well
ASCEND
Who, then, will you become?
MAGE
The magick is you.

MAGE

THE ASCENSION

Mage the Ascension

LEGAL AND CREDITS

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Introduction

*Surely a god hath set his lions loose
And laughs to hear them as they rage afar.*

— CHARLES LELAND, ARADIA: GOSPEL OF THE WITCHES

Mage the Ascension 5th Edition is a while away, but the world of Mage in the World of Darkness setting is one of the most compelling and its freeform magic is an absolute blast. Given the updated game mechanics **V5**, **H5** and **W5** brought to the World of Darkness line-up and that **M20** is over 650 pages long (not including the supplemental spell guide) it is in dire need some a simplification and modernization is the vein that **V5** brought to **VtM**. That's where these **M5** rules home in.

These **M5** Homebrew rules are an attempt to simplify and update the core **M20** premise with the core elements of the **WoD 5** mechanic updates along with some minor tweaks to keep up with the general metaplot.

Whenever something exclusive to Technocrats is exemplified in this book it will be colored **Ice Blue**.



CONCEPTS



Mages are people who channel energy to fuel spells. These spells are governed by spheres which are the areas and components of magic. Each mage is invested their powers by a particular entity that allows the mage to harness these abilities.

Lexicon

ARETE/ENLIGHTENMENT: A measure of the mage's enlightenment and connection to their Avatar.

AVATAR/GENIUS: The portion of the awakened's soul which grants them the ability to perform magick. Many experience their avatar as a separate entity.

AWAKENED: An individual or group who are aware of magick or the supernatural are considered to be awakened and are no longer part of, or be considered, Sleepers.

BACKLASH: Backlash is what happens when a mage pushes Paradox too far and reality catches up with them. This can range from being merely damaging to the mage, to debilitating, to banishment to a Paradox Realm, or even result in manifestations of Paradox. Generally, backlash will go the simplest route to undo or balance the scales the mage has tipped. A mage throwing lightning might be wracked by electrical energy, a mage trying to view the future might be struck blind, and a mage trying to reverse time might be stuck in Groundhog Day.

BURN: Direct damage caused by Backlash.

CONSENSUS: The collectively belief about reality that all Sleepers share. Anything that violates the shared understanding of the unawakened Sleepers goes against the Consensus and may generate Paradox. This typically happens when a mage exerts their will upon reality to cast spells counter to the Consensus belief. Notable local variations in the Consensus do exist in that what people believe in one area and another.

DISASSOCIATION: The risk a mage runs when reality conflicts with their will, can result in them gaining Quiet.

ENLIGHTENED SCIENCE: Alteration of apparent reality models based upon advanced scientific principles and understanding; in other words, technomagick.

ESSENCE/EIDOLON: Each Avatar has an Essence. These describe the Avatar's nature, as well

as the way in which the Avatar seeks Ascension. An Avatar's Essence usually, though not always, complements the mage's own desires and outlook on magic and life.

MAGE: A human who uses magick thanks to the mystic connection with their Avatar to create spells. They have the ability learn any Sphere and adapt their magic to fit the situation.

PARADOX: When a mage exerts their Will against the Consensus in order to change reality to cast spells, they may generate Paradox. Paradox is the difference between what the Consensus expect and what the mage made happen and it builds up around the mage until it either dissipates over time or 'grounds' through the mage via what is known as a backlash.

QUIET: Quiet is a magical delusion that distorts afflicted mages' views of reality. Each is associated with one particular type of Resonance, and indicates a mage has too closely associated with one particular branch of the Metaphysic Trinity.

QUINTESSENCE/PRIMAL ENERGY: The raw material of reality from which everything is created and sustained.

RESONANCE: The type of Quiet a mage suffers.

SLEEPERS: All human mortals who are unaware of the supernatural are Sleepers. These sleepers subconsciously influence and possibly even sustain our reality with the shared Consensus.

SPELL: The combination of a mage's powers in a Sphere or Spheres empowered by their Arete to inflict their will upon reality.

SPHERE: The 9 areas of magick. Each one covers a different building block of magical application and theory.

TECHNOCRAT: A measure of the mage's enlightenment and connection to their Avatar.

WISDOM: The quality of understanding a mage possesses about the proper balance of magic and the mundane. Wisdom is hard to acquire and maintain when practicing The Art, but it is well worth the effort, for many mages believe that only the Wise can attain the Final Key to the Ascension.

Stats

There are several new stats that are equivalent to stats from V5 mechanically, and some that only share aspects while staying true to M20.

ARETE: Arete is a measure of your enlightenment and raw magical strength.

- Similar to Blood Potency in V5, limiting the level of your spheres.

PARADOX: Paradox is a measure of the mage's current paradox count. It is rated from 0 upwards and is mostly gained when casting spells.

- Sharing aspects of humanity and hunger, Paradox increasing causes increasing risk on casting but also a risk to your character's Quiet.

QUINTESSENCE: Quintessence is a measure how much quintessence you have stored. This is the raw fabric of creation and can be used to empower or counter spells. Typically, you can hold up to your Arete value in quintessence and it can only be regenerated by meditating at a Node. Meditating and magically absorbing more from a Node can allow you to hold up to twice your Arete instead (this would require a Prime spell). Quintessence is the polar opposite of Paradox and as such as your Paradox count increases your Quintessence starts to be neutralized by it. If your Paradox score increases to higher than 10 minus your Quintessence it starts to remove Quintessence on a 1 for 1 basis. So, if you had 3 Quintessence your Paradox could rise as high as 7 without effect but an increase to 8 would reduce your Quintessence to 2. You also may not raise your Quintessence beyond 10 minus your Paradox by any means.

- Also tracked on the Paradox meter, this has no direct comparator in V5.

QUIET: Quiet is how well your character is managing to differentiate the real world from their ability to influence it. As it gets higher your character's smallest thoughts start to affect the world around them in terrible ways.

- Used directly in dice pools as Hunger is in V5, it also acts similar to Humanity for long term character viability. Once a Mage reaches 6 Quiet that's it, they're an unplayable NPC

much like when Humanity gets too low in V5.

- **Instability Failure** is the equivalent of Bestial Failure, and **Shock Critical** are the same for Messy Critical.

WISDOM: The ability to balance the needs of this world with a yearning for the Ascension. Also called "Sophia."

- Acts equals to Humanity for long term character viability, like Quiet. But has effects on your character like Humanity for a Vampire. Ranging from 0 to 10.





PATH TO ASCENSION

For Nature, united with Man, has brought forth a wonder of wonders.

— THE CORPUS HERMETICUM, BOOK I

Quiet

In M₅ Quiet takes the place of Hunger in dice rolls, it is a pool that goes from 0 to 5 and which can only be reduced under the most exceptional of conditions. Although it replaces dice in dice pools like Hunger it changes much like Humanity from V₅. It represents the Mage becoming twisted and disassociated with reality around them as paradox warps their perception.

All Mages have an Essence; this is the broad category that their Avatars fall under and the general drive. Dynamic, Pattern, Primordial, or Questing. These all tend to but not always evolve a Quiet related to their nature, Madness, Denial, Morbidity, or in the case of Questing, any one of the three, called a Resonance.

As quiet goes up there are additional knock-on effects depending on the Resonance of the Quiet. Regardless of the type, once Quiet hits 6 the character becomes a Marauder, wholly given over to their quiet and unsuitable to being a player character anymore. They become an NPC under the storyteller's control.

See more about Quiet in M₂₀ page 554.

Gaining Quiet

Characters can gain Quiet in some ways:

- **Backlash Disassociation:** Occurs every time you rolls zero successes in a Paradox Backlash Roll of 10 or more. If the character disassociates their Quiet immediately increases by 1. Backlashing a high paradox can warp a person's mind.
- **Disassociation Roll:** In some cases the Storyteller may ask a special test. Roll a number of dice equal to the unfilled dots of Paradox on the tracker. The minimum number of dice in a Disassociation Roll is one. Difficulty is 1, if results in no successes, the Mage's mind has lost, the character must gains 1 point of Quiet.
- **Mitigating Backlash:** As detailed in the Paradox Backlash Mitigation section.
- **Desperation Power:** You can receive a +1 in one Sphere for one Spellcasting with a +1 Quiet as cost.

Losing Quiet

With a lot of effort, roleplay and Willpower, it's possible for a mage to will herself sane. In practical terms, the player takes Willpower aggravated damage equals your Composure or Resolve (whichever is higher) and roleplays out the process of asserting her character's sanity, reducing 1 Quiet Dice.

Other characters can try to help a mage recover from Quiet; doing so, however, typically involves some powerful roleplaying, a few social or Knowledge-based rolls, and an extended roll in which the healing character uses Mind 4/ Prime 4 to drive out the Paradox within the suffering mage's mind. As a base guideline, assume that the

and replace each point of Paradox in the Quiet-ridden mage's pool with two points of the healer's own Quintessence, then uses a Mind 4/ Prime 4 effect (difficulty equals Quiet of the target +1). The particulars of such curing efforts are left to the individual players and Storytellers. This method heals all Quiet from Mage and is the only method that reduce Quiet below 1.

Whatever it takes, however, the cure should NOT be easy. After all, if fixing Quiet were easy, no mage would fear this madness... and yet, all sensible mages do.

Quiet Dice

Quiet Dice replace dice in all dice pools with exception of tracker pools up to the maximum dice pool possible, like in V5.

- ◆ Failure, Instability Failure if the test fails and Paradox Backlash (1)
- ◆ Failure (2-5)
- ◆ Success (6-9)
- ◆ Success, Shock Critical if part of a critical win (10)

Quiet Dice can never be rerolled using Willpower.

Instability Failure

- **Madness (Dynamic):** The character over reacts to a small stimulus and reacts as if something new has been introduced and which occupies their attention. For the remainder of the scene, they take a penalty to all rolls equal to their Quiet to interact with anything other than the hallucination.
- **Denial (Static):** The character refuses to acknowledge something in the scene as existing. For the remainder of the scene, they treat the target as if it didn't. When directly confronted by knowledge that the subject of their denial is real, they must make a willpower roll with a

difficulty equal to their Quiet to acknowledge it.

- **Morbidity (Entropic):** The characters failures are taken out on sleepers nearby. Missed shots hit onlookers, driving checks end up with them ploughing into pedestrians, and social interactions end up with them insulting or attacking the recipient.

Shock Critical

- **Madness (Dynamic):** The characters success comes with a side effect as the character changes the world around them. The character might use the crafting tools as part of the design; the characters drive might leave flaming skid marks making them easy to follow.
- **Denial (Static):** The characters success comes with a side effect as the character see's details and designs in their success that entrance them. They become unresponsive to new stimuli and do not process any new. The mage cannot voluntarily spend willpower for the remainder of the scene. Additional instances cause willpower damage.
- **Morbidity (Entropic):** The characters success comes with a side effect as the characters callousness comes to the fore. Attempting to knock out an enemy kills them; taking a drive short cut hits pedestrians on the pavement; medicine involves an unwilling donor.

The Delusion Spiral

QUIET 1: FAINT

- **Passive Effect:** None.
- **Madness (Dynamic):** The mage revels in changing their appearance and routine often.
- **Denial (Static):** The mage set into certain patterns. Getting quite irritable when interrupted.
- **Morbidity (Entropic):** The mages appearance takes on a morbid air.

QUIET 2: SUBTLE

- **Passive Effect:** Roll 1 less dice for backlash (to a

minimum of 1).

- **Madness (Dynamic):** The character takes a penalty to all Awareness, Investigation, and Insight rolls as you imagine clues that aren't there. However, you gain a bonus on all craft, and performance rolls. The amount equals half your Quiet rounded up.
- **Denial (Static):** You become entirely forgettable. Good for passing unnoticed but bad for making an impression. You suffer a negative penalty to social checks but a bonus to pass through an area unseen, unrecognized or leave no trace against sleepers or mundane security (security tapes mysterious fuzz, people's mind draws a blank, etc.). The amount equals half your Quiet rounded up.
- **Morbidity (Entropic):** The character's morbid fascination and gaunt appearance startle those around. You get a negative penalty on all non-intimidation social checks but bonus to all rolls related to corpses, ghosts, torture or intimidation. The amount equals half your Quiet rounded up.

QUIET 3: NOTICEABLE

- **Passive Effect:** None.
- **Madness (Dynamic):** You gain Echoes 1, or increase your existing Echoes by 1, as patterns tend to shift around you.
- **Denial (Static):** You gain Curse 1, or increase your existing Curse by 1, as lifts fail to respond to your touch, taxis fail to notice you to stop, etc.
- **Morbidity (Entropic):** You gain Echoes 1, or increase your existing Echoes by 1, as milk sours in your presence, plants wither, and fruit rots.

QUIET 4: STRONG

- **Passive Effect:** Roll 1 additional dice for spell-casting.
- **Madness (Dynamic):** The effects if the character's Instability Failure become manifest. The hallucination becomes real for the scene as if cast by a spell at a magnitude roughly equal to the character's Arete.



- **Denial (Static):** The effects of the character's Instability Failure become manifest. The subject of their denial becomes real for the scene as if cast by a spell at a magnitude roughly equal to the character's Arete.
- **Morbidity (Entropic):** The effect of the character's Instability Failure becomes needless and wanton death and destruction. The destruction caused is wider ranging and more deliberately callous, leaving Jhor taint behind.

QUIET 5: OVERWHELMING

- **Passive Effect:** You now roll 2 less dice for backlash (to a minimum of 1).
- **Madness (Dynamic):** Add +2 to the magnitude of their Strong Quiet.
- **Denial (Static):** Add +2 to the magnitude of their Strong Quiet.
- **Morbidity (Entropic):** The character can no longer use Quintessence gained without the sacrifice of a living being. They permanently lose 1 point from their health tracker.

QUIET 6+

- **Passive Effect:** No longer a player character.
- **Madness (Dynamic):** Marauder.
- **Denial (Static):** Drone.
- **Morbidity (Entropic):** The character can no longer use Quintessence gained without the sacrifice of a living being. They permanently lose 1 point from their health tracker.

Paradox

When spells are cast a Mage courts gaining Paradox, something which can be decidedly unhealthy for them as reality rebels

SITUATION	DICE POOL
Coincidental or Failure in Spellcasting	0
Vulgar	1
Vulgar with Witnesses	2
Instability Failure Coincidental	Highest Sphere
Instability Failure Vulgar	Highest Sphere +1
Instability Failure Vulgar with Witnesses	2x Highest Sphere +2
In a Sanctum/Laboratory	+1 or -1 depends on your Sect
Other Modifiers	Reaching/Storyteller decides

against the Mage's attempt to bend it against the consensus.

Paradox Generation

After you cast a spell make a Paradox Check: roll a number of dice depending on whether it is Coincidental, Vulgar, Vulgar with Witnesses or Instability Failure. Add the number of failures to your paradox track, if you exceed 10 you immediately backlash.

Paradox Backlash

Whenever you rolls a 1 at Quiet Dice when Spellcasting or your Paradox reach 10, it immediately backlashes. This can take many forms, although the most common is physical or willpower damage (depending on the sphere used in the spell) (known as the Burn) as reality reacts against you. When this happens roll normal dice equal to your paradox (if you exceed 10 then add the number by which you exceeded 10 as automatic successes of Backlash).

Each type of dice rolled can have different effects during Paradox Backlash:

- | | |
|---|--|
| (1-5) | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No backlash ■ No discharge ■ Possible Backlash Disassociation | |
| (6-9) | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Backlash ■ Discharge | |
| (10) | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No backlash ■ Discharge | |

The number of successes indicates how much paradox is backlashing (10s don't backlash); immediately reduce your paradox by the discharge amount (as such it will always reduce to 10 or lower). The backlash score is then spent by the Storyteller in a number of ways described in the table below. In addition, if the backlash is caused when

PARADOX BACKLASH ROLL

COST	NO. OF BACKLASH	EFFECT
REQUIRED		
1	1	Burn 1
1	1	Trivial Paradox Flaw
2	4	Minor Paradox Flaw
3	6	Significant Paradox Flaw
3	6	Paradox Spirit Visitation
5	9	Permanent Paradox 1
4	9	Severe Paradox Flaw
4	9	Banishment to a Paradox Realm
10	11	Drastic Paradox Flaw

paradox was over 5 then any Burn damage will be aggravated instead of superficial.

Regardless of Paradox Backlash, you can only receive one Paradox Flaw for each Backlash.

WISDOM	PARADOX FLAW
Enlightened (Wisdom 8-10)	One Scene
Understanding (Wisdom 4-7)	One Chapter/Day
Falling (Wisdom 1-3)	One Story/Mont
Fallen One (Wisdom 0)	One Chronicle/Year

A Paradox Flaw's duration depends on the Wisdom tier of the caster who invokes it.

Backlash Mitigation

Characters can choose to mitigate burn during backlash in several ways. If a character wishes, they may turn all aggravated burn damage into superficial, or negate all superficial burn damage entirely by voluntarily taking a point of Quiet. A character can choose to take 2 points of Quiet and take both options. They may also reduce burn damage (of either type) by 2 by taking a point of permanent paradox. This can only be chosen once per backlash.

Paradox Delay

When you trigger backlash, you can delay the backlash until the end of the scene by spending willpower. This keeps your paradox at the level it is even if it currently exceeds 10. If you trigger backlash again this scene it cannot be delayed again this way and backlashes all your paradox without rolling dice, each is treated as a success.

Paradox Discharge

Every day the mage does not use magick (other than tier 1 sensory abilities) they may roll one dice. For each success they lose a point of paradox.

Focus

Paradigm

A model of reality that reflects a system of belief. (See M2o page 565)

Practice

With regards to mages and magick, practice reflects the activities and rituals a mage uses to focus her beliefs; also known as a magickal style. (See M2o page 565)

Tools (Instruments in M2o)

Every mage can use tools to help shape the world around them. For some these are wands, pendants, or Latin chanting. For others this can be new age NLP techniques, sonic screwdrivers, or sprinkles of metal powders.

As they gain in power, they can employ more and more Tools to focus their power. The only exception are technocrat characters, who always need at least 1 tool. They don't believe in magick but in enlightened science.

Some examples for traditionally inclined mages include hand gestures, chanting in a dead

ARETE	TOOLS THAT CAN BE USED	
	MAGES	TECHNOCRATS
1	1	2
2	2	3
3	3	4
4	4	5
5+	5	5

language, wands, staffs, and pendants or similar. These should all be personal to the mage (such as a staff carved from an ancient tree by the mage) and must be displayed or active in some way (tattoos being displayed, wand being manipulated, words being spoken etc. Generally, this only affects gameplay when the mage is restricted from using them (chanting by gagging, hand gestures by being bound, wands by having them taken away, etc.).

Each Tool must be associated with a type of Magick, for example: damage, healing, perception, control, etc. If the Tool is used for another purpose it will not give any bonus.

A mage may want to use as many Tool as possible in her spellcasting, especially for powerful acts of magick. She can, however, only access so many pieces of Awakening knowledge at once. To reflect this, the number of Tools she can apply to a given spellcasting pool is limited by her Arete/Enlightenment (see the table above). If she uses one item in many ways, each individual use counts as one Tool for this limit.

It takes time to draw upon the mystik sympathy of objects and actions. A mage can draw upon one Tool as a full action in a turn, and cannot attack only defends; each further Tool extends the casting time of instant spells by a turn, the Spellcasting roll happens on the turn after the last Tool used. Ritual spells already take long enough to incorporate as many Tools as the mage is able and willing to use. Someone who wants to interrupt an involved casting thus has plentiful opportunities to snatch away mystic items, block out the light of the full moon, or just shoot the mage in the head.

SYSTEM: Each item or action used as a Tools adds +1 die to the spellcasting pool.

Arete

ENLIGHTENMENT for Technocrats

Excellence. No other word typifies the ultimate goal of a mage than that. No mage, regardless of affiliation, is just another person. Each mage is excellent in his or her way. And so Arete – correctly pronounced Ahr-eh-TAY, though often rendered AIR-eh-tay – epitomizes the core of True Magick and those who employ it. Technocrats prefer the more straightforward **Enlightenment**, or simply Excellence.

System

- Your Arete defines your magick's potential. You cannot have a Sphere ranked higher than your Arete rating.
- Determines the maximum amount of Quintessence you can hold. Prime Sphere and Advantages can change this value.
- Determines how much Tools can be used for Spellcasting, see the table above.
- To raise your Arete, your character needs to undergo a **Seeking**. This vision quest forces him to face and overcome inner obstacles. If and when he does so, he grows more enlightened; at that point, you can buy another dot of Arete to reflect his growing excellence.

Wisdom

The ability to balance the needs of this world with a yearning for the Ascension. The Awakened have seen a glimpse of The Art, which makes them what they are. Wisdom is the quality keeping them from mistaking that glimpse as the whole truth. In many ways, Wisdom is acknowledging how much a mage doesn't understand or know. It's the drive to keep searching, the ability to remain humble while wielding the power of the gods. Mages failing to comprehend these lessons fall victim to their own hubris.

Hubris

We wage our Ascension War for the fate of our world. We wage it for our own survival. We wage it out of hubris, the fatal pride that leads to destruction. The biggest crater in our Fragile Path, hubris insists that because we can do a thing, we should do it... because after all, it is our right to do it. Reality is in our hands, so it's our duty to make our world a better place with it – better, of course, by the standards we decide.

And that's where the cracks begin.

It often starts with people healing the sick and bringing fire and doing things that cry out desperately to be done. And that's good. But when you become convinced that only you know what's good or not, that fire ignites a holocaust. Robots march, and witches curse, and lightning storms flash down Main Street.

And we, the Awakened Ones, have been doing that kind of shit for centuries.

In the name of Ascension, the grand ideal, we make slaves and corpses of those in our way. The Technocracy gets the blame, but any so-called Ascension Warrior is guilty.

We fear, often rightly, and so we fight. And kill. And die. Every so often, we Ascend. All too often, though, we burn.

Magick is our gift, responsibility, and curse. We can use it to light lamps or set fire to the world. And we do both those things, and more besides.

And this is why, in the grand scheme of things, we're all such Fools, dancing at the edge of transcendence and oblivion.

When a mage acts against Wisdom, it's called an "act of hubris," because the equilibrium of the Tapestry is momentarily obscured by the mage's own ego. These are also called "acts of blindness," because a mage is blinded to the repercussions of his desires. Acts of hubris are sins against the Morality of Wisdom.

Hubris replaces Stains from V5 (page 241), they work in the same way however. You gain Hubris by violating Chronicle Tenets or your beliefs, your Convictions about Magick, and what you consider



the right path to Ascension.

Hubris also corrodes your Wisdom when a loved one is hurt because of your Magick, your Quiet, or your mistakes.

It's not just because you CAN DO IT that you SHOULD DO IT. And an enlightened mage knows the difference.

- **Wisdom 8–10, High / Enlightened:** These highest levels of Wisdom force the mage to walk a careful line.
- **Wisdom 4–7, Medium / Understanding:** Most experienced and stable mages fall into this range of Wisdom.
- **Wisdom 1–3, Low / Falling:** Hubris of this level concerns all mages. A mage at this precipice could be lost to his magic at any time.
- **Wisdom 0:** A character with no Wisdom is forever lost. His hubris has overcome him, and he's become one of **The Fallen**. He cannot control his magic; it controls him.

A character with any Hubris marked on their Harmony track at the end of the session makes a Judgement Test (in the same way of Remorse Test described in V5 page 241). If his player fails, the mage grows a bit more callous and Prudel, losing a dot of Wisdom.

If a character's Wisdom drops to 0, he can no longer be played. He might feel compelled to enter the Nephandi's Cauls.

Convictions

Convictions are different for mages. Rather than being human values that vampires cling to after death, for an Awakened they are beliefs that guide the mage in your Path to Ascension, whatever that path may be. Start with two Convictions related to your Paradigm and Practice (your way to do Magick) and one additional of your choice.

Chronicle Tenets work the same as in V5 (page 174) being just thematically different.

If the Conviction or Tenet was violated in the service of another Conviction, reduce the Hubris gained by one or more.

ACTION	HUBRIS
Killing a human needlessly	+1
Destroying an Avatar	+3
Touchstone damaged	+1
Touchstone damaged by your actions	+2
Touchstone destroyed	+3
Touchstone destroyed by your actions	+3





SECTS

As he entered the cave, they heard a voice from inside: "This is the man who shook the earth, who made the kingdoms tremble!"

— DANIEL C. MATT, “THE WEDDING CELEBRATION” FROM THE ESSENTIAL KABBALAH

Mages are split roughly in three different factions. The Traditions, the Technocracy, and the Disparates. This doesn't include the Nephandi, or the individualistic Marauders as both are unsuited for player characters.

Affiliation

Pick your affiliation Sect from Traditions, Disparates or Technocracy (with Storyteller discretion).

SYSTEM: You gain a dot in one of their affinity spheres, gain a extra specialty related to your Sect and also add a Conviction that is based on their idea of Ascension.

Traditions

The Traditions are a collection of magical traditions united by a common theory of magical Spheres, as well as a common purpose: the defense of magic and myth against the oppressive, static and safe Technocratic paradigm of predictability and control.

Disparates

The Disparate Alliance is a created network of independent Crafts that have chosen to take the matters of the Ascension War into their own hands, independently from the Technocratic Union or the Council of Nine Mystick Traditions. In these desperate times of the Post-Truth Age of Nephandi and Marauders, many Crafts have joined the Traditions.

Technocracy

To the Technocracy, they are not at all related to other magickal Traditions. Enlightened Science works because it is tested and proven, not because someone simply believes its working. As they spread their craft across the world, working out kinks, improving their models, etc. The result is that many of their devices can become consensual and usable by Sleepers. Hyperscience, also called vulgar Technomancy, is seen as beta testing before the device can be used by the public.



*Devotees
Harmonious
Warring Fists*



AKASHAYANA

Mystical martial artists whose meditations grant them insight.

AFFILIATION: Traditions.

AFFINITY SPHERES: Mind or Life.

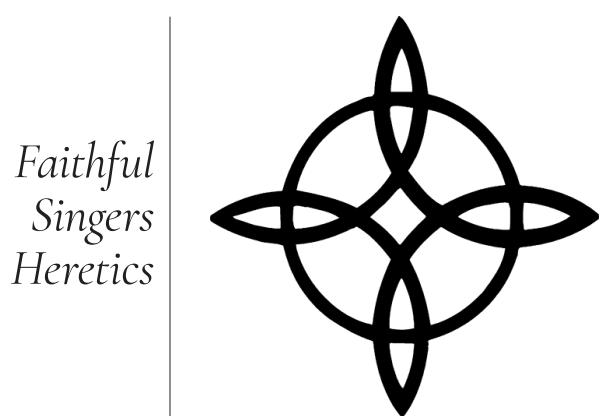
ORGANIZATION: The Brotherhood is essentially led by the **Kannagara**, monastic ascetics of the Phoenix Robe sect. Today, however, lots of power resides with the **Shi-Ren** (“Benevolent Aristocracy”), a faction of politically active traditionalists who want to expand Akashic influence in world affairs. Tradition mages in the West most often encounter warriors of the **Vajrapani** (derisively called “Warring Fists”) and the eclectic iconoclasts of the **Li-Hai**, who seek enlightenment through heroic experience.

INITIATION: At temples, ashrams, and dojos across the world, Sifus (Masters) and Sihings (Adepts) accept disciples who display open minds and serious purpose. Each teacher typically teaches only one pupil at a time. Akashic doctrine maintains that every person must find his or her way to enlight-

enment; as a result, Akashayana receive very little guidance or encouragement. Many frustrated pupils give up on this Path; those who persist, however, cultivate impeccable fitness of mind, heart, and body.

FOCUS: “Magick” is actually self-perfection and cosmic harmony. To master such Arts in the proper Way (Do), a person must expand awareness in all things, clarify thoughts, focus the body, and subdue emotional confusion. Asian alchemy, craftsmanship, faith, yoga, social dominion, and martial arts training allow a Brother to channel life energy (chi) toward astounding feats of physical, mental, and energetic achievement. As a result, common paradigms include Bring Back the Golden Age, Everything’s an Illusion, It’s All Good, and occasionally Might is Right.





Celestial Chorus

United by their efforts to touch the Divine as well as their belief in the One and Prime from which all things originate.

AFFILIATION: Traditions.

AFFINITY SPHERES: Prime; Forces, or Spirit.

ORGANIZATION: Hierarchical since the Roman Republic, the Chorus is led by its **Curia**, a 17-member synod of Chancellors and associated finance officers, tribunes, notaries, and liturgical commissioners. The most respected (or best connected) Chancellor holds the ceremonial position of **Pontifex Maximus**. Each Chancellor commands a territorial staff of **Exarchs**, sometimes called bishops. Exarchs supervise local leaders called **Presbyters** (priests or elders), who present this Tradition's human face.

INITIATION: Presbyters seek recruits through social outreach in church organizations. Some worshippers spontaneously Awaken through powerful religious experiences, particularly those involv-

ing music. Each new apprentice, or Catechumen, undertakes rigorous instruction from an experienced mage called a **Præcept**. Like many forms of religious training, this instruction involves matters of doctrine, personal discipline, and – obviously – lots of singing lessons.

FOCUS: The Arts flow not from personal achievement or intent but from faith, unity, and harmony with the Divine Will. Singing – especially many voices joined in harmony – provides this Tradition's oldest and most important instrument. Chorister magick tends to manifest in light, fire, warmth, harmonic vibrations, and sublime music. Faith and High Ritual form the core of Celestial Chorus practices, so the group's paradigms include **Creation is Divine and Alive**, **Divine Order** and **Earthly Chaos**, and, of course, **It's All Good – Have Faith**.



*Seers
Artists
Bohemians
Sahajiya*



CULT OF ECSTASY

Seers who transcend boundaries and limitations through sacred experience.

AFFILIATION: Traditions.

AFFINITY SPHERES: Time; Life, or Mind

ORGANIZATION: Informal and nomadic, this Tradition's loose structure reflects its focus on individual transcendence. It has several subsects but few leaders as such. Cultists tend to congregate at festivals, raves, concerts, and other tribal gatherings, mingling with "sleepwalkers" who tread the line between Sleeper culture and full Awakening. For the most part, this group favors **influence** over **organization**. Each Ecstatic is encouraged to follow his or her own Path, so long as that Path doesn't violate the sacred nature of other people. The only rigid element in the Sahajiya Path is the **Code of Ananda** and its emphasis on compassionate respect. Everything else is negotiable.

INITIATION: Five Steps to Ecstasy: 1: Surrender your fear; 2: Focus your intentions; 3. Open yourself; 4. Attune yourself; 5: Repeat Step 1. To help a new Ecstatic into Step 1, a mentor challenges that person to leap beyond his fears and then use his intentions to fly instead of fall. Diksham – the mentor/ student covenant – provides a safe space for the initiate to learn magick and control. Often, mentors and students become lovers, opening a channel of intimacy and trust that goes beyond mere sex. That's not a rule, though, and compulsion is considered the worst sin an Ecstatic can commit.

After initiation and initial training, a mentor often pulls away from her student, trusting him to find his own way. She'll provide advice or secondary helpers, but she refuses to become a crutch. In order to grow along this Path, a mage must shape his own triumphs and mistakes.

Focus: "Get out of your own way" sums up the Ecstatic paradigm. To touch the Lakashim ("Divine Pulse"), a person must blow open the doors of inhibition and fear. Magick is the communion between a focused mind and the Lakashim – a dance of possibilities directed by crazy wisdom. To perform it, an Ecstatic guides Ojas (life force) energy with conscious but flexible intentions. Ideally, a mage operates in a flux state in which neither time nor inhibitions block the life force – aware of what she's doing and yet open enough to do anything.

The Cult's infamous substances and stimulations are meant to blow open mental doors and blast away obstacles to Enlightenment. That's the theory, anyway. In reality, those same tools can become obstacles in their own right. Smart Ecstatics, then, keep shifting their tools around to avoid stagnation and dependence on "the same old shit." Crazy wisdom is the core of this group's many practices, which include everything from gutter magick, yoga, and martial arts to cybernetic hyper-tech. And so, paradigms include **Creation's Divine and Alive, Everything is Chaos, It's All Good**, and quite often **Everything's an Illusion**.



*Medicine-People
Spirit-Workers
Unbroken Folk*



K HA'VADI

Individuals who practice shamanism, communing with spirits as part of their magic and existing as intermediaries between the Mortal World and the Spirit World. Kha'vadi means “those whose vision hapes the world”.

AFFILIATION: Traditions.

AFFINITY SPHERES: Spirit; Force, Life, or Matter.

ORGANIZATION: Although the shamanic Path tends to be solitary, medicine-people can be quite social. And so, this Tradition combines a respect for autonomy with the supportive network of a tribe. For centuries, many Kha'vadi preferred to wander their own roads; in recent years, however, the group has returned to the community-centered focus of many pre-imperial cultures. Separation, after all, has been a liability. With stronger bonds between them, the Kha'vadi share a greater voice.

In previous ages, Kha'vadi met in distant corners of the spirit world – even forming Realms where the Old Ways remained untouched. Recently, however, the Unbroken Folk have turned their focus to the material world, meeting in both rural and urban settings, often gathering at pow-wows, hip-hop shows, block parties, and neotribal festivals. Social media groups, too, provide meeting grounds for the new breed of Kha'vadi. In all cases, the previous solitude has shifted toward a more social focus.

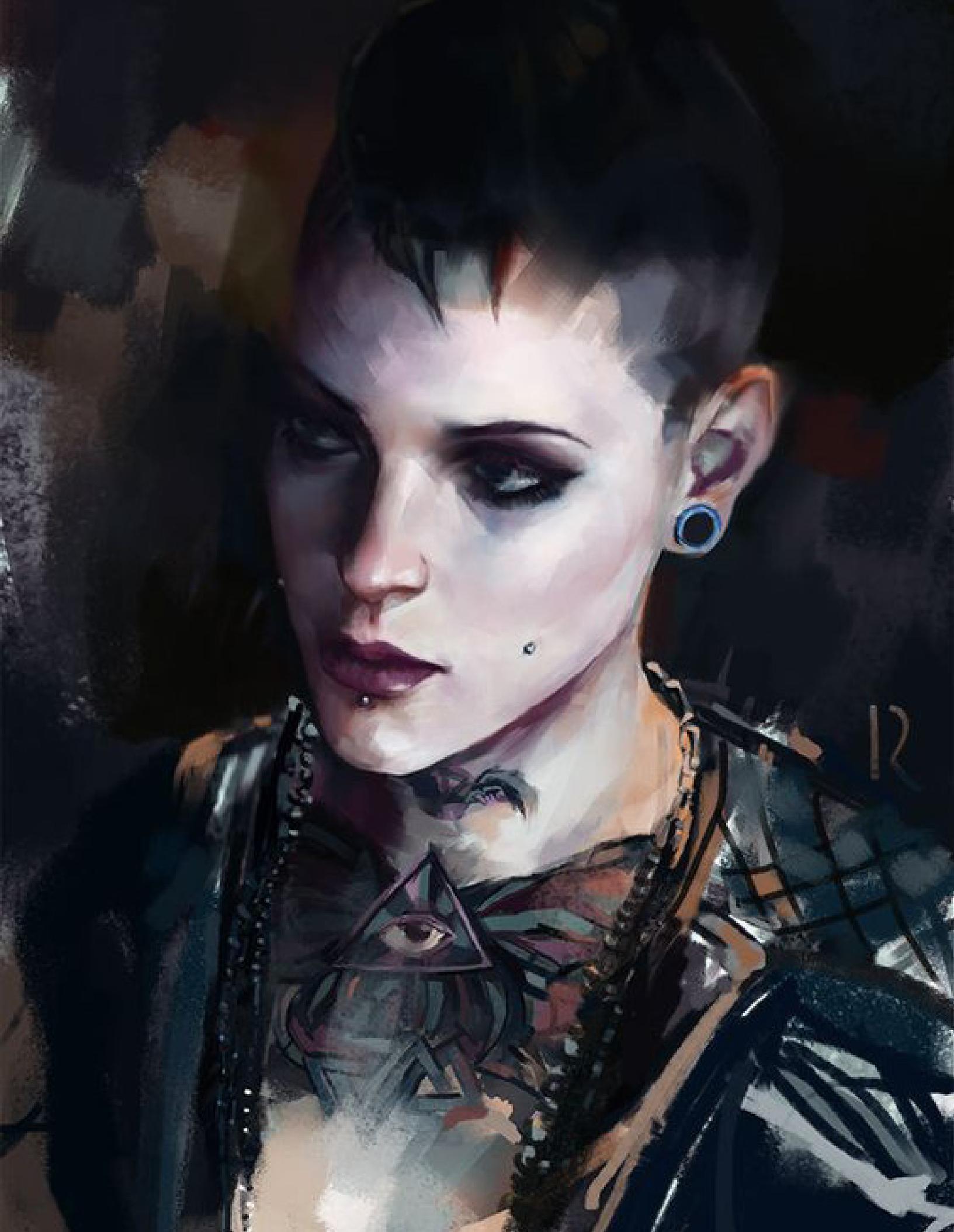
Even so, Kha'vadi remain distinctly informal.

Elders are respected by their younger peers, but youthful vigor feeds the future and earns its own sort of respect. The longwinded titles favored by “the White Council” sound stupid to the average Kha'vadi. Deeds and wisdom speak louder than laws.

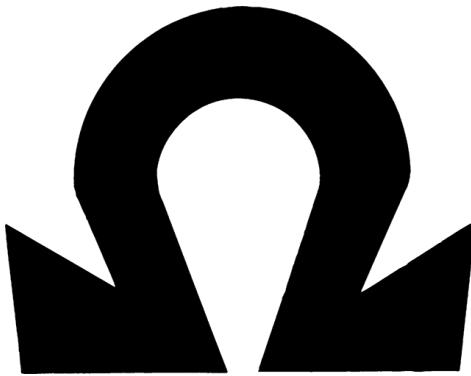
INITIATION: Like his Tradition, a Kha'vadi survives apparent death. Part of his initiation involves ritual (sometimes literal) demise; that passing brings the shaman into the spirit realm, where he faces trials and challenges. Assuming he survives that ordeal, the kaimi (“initiate”) becomes a so-cha (“disciple”) and returns to the mortal world with fresh insight and greater vision.

FOCUS: Medicine, not magick, is the essence of Kha'vadi Arts. An avatar is Howahkan: the mysterious voice that speaks to those who are ready to hear it. Sorcery is an egotistical and ultimately destructive Path that leads people away from the Good Road of harmony with the World Spirit. To reach past the illusions of mortal life, one must listen to Creation’s heartbeat, face death, and remain open to the voice through which all life speaks.

Practice-wise, Kha'vadi favor medicine-work, craftwork, shamanism, crazy wisdom, and faith. A few pursue cybernetics, yoga, Voudoun, and witchcraft, but their companions often shun them. Common paradigms include **A World of Gods and Monsters**, **Creation's Divine and Alive**, **Bring Back the Golden Age**, and sometimes **Might is Right**.



*Keepers of the Wheel
Necromancers
Priests of Fate
Chakravanti*



EUTHANATOS

Intrately devoted to the forces of death, rebirth, destiny, and karma in the world. They represent a collection of thanatotic cultists, necromancers, priests of fate, assassins, scholars, gamblers and healers.

AFFILIATION: Traditions.

AFFINITY SPHERES: Entropy; Life or Spirit.

ORGANIZATION: Like their Verbena and Ecstatic allies, the Chakravanti pursue a sometimes sinister Path that other mages often fear and rarely understand. Yet among the Traditions, this group is perhaps the most ethical. Their awful responsibility demands no less. The group's strict code – the Dharmachakra, or “Eight-Spoked Wheel of the Law” – emphasizes the Cycle (Samsara); unity of all things (Advaita); acceptance of mortality (Kala); responsible guardianship (Pravitra); self-control (Dama); compassion (Daya); avoidance of temptation (Tapas); and the personal experience of death and rebirth (Punarjanman). Although the group itself lacks rigid hierarchies, all members of this Tradition are expected to know and follow this code, on pain of final death and removal from the Wheel.

This strict code requires strong bonds between mentors and initiates. As a result, although the death-Tradition contains many different sects, the relationship between a teacher (Acarya) and her student (Chatra) is essential. The Chatra swears a Vrata (“life-oath”) to both his mentor and to the Tradition as a whole. Breaking that oath disgraces

not only the student but the teacher as well... and compels the Acarya to hunt her student down for punishment.

INITIATION: Each Thanatoic mage undergoes the Diksha: a ritualized physical death. Returning from the Shadowlands, that person undergoes a long apprenticeship that includes memorizing the Niyama and learning the many arts of healing, fate, and murder. Such apprenticeships can last for years and typically involve quests, tests, and challenges in which the student confronts the awful implications of his Path. Without that awareness, after all, a “death-mage” is exactly what people think he is: a monster who’s everything this Tradition has sworn to destroy.of doctrine, personal discipline, and – obviously – lots of singing lessons.

Focus: As masters of life, death, Fate, and Fortune, the Euthanatoi view magick as an extension of the Cycle. By turning the Wheel, these mages control probability as well as the forces of mortality. That turning focuses on the cyclical nature of existence, and so a Chakravat uses practices and instruments like crazy wisdom, faith, High Ritual, medicine-work, reality hacking, martial arts, shamanism, and occasionally Voudoun to direct those energies toward the desired end. Yoga has an essential place in this Tradition’s Arts. **Divine Order and Earthly Chaos** might be the group’s most common paradigm; others include **Everything’s an Illusion, Creation’s Divine and Alive**, and even, believe it or not, **It’s All Good – Have Faith**.



*Traditionalists
Magicians
Academics*



ORDER OF HERMES

They draw upon a potent fundus of magical knowledge and has shaped occult history to great deals.

AFFILIATION: Traditions.

AFFINITY SPHERES: Forces.

ORGANIZATION: The Order is rigidly hierarchical, disciplinarian, and regulated. The Code of Hermes and its Peripheral Corrigenda dictate behavior, protocol, rules for certámen challenges, and the proper inscriptions for Chantry doorways. Thirteen Houses still exist as factions in the Order's endless, brutal infighting. Some Houses predate the Norman Conquest (**Bonisagus**, **Flambeau**, **Quaesitor**, **Tytalus**, **Verditius**, and the catch-all **Ex Miscellanea**); others are newer, even quite recent (**Fortunae**, **Hong Lei**, **Ngoma**, **Shaea**, **Skopos**, **Solicificati**, and **Xaos**).

INITIATION: Recruited from academia, esoteric religious orders, science, or the military, a student must survive a punishing apprenticeship under an unforgiving mentor (a mater or pater). The Order recognizes nine Degrees of mystic advancement: Neophyte, Zelator, Practicus, Initiate, Initiate Exemptus, Adept, Adept Major, Magister Scholae,

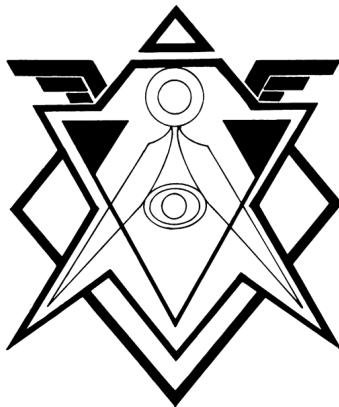
and Magister Mundi. The training aims to provoke, by the conclusion of the Third Degree, a gradual Awakening more akin to a process than to a single jolting moment.

FOCUS: A Hermetic mage commands nothing less than the keys to the universe. And so, these consummate scholars master ancient and arcane rituals through constant study and intense practice. Tapping elemental currents through incantations, signs, seals, paraphernalia, and secret languages, the Hermetics are – by necessity – secretive and suspicious. They command tremendous power, after all, and their rivals lurk everywhere.

Alchemy, dominion, and High Ritual form core practices within the Order's ranks. No Hermetic mage lacks such training. Certain Hermetics add chaos magick, the Art of Desire, hypertech, craftwork, weird science, yoga, and occasional malficia to that core, pursuing such paradigms as **A Mechanistic Cosmos**, **Divine Order and Earthly Chaos**, **Might is Right**, **Tech Holds All Answers** and, naturally, **Bring Back the Golden Age**.



*Victorians
Crazy Scientists
Gadget Makers*



Society of Ether

Originally part of the Technocracy, they abandoned their former compatriots. Since then, the Sons have adopted several outdated technologies and incorporated them into their Paradigm.

AFFILIATION: Traditions.

AFFINITY SPHERES: Matter; Forces or Prime.

ORGANIZATION: Etherites, despite their boisterous talk about society, are often fractious and competitive. Fellowship exists as an avenue for seeking praise; criticism merely prods you to go back to the lab and do better next time. Although many Etherites bury themselves in research for weeks on end with very little companionship, they eventually seek the company of their peers, no matter how obsessive their work becomes.

INITIATION: Prospective Etherites tend to be selected by true Scientists, based on some sign or evidence of latent genius. These prospective initiates receive a test designed to force them to confront the implications of their ideas. Most often, the would-be Scientist is left to discover a copy of

the Kitab-al-Alacir, whose concepts often serve to Awaken the spark of bigger, brighter accomplishments to come.

Focus: Science! Or, more accurately, an imaginative grasp of natural principles channeled through established physical and energetic technologies. Earthier than their Virtual Adept colleagues, these technomancers prefer to employ Science that can be seen, held, demonstrated, and confirmed even by the eyes of fools. To that end, Etherite Science is showy, romantic, and gracefully futuristic, even if that future looks more like classic science fiction than like mundane science fact.

As a practice, an Etherite may use anything that seems to work. Most Scientists, however, favor gloriously esoteric variations on alchemy, craftsmanship, cybernetics, hypertech, reality hacking, and, of course, weird science. Paradigms focus largely around concepts like **A Mechanistic Cosmos**, **Everything is Data**, **Might is Right**, and **Everything's an Illusion**, but they usually boil down to **Tech Holds All the Answers**.



*Pagans
Witches
Followers of the Old Gods*



VERBENA

Dedicated to preserving the ancient crafts and wisdom passed down over the ages by witches and warlocks, druids and druidesses, shamans, mystics, and priests and priestesses of the Old Gods.

AFFILIATION: Traditions.

AFFINITY SPHERES: Life; Forces.

ORGANIZATION: Covens – often numbering 13, nine, seven, or three – make up this group's foundation. Solitary Verbena exist, but most members of this Tradition prefer to work in groups. Women probably outnumber men overall, and they're granted more respect here than in most other groups. Many female mages gravitate toward this Tradition for that reason. Two leaders (taking priest and priestess roles although both might be male, female, or transgender) govern the larger covens, with a single witch in charge of three-person groups. Covens tend to favor older members over younger ones, and old-school covens can be quite autocratic. Although disputes often get resolved through votes, those votes might involve ordeals, tests, or combat.

Each coven has a grove, though that grove might be a garden in the leader's back yard. Large meetings occur eight times a year, during the two equinoxes, the two solstices, and on Imbolc (Feb. 2), Beltane (May 1), Lamas (Aug. 1), and Samhain (Oct. 31). Plenty of Verbena also gather at Christmas (Dec. 25) and on July 1, especially as shifts of

climate and culture blur the distinction between Nature's seasonal cycles.

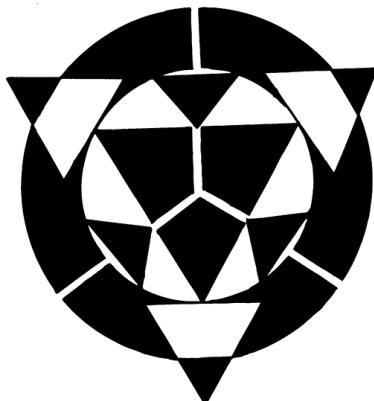
INITIATION: Verbena newcomers undergo a ritual death and rebirth. An intense period of study, testing, and meditation climaxes in a distressing ordeal – sometimes illusionary, often real. If and when the coven members are satisfied with the initiate's trustworthiness and dedication, they call the elements as witnesses. As they were during the Burning Times, most Verbena remain loyal unto death.

FOCUS: Verbena Arts concentrate on doing a lot with very little. Their tools are practical as well as symbolic, with uses that reach back to antiquity. "Pagan" in every sense of that word, these magicks hold deep ties to Nature. Shape-changing, transformation, healing and injury, divination, purification, growth and withering, natural cycles, and the tricky ways of Fate are witch-folk specialties.

To all Verbena, **Creation's Divine and Alive**. Because Creation, life, and divinity aren't particularly nice, other common Verbena paradigms include **A World of Gods and Monsters**, **Might is Right**, **Bring Back the Golden Age**, and **Everything is Chaos**. Witchcraft is the group's core practice, with certain individuals favoring Voudoun, dominion, weird science, chaos magick, yoga, martial arts, High Ritual, cybernetics, the Art of Desire, craftwork, medicine-work, and even organic hypertech.



*Reality Hackers
Tricksters
Anarchists
Virtual Adepts*



MERCURIAL ELITE

The youngest members of the Traditions and former members of the Technocracy. Focused on the Digital Web, the Mercurials search for a way to reach the singularity, the point where mankind can transcend into something post-human.

AFFILIATION: Traditions.

AFFINITY SPHERES: Correspondence/ Data; Forces.

ORGANIZATION: Merit-respecting anarchists, Adepts avoid standard organization and loathe conventional hierarchies. In the '90s, they based respect on eliteness: a form of peer recognition won through attitude and accomplishment. Though the tradition has matured and diversified since then, an Adept's personal achievements – rather than titles or seniority – still mean everything in this group's esteem. Cleverness, wit, technological creativity, and an astute sense of sociological reform mean more than a snappy handle or a keen online icon. There's a special reverence for Adepts who tear down oppressive social structures... and a vituperative loathing for ones who support such structures in Meatspace or the online world.

INITIATION: Virtual Adepts have a socially brutal initiation process. The idea of physical deprivation, master-apprentice challenges, or meditative spirit quests strikes them as absurd. Instead, Adepts typically give their aspirants and initiates cryptic missions to sabotage authoritarian structures, steal classified data, and create amusing pranks that

undermine corrupt bastards and expose pompous windbags. At some critical juncture, the initiate gets left to fend for herself; a suitably imaginative (and hopefully stylish) resolution to the problem earns the accolades of peers and a place among the Adepts. In short, then, most Adepts enter the group through the grand Internet tradition of trolling.

FOCUS: Everything is Data. Thus, in this **Mechanistic Cosmos**, every tool or practice an Adept employs focuses on shaping, altering, manipulating, gathering, storing, collating, influencing, or destroying information. Such tools range from the obvious computer gear (generations ahead of conventionally available tech), clouds, holograms, implants, nanotech, energy drinks, and sense-altering stimuli to the understated chic of dark hoodies, manga-influenced haircuts, fashionable androgyny, and provocative masks. All Adepts, however, keep the implements of their technomagick handy. For many Adepts, computers are a more important part of one's identity than any attire or accessory. An Adept's personal devices are almost always the most heavily customized and stylized elements of that Adept's ensemble.

Perhaps the most accomplished reality hackers alive, this Mercurial Elite also employs various forms of cybernetics, hypertech, weird science, martial arts, chaos magick, gutter magick, and sometimes shamanism, Voudoun, crazy wisdom, or witchcraft with a technological flair.



*Darklings
Rebels
Graceful Ones*



Hollow Ones

A group of mages who have either been orphaned or rejected the Traditions, but refused to join forces with the Technocracy. Instead, they take what they like from every tradition and fuse it together. As a result, they have no dominant Sphere.

AFFILIATION: Disparates.

AFFINITY SPHERES: Any.

ORGANIZATION: Traditionally, the Darklings favor small, family-like cliques; within these groups, social acclaim and stigma keep the members of that group in line. Given the dangerous nature of their world, these cliques prize loyalty and punish betrayal with all the harshness of the streets. The rules within such groups are simple: don't fuck each other over, respect one another's autonomy, and remain beautiful in the face of ugliness.

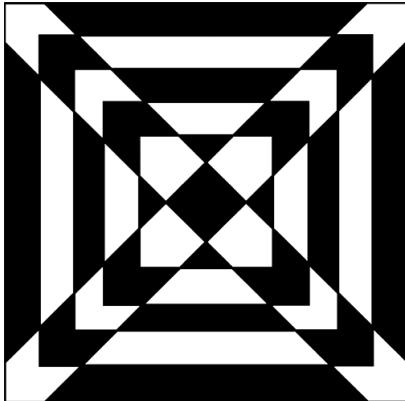
INITIATION: Though they're typically associated with the Goth-rock subculture, Hollow Ones gravitate toward any fashion steeped in beautiful revolt. Punk, metal, hip-hop, techno-industrial, and even classical music cultures have adherents among the Hollow Ones. Most recently, the neo-jazz, steampunk, fae-punk, Gothic Lolita, and androgynous visual kei subcultures have rattled the old Bauhaus-style cage. Even so, many Hollowers still enjoy the old-school Goth look, if only because it's so unfashionable these days.

An element of grace must always be present in Darkling company. When an appropriately graceful member gets noticed, a clique begins to test his fitness to join the club. From a discreet distance, they prod him and watch how he responds. Assuming that he passes their tests, they approach the potential member with offers of friendship. If he seems cool, he's allowed further and further into the clique until the members judge him fit to join... by which point he's usually a member by default.

FOCUS: Darklings use whatever they've got to work with – typically things discarded by society. Broken toys, occult goodies, and symbols and behaviors that so-called respectable people shun make potent tools in the hands of a Hollow mage. Belief-wise, that hollow image is appropriately symbolic: these folks tend to see themselves as vessels of life and death, pouring their Arts out or carrying those cosmic forces from place to place. Magick, then, comes from the proper comprehension and intentional use of the energies that, in most people, are simply wasted. **Everything is Chaos**, an **Illusion**, or a **Mistake**, probably on a **One-Way Trip to Oblivion**. Some Hollowers insist that **It's All Good**, but they're the minority. Chaos and gutter magick are near-universal among the Hollow Ones. Although such Arts don't actually nurture chaos, they thrive in the chaos of our age.



*Clockworkers
Cyborgs
Mathematicians*



ITERATION X

The Iterators are dedicated to the idea of "Stronger, Faster, Better". Specializing mainly in Forces, Iteration X are perhaps best known for their skill in cybernetics, computing and robotics. However, the Convention's overarching goal is the creation of better tools to aid humanity. The Clockwork Convention claims that they strive to emulate the men who first discovered fire and the wheel, elevating man to new heights.

Enlightenment Through Precision and Quantifiable Perfection.

AFFILIATION: Technocracy.

AFFINITY SPHERES: Forces, Matter, or Time.

ORGANIZATION: Iterators employ chains of command that dictate missions with mathematical precision. Ideally, the operatives and their Convention work as parts of a larger machine, setting aside autonomy and ego. Both agents and supervisors are expected to perform to their utmost ability, sacrificing themselves, when necessary, for the greater good.

Among the lower ranks, Socially Conditioned Iterators work exclusively with one another, refining their teamwork and proving their value. Successful agents gradually achieve free will, greater trust, upgrades, enhancements, and cross-Convention assignments that reward efficient flexibility.

Experienced Iterators learn to critique and question their superiors but also to wait until the right moment to do so. For most Iterators, gray areas are unacceptable; instead, each action becomes a binary choice, swiftly evaluated as either success or failure.

Repeated failures condemn an Iterator to serve time as part of a mindless machine. The lowest-ranking operatives are little more than tools, and a powerful cyborg who cannot manage his resources must temporarily surrender his autonomy to more efficient external management.

INITIATION: Sophisticated calculations (that is, Time-based Procedures) help Iteration X recruiters find likely personnel before those people reach Enlightenment. Soldiers, scientists, mathematicians, philosophers, and even people with profound physical handicaps all provide suitable personnel, so long as they can accept an essential role in a greater whole. Previously Awakened recruits are rare, but they can be Socially Conditioned to accept assimilation. Once a potential initiate has been removed from the distracting imperfections of the Masses, a complex process of indoctrination, surgery, and enhancement shapes each Iterator into an effective and often Enlightened operative. Failed experiments, meanwhile, get deconstructed into Kamrads and Ciphers, creating an army of obedi-

ent workers and soldiers who act in unison toward programmed goals. seems cool, he's allowed further and further into the clique until the members judge him fit to join... by which point he's usually a member by default.

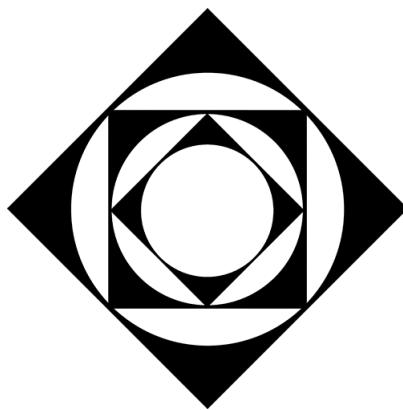
Focus: The core of Iteration X science comes from the synergy between organic, mechanical, social, mathematical, and psychological elements. And so, cybernetics, craftwork and hypertech forge the foundation of this group's practices.

Innovative Iterators employ martial arts, social dominion, hypereconomics, and reality hacking – after all, even perfection must be flexible! A few even hold a demi-religious faith in the ultimate potential of The Machine; these days, though, they don't often discuss that out loud.

A **Mechanistic Cosmos** presents the obvious paradigm for Iteration X. Clearly, **Tech Holds All Answers**. Mathinclined members of this Convention assure their comrades that **Everything is Data**. This group has no use for “fuzzy” paradigms, so the Sphere of Dimensional Science is an extremely rare discipline among its ranks.



*Cloaks and Daggers
Suits
Black Mirrorshades*



Agents of the New World

There are "things-man-was-not-meant-to-know". Your job is to keep people from knowing about the things that could wreck humanity. You perpetuate this fiction not because you are cruel or because you are an enemy of the truth, but because those things could hurt all society. Far better that the Masses believe your Truth (with a capital "T") instead. It is safer, it is simpler, and best of all, if enough people accept it, it might as well be real. Hunt down things that should not be, erase violations of your Truth, educate those too stubborn or foolish to accept it. Above all, remember, you are doing it for their own good. Everyone has potential and is worth saving.

Enlightenment Through Knowledge, Discipline, Institutions, and Control.

AFFILIATION: Technocracy.

AFFINITY SPHERES: Mind or Correspondence/Data.

ORGANIZATION: Reflecting that three-pronged strategy, the ANW employs three primary Methodologies to implement its goals. The **Operative** group sends agents – typically the Black Suits,

though it employs less obvious agents too – into the field to address threats and collect intelligence. The **Ivory Tower** handles administration and implementation throughout the entire Technocracy and also disseminates controlled truths through Sleeper academia. Meanwhile, the **Watchers** collect information, simultaneously circulating messages of control and complacency among the Masses so as to minimize chaos and dissent. All three agencies report to upper-echelon supervisors, who direct operations from safe distance.

Meanwhile, two other Methodologies – **Q Division** and **the Feed** – provide support for the other operations. Technically a cross-Convention imperative, Q Division provides the field gear for Technocratic agents (ANW and otherwise), and the Feed assesses and guides the growing power of the Internet and its many social technologies. Within all ANW divisions, an ascending order of seniority (Black Suits/ Gray Suits/ White Suits) reflects what the Order calls the “purification of genius” and the formality of control.

INITIATION: By reviewing standardized academic and vocational tests, scanning databases, and

coordinating covert surveillance efforts, the Ivory Tower selects potential recruits.

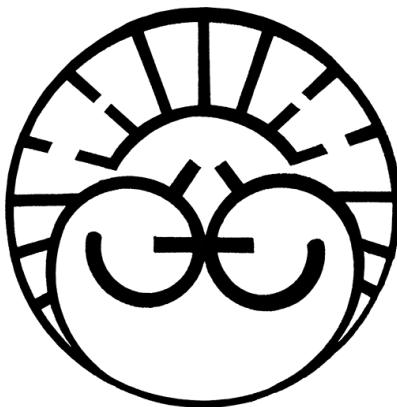
Generally, a new recruit dies to his oldlife and enters a newlife as a ANW trainee. Other recruits get converted from among the Union's enemies, by way of the Order's sophisticated Social Conditioning techniques.

Because these tactics can be very resource-intensive, the ANW bolsters its ranks with clones: unEnlightened constructs trained to act in unison, empowered with a telepathic hive mind, and chemically altered to disintegrate upon death. As a matter of course, the ANW subjects its agents to varying degrees of indoctrination and social conditioning, depending on individual performance and their roles out there in the field.

Focus: In A World of Gods and Monsters, Might is Right and Tech Holds All Answers. Social dominion and the command of consciousness – that is, the influence, harnessing, programming, and re-programming of the homo sapiens mind – provides the cornerstone of this Agents of the New World techniques. To that end, psychic training, information manipulation, perceptual conditioning, and symbolic connections (like a man wearing a formal black suit and carrying a badge) provide the essential tools for ANW Procedures. Physical media constitute the second level of manipulation, with the third and most brutal level – force – channeled through guns, armor, gadgets, hypertech vehicles, advanced weaponry, and the martial arts training all operatives receive. Paranoia, however, is the conventions's strongest weapon. If people believe you can do something, after all, their belief tilts reality in your favor before you even begin to act.



*Cadeuceus
Frankensteinians
Visionary Doctors*



PROGENITORS

The most fit must survive. Evolution has taught us that a better-adapted organism will always displace a less fit one. The difference between Neanderthals and humans were minuscule. The Neanderthals made tools, had a complex social structure and even language. But our ancestors' cerebral cortex was just a bit more efficient. How many Neanderthals have you seen on Earth lately? Now we possess the power to make humans better adapted, more fit and hence more likely to survive. It falls to us to use this power wisely, in order to gift humanity with the immortality, perfection and Unity it requires. Life itself is our purview. All that grows changes and look at the universe in wonder.

Enlightenment Through Evolution of Biological Machines.

AFFILIATION: Technocracy.

AFFINITY SPHERES: Life or Prime.

ORGANIZATION: Throughout its various Methodologies (**Pharmacopoeists**, **Genegineers**, **FACADE Engineers**, and the cross-disciplinary **Damage Control**), this Convention follows an academic hierarchy. UnEnlightened facilitators (janitors, lab assistants, receptionists) provide support for the ascending ranks of Students, Research Associates, Primary Investigators, Research Directors, and the mysterious Administrators. A ruthless but unEn-

lightened contingent of field and street operatives (backed up by the Conventions' considerably more capable collection of clones, constructs, Victors, biomodified agents, and bestial projects) provides muscle when needed. The most versatile Progenitor agents learn techniques and Procedures from all of these disciplines, developing formidable arsenals of scientific knowledge.

Advancement through those ranks demands constant study, research, and innovation. Students must pass many tests, eventually providing and defending a thesis that demonstrates her mastery of Enlightened Science. Success means promotion to progressively higher levels, levels at which the various scientists contend for grants and resources. Investigators spend copious amounts of time working with teams of other agents to prove their loyalty and usefulness to the Technocracy. As one would expect, if they can't publish successful results for the Union, they might perish for their failure.

INITIATION: This Convention prefers to find potential recruits before they Awaken. Working with the Ivory Tower, Progenitor supervisors analyze standardized tests and search databases to find clever scholars with budding potential. (Recruiting Progenitors after their Awakening is more difficult... but the Union offers answers for troubled minds.) Promising recruits get tagged before medi-

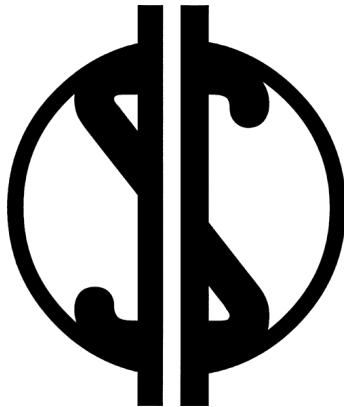
cal school, sponsored with scholarships, and offered a chance for something more. If a recruit accepts, she receives training above and beyond what the Masses can offer; if she refuses, then the entire episode gets wiped from her mind and she just has a bad quarter, defined only by hazy recollections and a lingering feeling that she missed something grand. In the worst cases, the student ODs on recreational drugs or suffers stress-based suicide. The Progenitors hate to waste good material, but life isn't always fair.

Focus: The intricate enigmas and potential of organic life provide the foundation of Progenitor techniques. Upon that framework, an individual Progenitor can build a wide variety of innovations. Although specific applications must be scientifically defensible (see "Wait – I can Explain!" in the Chapter Six sidebar SCIENCE!!!, M20 page 290), the Progenitors employ a dizzying variety of theories and Procedures. That said, those weirdscience techniques typically demand the presence of a well-stocked lab and intricate, often time-consuming, labor. Any tool that a healer, scientist, or naturalist would use can yield miraculous results in the skillful hands of a trained Technocrat, but the Progenitors usually need time and space to work their miracles.

To certain evolutionists, **Might is Right**, paradigm-wise. Most Progenitors, however, favor the agnostic Gaia-hypothesis approach to **Creation's Divine and Alive**. Cybernetics blend in with a hypertech approach to medicine-work, and the Convention's eclectic methods often seem like weird science by the standards of other Conventions.



Cashers
Stock Handlers
Gangsters



SYNDICATE

Money makes the world go round – this is the Syndicate's primary ethos. The Syndicate is about the almighty Bottom Line, but the Bottom Line is this: the Masses want a Consensual Reality where they have a say in what goes on. The Union gave the Masses exactly what they asked for and the Syndicate continues to do it today. Traditionalist propaganda aside, the common man does not want to fight for Awakening. The Masses want something simple: they want to live.

Enlightenment Through Commerce, Desire, and Exchange.

AFFILIATION: Technocracy.

AFFINITY SPHERES: Entropy, Mind or Primal Utility.

ORGANIZATION: Organized like a corporation (or perhaps it's the other way around...), the Syndicate descends in a topdown pyramid. At the apex sits a CEO and 10 Vice Presidents of Operations (VPOs) who head the Board; from there, the various Chairmen (or Vision Men) answer to the Board, supervising each Construct and Symposium. Managers answer to these Chairmen, and Associates (or Magic Men) answer to the Managers. Those Associates comprise the lowest rank of unEnlightened Syndicate ops, with Providers (a.k.a. Our Friends or simply Staples) rounding out the lowest duties

and handling most of the busywork at the bottom of that pyramid.

INITIATION: Talent, hard work, industrious imagination, and a gift for playing hardball mean everything in this Convention. Recruits often come from offices or business schools where scouts watch for rising stars... especially ones who are deeply in debt, incredibly skillful, or both. After a series of interviews, the would-be recruit is tested, employed as a Provider, and groomed for ruthless acumen and personal responsibility. If and when a prospective Associate reveals that she controls money rather than letting money control her, she receives a promotion to the head division. There, she begins to learn the secrets of desire and the means to manipulate reality's bottom line.

FOCUS: *Ars Cupiditae*, the Art of Desire, provides the heart of Syndicate methodology. Refined by the High Guild during the medieval period, this portfolio of techniques focuses on selfmastery and social psychology. Essentially, the practitioner disciplines his own body and mind, refines relationship techniques, and establishes a kingdom around himself that he gradually expands into an empire of subtle but compelling influence.

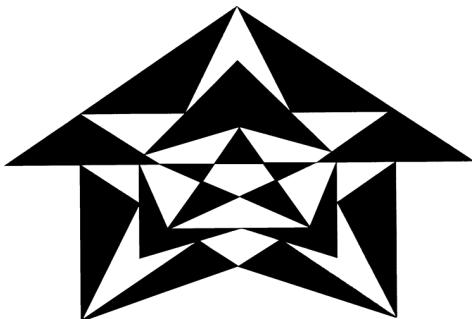
Except in the most desperate circumstances, a Syndicate rep never resorts to vulgar Procedures; even then, those Adjustments employ high-tech

weapons, martial arts, or other stylishly technological methods. Most often, a Syndicate Associate manipulates people and systems with subtle yet effective nudges – phone calls, bribes, handshakes, perfumes, seductions, power lunches, PowerPoint presentations, hypereconomics, social domination, and so on – that get other people to pull the trigger while the Associate tallies up the profits. **Might is Right** in the Syndicate world; without it, civilization as we know it is on a **One-Way Trip to Oblivion**.

ELGOMER

800-322-4444
COMFORT SYSTEMS USA INC.
800-347-6788

*Wanderers
Explorators
Alien Killers*



Void Engineers

The place for humanity is the stars. Not only is the Earth too small by far, but it is dying, just look around, and you can see that. Pollution, crime, war: society is tearing itself apart, and it is taking our world with it. No matter, for we have seen the glory of the universe. Humanity (or the better parts of it, anyway) can settle where we have explored. We have already released primitive rocket-technology to the Masses; soon we will begin to encourage mundane versions of our Deep Universe vessels. When humans have settled on a dozen worlds, the problems of Earth will no longer seem so important. As for us, what will we do then? We have always been explorers. Even before our work settling the near worlds is done, we will be gone again, pushing the frontiers of knowledge. We hope some of the Masses will come with us, for Unity lies in seeking.

Enlightenment Through Exploration and Revelation.

AFFILIATION: Technocracy.

AFFINITY SPHERES: Dimensional Science, Correspondence, or Forces.

ORGANIZATION: Especially in the wake of the Dimensional Anomaly, Void Engineer groups follow military-style ranks: Technicians, Marines, and Cadets form the lowest echelon, graduating upward to become Enforcers (who guard the borders),

Explorers (who chart new territory), Investigators (who pursue scientific inquiries), or Researchers (who develop new tech). Higher-ranking personnel within these levels assume command of individual units. At the highest level, a series of Coordinators handles the logistical and administrative responsibilities, overseeing the Convention as a whole. (Note: In an Avatar Storm metaplot, this Convention changes drastically; see **M2o Technocracy Reloaded** or **Convention Book: Void Engineers** for details.)

INITIATION: Recruiting personnel from among top-level researchers, tech geeks with an eye for unconventional applications of science, and folks who feel disappointed by science program cutbacks, the Engineers bring their Cadets off-world to specially designed training and research facilities. From that point onward, a Cadet is considered initiated whether or not she ever achieves Enlightenment – she's seen too much to ever be considered mundane again.

FOCUS: As every Engineer knows, only **Tech Holds All Answers in A World of Gods and Monsters**. Without imposed order, **Everything is Chaos**. And so, hypertech melds with cybernetics, craftwork, cosmic reality hacking, and a formalized type of weird science. Mind-bending quantum physics, and the machines created to channel those phys-

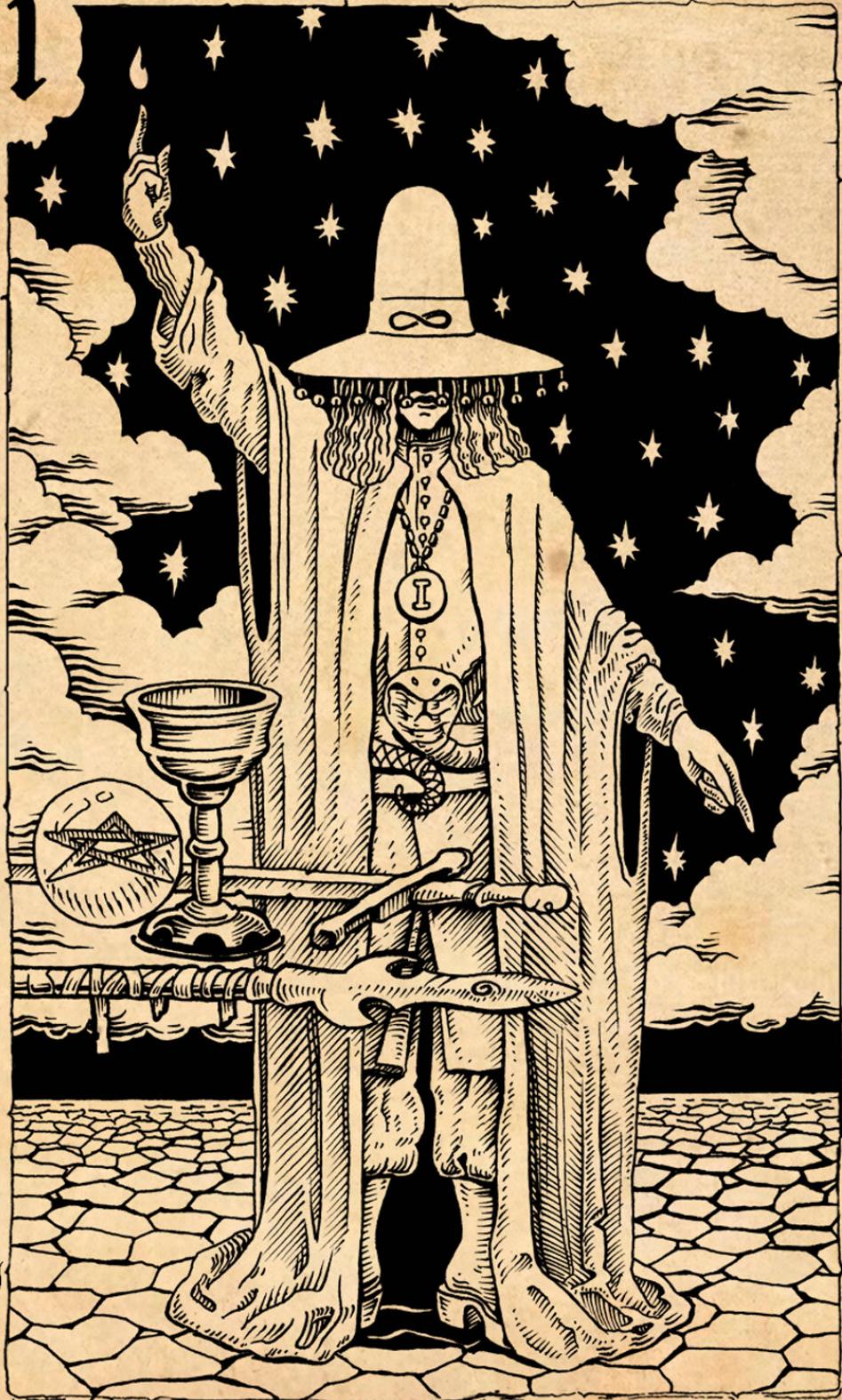
ics, form the core of Wanderer beliefs. To that end, they adapt alien technologies and sanitized versions of ancient spiritual Arts, incorporated through reconciliation theories that bind those ideas and energies to scientific methods. In the Realms beyond Earth's limited reality sphere, Void Engineer technologies have all the subtlety of a big-budget science-fiction film. Blasters slide out of holsters, power-armor suits become essential, and titanic Universal craft (that is, spaceships) are the order of the day.





The horizon melts into a limitless question mark, and like the cartographers of old, we glimpse yawning monstrosities and mind-forged utopias beyond the edges of our paltry and provisional maps.

1



THE MAGICIAN

SENKAI YAMI

CHARACTERS

If you would create something, you must be something.

— JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE

Essences

EIDOLONS for Technocrats

As we've seen earlier, the Essence reflects the personality of your mage's Avatar. By extension, it also influences the mage himself. In many regards, the Essence gives you a general script for your character's behavior. His goals, his habits, the way he approaches life and all its mysteries – all may be guided by the mage's Essence.

The Awakened themselves disagree about the role, nature, and purpose of an Essence. Reincarnationists view such tendencies as the legacies of past lives, whereas big-picture metaphysicians point toward the Metaphysic Trinity and the spaces between its forces. Technocrats dismiss such mystic rubbish, seeing instead the psychological profiles of Enlightened personalities. There are folks who see Essence as directives from Almighty God, and others who speak of Pure Ones who continually reincarnate their cosmic identities in Earthly vessels. As with magick itself, the truth about your mage's Essence will depend – at least in that character's eyes – on the beliefs he holds about his place in Creation.

Most often, the Avatar and its Essence reveal themselves as personality quirks, subtle nudges, dreams, hallucinations, *déjà vu*, and feelings of something or someone being just right or totally wrong to the mage in question. A Dynamic Es-

sence mage feels restless, driven, impassioned, and hyperactive; his Pattern companion might be more settled, reliable, one of those good head on her shoulders types with a solid approach toward life. A Questing vagabond rarely sticks around one place for long, and the enigmatic Primordial soul gazes at her surroundings with eerie calm and an agenda no one else can fathom. Despite broad connections between the four Essences and the Ascension War factions – Dynamic for Marauders, Pattern for Technocrats, Questing for the Traditions, and Primordial for the Nephandi – all four Essences can be found in every faction... including the ones who want no part of that War.

The stronger the connection with the Avatar (represented by Arete), the greater its influence; one or two dots in Arete manifest as simple hunches, whereas four- or five dot ones achieve full-blown identities. An Avatar's manifestations are often tied to its Essence nature. Although human beings seem more complex defined more by Desire, Ambition, and personal choice than by cosmic forces – the Avatars that push mages themselves often display the Essence in obvious ways. Dynamic Avatars take ferocious forms, driving their mortal hosts like children before demonic whips. A Pattern Genius could manifest as that feeling of rightness when a carpenter grabs his hammer and gazes at a stack of planks. The Questing Avatar might blow through a mage's hair like an eternal breeze, cooling her skin even in the still desert air, whereas the Primordial Avatar pools deep in a wizard's subconscious, filling his head with visions that defy definition yet demand answers in the light of day.

Operatives of the Technocratic Union refuse to accept superstitionist babble about avatars and essences. Such concepts are merely the archaic excuses for perfectly understandable psychiatric phenomena. Still, even the most hardened scientists must accept overwhelming evidence, so the concept of Eidolons – constructs of a person's Enlightened Genius – remains an open secret among Technocratic personnel.

System

- Defines the Resonance of Mage's Quiet
- Indicates how the Mage's magick will show itself to the world
- Subtly defines the Awakened's personality and way of acting

Types

DYNAMIC

The Dynamic Essence embodies Change itself. Manifesting as a mercurial temperament, passionate emotions, restless drive, and fickle spirits, Dynamic Avatars compel their mages toward daring experiences. Such people are never boring company! A Dynamic mage might drag you out for a night on the town that includes hijacking a taxi, skateboarding down a railroad track, and slumping into bed just after dawn with a huge grin (or a terrified grimace) on your face, just to wake up a few hours later and see what trouble you can get into next.

In more subtle forms, this Essence inspires curiosity, impatience, and sudden flashes of brilliance. Appearing in the form of shadows, whispers, and poor impulse control, it goads a mage to treat every day like an adventure. At higher levels, a Dynamic Avatar can nag a person mercilessly, leaving half-finished projects and shattered relationships in the wake of a mage who rarely sits still for long.

PATTERN

The very opposite of Dynamism, the Pattern Essence provides stability and order. If Dynamism is

fire, then Pattern is stone. Pattern mages approach things with deliberate intent, speaking slowly and taking time to consider the potential risks and benefits of a task. Manifesting as calm temperament, sound logic, stable emotions, and authority figures (often in dreams, perhaps as people only the mage herself can see), Pattern Avatars settle the capricious whims of reality into solid, dependable forms.

Because every war needs fortifications and dependable souls, the Pattern Essence is a valued asset. Such Avatars inspire their mages to be prudent, constructive, and trustworthy – real bricks, to use the British slang. Honor, stability, and good judgment are hallmarks of such people. If they seem stodgy or uninspired, it's simply because other people are too shortsighted to recognize a true friend when they have one.

PRIMORDIAL

Before light and order existed, Primordial Chaos was the Essence of the universe. Even now, that eternal enigma beckons to the human soul in the shape of eerie and often sinister Avatar-forms. Manifesting as shadows; half-heard cries; swirling vortices of pulsating energy; or the disconcerting figures of madmen, ghosts, and squamous things, this Essence reflects the depthless reaches of cosmic potential. Mages connected to this Essence tend to be abrupt and secretive, or else seductive in ways that Fallen souls can best appreciate. A Primordial mage loves mystery. Like deep water, she seeps into hidden places and defies easy understanding. Whereas Pattern people are bricks or stone, Primordial folks are riptides and dark pools. The few Technocrats who favor this Essence understand that no science can penetrate the richest mysteries of the universe; they'll give lip service to technology, but they always keep a few extra cards up their sleeves for the time when the light fails and order becomes a punch line in the cosmic jest.

QUESTING

Wherever windmills beckon, you'll find Questing mages preparing to tilt. Vagabonds and errants,

pilgrims, and pioneers, these people prefer the open road and a worthy cause. Epitomizing Balance in the Trinity, this Essence avoids extremes. Questing Avatars tend to manifest as yearning; wanderlust; bright spots on the horizon; and people, beasts, or entities associated with travel. One might look like a stray hound, another like a kaleidoscope, and a third like a hitchhiker on the side of the road. Whereas the Primordial mage curls up in the shadows, the Questing mage straps on her backpack, straps on or discards entirely her shoes, and heads off to face adventures in the Great Unknown. “Call Me the Breeze” makes a good theme song for such characters. Their Avatars draw them ever onward. Sure, these souls might seem friendly and fun enough; in time, however, they’ll disappear into the rising dawn, secure in the knowledge that someone else will follow the trails they’ve blazed.

Touchstones

Systemically, Touchstones can travel and take actions — and be threatened. Maintaining Touchstones is important, as they’re the connection between the Awakened and the greater world. Without Touchstones, a mage may quickly become no more than an arrogant spellcaster, acting upon their Quiet and Paradox without any sense of human grounding.

Pick one to three human Touchstones. The more Touchstones the character has, the better they’re able to focus on Ascension rather than falling to Hubris and losing magick control, but the more vulnerabilities they have. But that’s the point, because Touchstones being at risk may happen often in the chronicle, as the costs of being a mage come into the narrative spotlight.

Touchstones in one way or another aid the mage in his Ascension, and their destructions echoes in the Awakened Wisdom.

Losing Touchstones

A Touchstone can be lost for a number of reasons.

They can drift apart from the Mage or change to the point where they no longer fill the role of an emotional anchor. They can die, from natural causes or due to their involvement (intentional or not) with the Awakened. They can even in very rare cases turn into something else, such as a vampire, werewolf or awakening, and while they might still play a role in the Mage’s life at that point, their new inhumanity makes them unsuitable as Touchstones.

A Mage may replace a lost Touchstone or even replace a living one, but such a thing should occur in consultation with the Storyteller. Touchstones shouldn’t be replaced on a whim; they’re individuals with whom the mage has a deep connection or meaningful relationship.

Touchstones in Play

Awakened characters gain multiple benefits from having Touchstones in their lives, but those Touchstones carry some risks, by being both important to the Mage and sometimes proximate to them.

The player may take advantage of each of the benefits below once per story, no more than once per session. (That is, you can do each one once per story, but no more than one in a given session.)

- A Mage may restore or heal a point of Aggravated Willpower damage by spending a scene or period of downtime with a Touchstone.

The following risks are also associated with Touchstones:

- When a Touchstone is threatened or injured as a result of the Mage’s actions (or inaction), the Mage gains 2 Hubris marks on Wisdom (see page 16).
- When a Touchstone is lost as a result of the Mage’s actions (or inaction), the Mage automatically gains 3 marks of Hubris on Wisdom (see page 16).

Advantages

MERITS

Avatar Capacity

- **Capacious Avatar:** Your Avatar is unusually good at holding Quintessence. Your capacity for holding Quintessence is equal to one more than normal.
 - **Mighty Avatar:** Your Avatar is especially good at holding Quintessence. Your capacity for holding Quintessence is equal to two more than normal.
- Flaw: (●●) Limited Avatar:** Your Avatar is poor at holding Quintessence. Your capacity for holding Quintessence is equal to one less than normal.

Avatar/Genius Resonance

- **Avatar Resonance:** Your resonance is especially in tune with your dominant emotion. Whether it is kindness, hate, anger, sadness, or curiosity. When you pick this merit pick an emotion, typically one tied to your Essence. When you are in severely affected by this emotion you may choose to gain a bonus of +1 on any casting rolls, however after you do this you must immediately make a Disassociation Roll with a penalty equal to the number of times you have used this this chapter as the paradox and your emotion mix.

●●● **Avatar Resonance:** Same as above, but +2.

Avatar/Genius Strength

- **Brutal Avatar:** You gain +1 to your Arete for all rolls. All rolls to counterspell your magic gain 2 dice provided they are capable of counter-spelling.

Flaw: (●●●) Subtle Avatar: You lose -1 Arete for all rolls. However, rolls to counter spell you always lose 1 dice.

Bard's Tongue

Flaw: (●) Bard's Tongue: Things you say sometime become true in unfortunate ways. The Storyteller should use this to hamper your character with ill

fortune but not necessarily directly imperil you.

Beast Affinity

Animals are unusually drawn to you, although you can't speak to them you can communicate on a limited level based on body language and tone.

- **Beast Affinity:** One specific type of animal is affected (i.e. Crows).
- **Beast Kinship:** One specific group of animals is affected (i.e. Birds).
- **Beast Mastery:** All natural animals are affected.
- **Unnatural Beast Mastery:** Even supernatural animals are affected by your aura, although it only covers non-sapient creatures.

Combat Tools

- **Combat Tool:** Your character has studied extensively in akashayana Do, magical swords, hypertech gun, ecstatic dance or in another skill that can be used as a magickal tool. This allows her to use combat techniques as Tools for instant spells. When taking this Merit, choose a Skill, which your character must have three or more dots in. This Merit allows use of that Skill in combat as a Tool, adding dice to a spell cast on subsequent turns, or to a spell cast reflexively in the same turn as the combat action. You may purchase this Merit multiple times to reflect the other styles.

Curiosity

Flaw: (●) Curiosity: Your curiosity overrides your commonsense. Resisting temptation requires a successful Wits + Resolve (2) check.

Cursed

Flaw: (●●●) Severe Curse: Accidents happen frequent to you, your bank account and internet accounts are frequently hacked, you keep getting your wallet and phone stolen, and driving anywhere is a risk.

Flaw: (●●) Moderate Curse: Your car breaks down when you need it, your expensive clothes end up stained, and tools break when you use them.

Flaw: (●) Slight Curse: Tech fails around you, traffic jams occur whenever you drive, tires go flat.

Echoes

Typically, this will be associated with your Affinity Sphere.

Flaw: (●●●) Major Echoes: Even sleepers notice how you standout. Your shadow moves of its own accord, you don't cast reflections, cold winds follow you, or people feel nauseous in your presence. People who know folklore might know the precautions to take (Intelligence + Occult maybe used to counterspell against you, Resolve + Occult vs your Willpower may be used to keep you at bay physically).

Flaw: (●●) Noticeable Echoes: People who know what to look for recognize you on sight. Flowers bloom or wither in your presence or music echoes through the air. Holy or unholy symbols repulse you and might force you to make a willpower check.

Flaw: (●) Slight Echoes: Animals shy away from you, milks sours in your presence, a strange smell appropriate to your nature follows and proceeds you or similar. Sensitive people might get odd feelings around you. Typically, this will be associated with your Affinity Sphere.

Enemy

Flaw: (●) Bound (To be taken with an enemy): Your enemy is bound to you somehow and will always turn up or interfere at the worst time.

Faith

●●●● True Faith: You have a burning faith in something divine. This faith protects and fills you. You start with 1 dot of True Faith.

You gain a number of advantages:

When attacking anything deemed truly evil or tainted a number of your damage points equal to your True Faith may not be reduced by armor or innate abilities belonging to the creature in any way.

You have a number of additional points of

armor that count against direct mystic attacks, torture, or other thematic sources of damage equal to your True Faith.

True Faith may be spent for the same benefits as a point of willpower.

True faith can be spent to act as though you had the Life Sphere (equal to your current True Faith value) for the purposes of benevolent healing of good creatures.

However True Faith also demands a very strict adherence to a very inflexible moral code and those who act against people not covered by their code or who act outside of the code find their True Faith abilities temporarily or permanently disappear.

Folklore Bane

Flaw: (●●●) Fire: Fire burns you more than most. When using mystical methods to avoid, reduce, or otherwise diminish flames you roll 1 less dice and all flame-based attacks deal 1 extra point of aggravated damage against you.

Flaw: (● to ●●●) Threshold: When crossing into private property where someone lives you lose between 1 and 3 Arete while there (corresponding to the number of dots in the flaw) unless explicitly invited by someone who lives there.

Flaw: (●●) Running Water: Standing over bodies of water causes your magic to seep away in proportion to the volume and speed at which it is flowing. In game terms you take a penalty to your Arete: around 1 for a small stream, heavy rain or sewers, 2 for a small sedate river, torrential rain or deep lake, 4 for a major rushing river or deep ocean and 5 for Niagara Falls. If this penalty reduces your Arete to 0 or below you may not cast and any ongoing spells you are maintaining end.

Flaw: (●●) Sleeper Bane: Mundane humans are your downfall. Sleepers count as having rolled 1 success more with any successful attack against you and your mystical methods of reducing the damage reduce it by 1 less.

Haunted

Flaw: (●●●) Haunted: A wraith plagues you for

some reason and makes your life hell. It can possess you or people you know, slam doors, twist your dreams, and throw things around.

Health

●●● **True Grit:** You refuse to go down in a fight extends beyond the limits of normal human bodies. You may take a point of aggravated willpower damage to temporarily gain 3 health boxes that disappear at the end of the scene. Any damage in them is shifted to your remaining health when they are removed, this can result in superficial converting to aggravated, and can cause you to keel over and die when the fighting ends.

Lifesaver

Flaw: (●●●) Lifesaver: You refuse to kill under even the most significant or dire of circumstances, or work directly with people who do. When you or your allies kill another human or partly human, being permanently lose 1 point of Willpower until the end of the chronicle. The storyteller may rule that excessive torture or similar will count for this too.

Love

Flaw: (●) Love: There is someone you would do anything to protect. You must spend willpower to roll Willpower (dif. 3) to resist protecting or defending them via the most direct means possible.

Memory

●● **Eidetic Memory:** Your memory is picture perfect. You roll all memory checks at up to plus 3 depending on visual element and may remember forgettable visual details.

Pain and Suffering

Flaw: (●●) Bloodthirsty: You enjoy killing. Whenever you are faced with the chance to kill someone you must succeed on a Willpower (dif. 2) roll not to.

Flaw: (●) Masochist: Take -1 to all rolls when you have no physical damage and +1 when you have half your health left (rounded up) or less.

Paradox Merits

●● **Paradox Magnet:** Whenever someone gains Paradox nearby you may spend a number of Willpower points to gain that many Paradox instead of the target. You may use this a maximum of once per story.

●● **Paradoxical Dispersal:** Whenever you lose Paradox without Backlashing you lose an extra point of paradox for each 10 rolled.

●●● **Blank Slate:** You are initially resistant to Paradox. Whenever you gain Paradox and are at 0 Paradox currently you may spend a point of Willpower to reroll a dice in your paradox pool. You may not use or acquire this if you have any Permanent Paradox.

●●● **Feel The Burn:** Whenever someone suffers Burn nearby you may spend a number of Willpower points to take that much Burn instead of the target. You may use this a maximum of once per story.

Flaw: (●●/●●●●) Permanent Paradox: You've caused some serious backlash in the past and you have 1 (2 dot flaw) or 2 (5 dot flaw) points of paradox that can never be removed for any reason.

Flaw: (●●) Painful Paradox: Regardless of the reason, burn damage you cause due to backlash is always physical.

Phylactery

Flaw: (●●●) Phylactery: Your avatar is trapped and sealed in an object for some reason. You may only cast spells when this object is on your immediate person.

Quickenig

●●● **Quickenig:** You can maintain 1 extra spell per penalty over normal before increasing your penalty.

Sect Paradigms

● **Branch Sect (Specific Sect):** This individual's sect is incredibly similar to a specific sect with whom they are currently considered as 'Different'. Treat them as part of that sect for the purposes of

multi-casting penalties. Cannot be bought by non-Disparate sects.

●● **Compatible Sect:** This individual's sect is compatible in its methods with a certain faction outside of its own. Treat them as 'Different' instead of 'Radically Different' with the selected sect faction. Cannot be bought by non-Disparate sects.

Flaw: (●) Divergent Sect (Technocracy or Traditions): The individual's sect uses techniques similar to either the Technocracy or the Traditions, allowing them to multi-cast with the group (treat 'Radically Different Sect' as just 'Different Sect'). However, their techniques have diverged from most mainstream sects of his faction. Any multi-cast with other sects they are part of takes a -1 penalty. Cannot be bought by non-Disparate sects.

Sight

●●● **Umbral Sight:** You instinctively recognize spirits from the Umbral, you gain an additional 3 to your dice pool when rolling to recognize spirits from the Umbra and you may make awareness tests to pierce their veils and deceit even when you would normally require the Spirit sphere to do so.

Substance Use

- **High-Functioning Addict:** You add one die to any one category of pool (specify when you choose which substance you use) when you use your drug.

Territorial

- **Stomping Ground:** You know your domain (no more than a half dozen city blocks) like the back of your hand. Roll one more die any time you roll for any test related to local knowledge.

●●● **My City:** Cab drivers come to you for directions. In your domain (up to the size of a major city) you gain an automatic success in addition to your roll anytime you roll for a test related to local knowledge.

Flaw: (●) Insular: You rarely leave your domain (no larger than a half dozen city blocks). Roll one less die anytime you roll for any test related to local knowledge.



Will

●●●● **Iron Will:** When rolling Willpower tests, you do so ignoring superficial willpower damage.
Flaw: (●) Weak Willed: You permanently have a point of aggravated willpower damage that may not be removed under any circumstance.

BACKGROUNDS

Demesne

A mage's mind is her castle. There, she can get away from it all to a world of her own making. Classical and Renaissance treatises refer to memory palaces, wherein a person builds a structure in her mind as an aid to meditation, study, reflection, and, of course, memory. Shaped from the builder's consciousness, these constructs have no physical form, yet they offer a type of refuge. With this Background, you have such a place.

In game terms, the Background rating reflects the degree of control you have over this place once it's established. At low ratings, you can visit the Realm but not command it, while at higher levels you determine almost every detail of your Realm. (See the Lucid Dreaming, M20 page 294.) Figure out your Demesne's appearance and nature, probably in collaboration with your Storyteller... who's bound to add a few elements of her own.

When dreaming or meditating, your character can go visit his Demesne with a successful Resolve + Demesne roll. The difficulty depends upon your situation: directing yourself there under normal circumstances would be difficulty 2, whereas trying to reach it under distressing circumstances (say, while enduring torture or other challenges) would range from difficulty 3 to 5. Once he's arrived, the character's consciousness is free to wander around the Demesne. Although physical or mental distress can disrupt the Realm, it's still a familiar – if not always welcoming – space.

See more information on M20 page 311.

- **Occasional Visitor:** You have a name for it and recognize a few significant features.
- **Regular Visitor:** You've traveled extensively through the Demesne.

●●●● **Well-known Place:** In your dreams, you know this place quite well.

●●●● **Your Realm:** This is your Realm, and though you don't command its every feature or resident, they know and recognize you as someone of authority there.

●●●●● **Ruler:** Lord or Lady of the Demesne, you know and command this Realm as if it were your kingdom... because it is.

Enhancement

Cybernetics, Biomods or Genengineering. Enlightened hypertech can accomplish incredible things, few of them more staggering (or, to some mages, unholy) than the modification of living tissue with the power of machines. Enhancements are devices and will be purchased as Wonders, see page 69 for details, and M20 page 657 for a list. Paradox Points are Permanent.

●● +1 Attribute dot, or 3 wonder points for Devices. One Paradox point or Genetic Flaw.

●●● +2 Attribute dots, or 6 wonder points for Devices. Two Paradox points or Genetic Flaws.

●●●● ● +3 Attribute dots, or 9 wonder points for Devices. Three Paradox points or Genetic Flaws.

●●●● ●● +4 Attribute dots, or 12 wonder points for Devices. Four Paradox points or Genetic Flaws.

Familiar/Companion

Animal allies remain an integral part of the classical mage's mystique. Who hasn't heard of the witch's cat, the telepathic steed, the wolf-brother, or the lab-assistant made of spare parts and ingenuity? Tradition calls such entities familiars, and most of the Nine Traditions tend to use that name as well. Other groups, as usual, employ their own names: assistants, brothers, soul-beasts, spirit animals, and so forth.

Although the Technocracy does not officially acknowledge such deviation from protocol in its

ranks, certain Technocrats – especially among the Progenitors, the Agents of the New World, and Iteration X – have been known to employ Companions: cybernetically enhanced critters, bioengineered experiments, clones, and so on. Lab animals have their intelligence and capabilities boosted with the wonders of hyperscience, and vat-grown humans with perfect skin and dazzling features stock the offices and bordellos of Syndicate bosses. Out on the murky fringes where protocol becomes a stern suggestion, Void Engineers work alongside friendly (?) aliens and technologically modified Earth creatures. These Companions, of course, are nothing like those superstitionist familiars – such comparisons would be tantamount to treason! And yet, it's funny how much Companions and Familiars have in common. In game terms, of course, they're pretty much the same thing. Technocrats define their bonding ceremonies and feeding procedures differently, but the Background works the same way for both definitions.

In game terms, this Background – like Allies and Mentor – reflects a character affiliated with the player and yet created and run by the Storyteller. Beyond companionship, that character confers several other benefits onto his mage:

- **Advice:** The Familiar/ Companion has access to certain types of information and can lend insights to his associated mage. Generally, this works as a handful of Skills – Occult/Science, Investigation, Insight, and possibly some others – from which the Familiar/ Companion can offer suggestions to his mage. The dice pool for that Trait equals one die for each dot in the Background. Say, for example, that Spider Chase has a Familiar 3 blue tarantula. Spider needs some advice about a riddle, the Storyteller rolls three dice, and the tarantula spins some advice into a web.
- **Empathy:** The mage and her Companion share an emotional bond and each can sense what the other is feeling. In order to conceal those feelings, a character must make a successful Manipulation + Subterfuge roll, using the other character's Composure or Resolve (whichever

is lowest) as the difficulty. Even then, the other partner will realize that the character's trying to hide something.

- **The Feast of Nettles/ Paradox Nullification:** When an impending Paradox backlash threatens the Companion's mage, or when that mage absorbs dangerous amounts of Paradox energies, the Familiar can absorb a certain amount of those energies. So long as the Companion stays close to his mage, usually within 10 meters or so, he can bleed off a few points from a mage's Paradox trait or consume a pending backlash.

- The Familiar can hold up to three points of Paradox for each dot in the Background; Spider's spider, then, could retain up to 9 points of Paradox. The Familiar nullifies those points at a rate of one point per week. If Paradox exceeds the familiar's capacity – say, 9 Paradox for Spider's spider – then the whole amount of Paradox explodes in a horrific Burn Backlash that affects both the mage and the Familiar equally.
- By the way, Familiars don't enjoy this sort of thing at all, and they may get fed up (so to speak) with a mage who makes them "eat nettles" very often. A Familiar gets quite cranky when he's stuffed with Paradox, and he may break the bond or otherwise act up if his mage keeps using him like a Paradox battery.

Quintessence Feeding: In return for those benefits, the Familiar requires a certain amount of Quintessence or Tass every three days. In the third morning, roll a Familiar Check: rolls a die, a result of 6 or higher succeeds. On a success, the Familiar don't need Quintessence today. On a failure, they needs 1 point of Quintessence, if you don't have they are hungry. If the Familiar is hungry that day, all rolls involving the Familiar are made with -1, if you don't feed them until the next day, they will disappear. Mystic critters devour magickal energies by suckling on the mage, bathing in her aura, or otherwise sharing physical or metaphysical contact. Technological Companions eat Quintessence-rich



snacks (that is, Tass), absorb Quintessence through physical contact (affection, mind-melds, sex, and so on), or get powered up by the mage's hypertech machines. In game terms, it's all the same thing: the mage offers Quintessence and the Companion feeds on it. No Quintessence, no Companion; the disgruntled Companion disappears and the mage loses all of the benefits associated with her Companion.

Familiars also crave gifts, favors, affection, and so on. The nature of those offerings depends on the individual Companion and might be weird, arbitrary, or outright horrifying.

● Your Companion has access to a few scattered bits of helpful information. (Requires one Familiar Check every three days and can absorb up to 3 points of Paradox.)

●● You've got a pretty cool Companion. (Requires two Familiar Checks every three days and can absorb up to 6 points of Paradox.)

●●● A magnificent Companion shares its wisdom and loyalty with you. (Three Familiar Checks every three days and up to 9 points of Paradox.)

●●●● You're favored with the presence (if not always the good behavior) of a smart and miraculous creature. (Four Familiar Checks every three days with up to 12 points of Paradox.)

●●●●● Your Companion probably knows more than you do, can be quite demanding, and has a very outspoken personality. (Five Familiar Checks every three days, may retain up to 15 points of Paradox, and will give you lots of shit about both.)

Requisitions

There are reasons for Technocratic dominance. One of them involves the epic resources available to Technocratic operatives. With this Background – a Trait available ONLY to Technocrats in good standing with the Order – you can request goodies from your superiors and often expect to get them. Before a mission, you and your team will be issued whatever gear your superiors expect you to need. If you want more than that (as most agents do), you need to requisition it. In story terms, you tap your contacts and file an official request for the desired goodies – see Requisitioning, Outsourcing,

and Borrowing Backgrounds (**M20** page 302-303). In game terms, you roll your Requisitions rating as a dice pool. Each success on that roll gives you five wonder points with which to buy Devices for that mission. (See The Toybox, **M20** page 651 for Devices and their costs.) More than three successes scores you as much mundane Sleepertech as you can use. If your relationship with the Powers That Be is good, this'll be an easy roll... and if not, then good luck getting anything other than an earful of abuse. See The Six Degrees in **M20** (page 181-182), for examples of good standing and its alternatives.

- **One die:** They don't take you seriously.
- **Two dice:** "There might be something left over here for you..."
- **Three dice:** You've earned their trust.
- **Four dice:** Q Division likes you.
- **Five dice:** You're a trusted and valuable operative.

Safe House

- to ●●● **Occult Library:** You own or have access to a repository of arcane books and information. You may add the number of dots in this merit when roll for an appropriate occult test and you have access to your library.
- **Nightclub:** Your haven is actually a nightclub with great cover for meeting people, gossiping, soliciting information, private meeting rooms and even staff. While they work for you, they only will help out as much as nightclub employees are meant to and interfering too much with the day-to-day running of the club might cause problems.

Wonders

Device, Fetish, Periapt, Talisman, Trinket or Biotech.

A wonder by any name is still as sweet... and you have one. See below for more details and **M20** page 651 for a list.

- A Wonder with one small power – that is, a Wonder worth 1-3 wonder points.
- A Wonder with one or two powers, probably with some Quintessence and an Arete of its

own. (4-6 wonder points.)

- A Wonder with a few notable powers or one respectable one. (7-9 wonder points.)
- A Wonder with impressive powers or a powerful Effect. (10-12 wonders points.)
- A Wonder with mighty powers or a single devastating Effect. (13-15 wonder points.)

Wonders

Wonders are a special Background, which can be purchased multiple times, for multiple wonders. A wonder by any name is still as sweet... and you have one. What's a Wonder? Perhaps it's a mystic Talisman imbued with magickal power; a Fetish whose strange properties come from a spirit bound within its form; or a Technocratic or weird-science Device, shaped by Enlightened Science into something that transcends mortal technology. In game terms, a Wonder is simply an item with Sphere Effects of its own. Although such items, with a few exceptions, usually work only for mages, the Wonder's form and function depend on the people who created it and the methods involved in its creation. (See more in **M20** page 651)

For **M5** conversion, replace Arete/Enlightenment for Potency. You receive 3 Wonder Points for each Advantage Point allocated in Wonder Background.

- Wonders have at least a Background Dot rating equal to the Highest Sphere in the effects they use.
- Wonders have at least a Background Dot rating equal to the number of effects they can do.
- Their Potency is as high as their Background Dot rating.
- Optionally, you can have higher Potency by having the wonder use more Advantage Points.
- Wonders can hold Quintessence equal to their Potency x5.
- You need to spend dots 5 times Quintessence into the wonder on creation, plus 1 Quintessence per roll used for crafting it.

Background Costs

As described in the **M20** pa 328, Wonders get rated by their overall power level, points described here represent Wonder Points.

An individual Wonder can have up to one separate power for each dot in that Background. A three-dot Wonder, for instance, can have up to three different powers, although many three-dot Wonders have only one or two abilities.

Because each Wonder uses Sphere-based Effects, those dots depend upon the Sphere Rank of the object's most powerful Effect. A Talisman, for instance, that uses a Forces 4/ Prime 4 Effect would be a four-dot Background, its Potency as high as 4.

As an optional rule, a Wonder may have a higher Potency than usual; for one extra advantage point, that four-dot Talisman could have a Potency of 5. Generally, Wonders have a capacity of five Quintessence points for each point of Potency. That four dot Potency 5 Talisman, then, could hold up to 25 Quintessence and would cost five advantage points.

Using a Wonder

SYSTEM: Using a Wonder depends of the System that the Storyteller chooses for the Chronicle, see page 84:

(ABS) Wonder Potency + Arete

[Difficulty set by Magick]

(SBS) Wonder Potency + Appropriate Skill

[Difficulty set by Magick]

As a general rule, **Devices** and **Talismans** have their own Potency Trait, which determines the dice pool for the item's Effects, add your own Enlightenment/Arete to this value, like any other Spell Roll. If Ryan uses a 4 Potency bafflejack, for example, his player rolls four dice plus your Arete to activate that Talisman's Effect.

A **Fetish** channels the power of a spirit within that item. To use one, the character asks the spirit to unleash its powers. Storywise, this typically demands a decent relationship with the spirit in question; game-wise, the Storyteller might have the player make a Willpower roll, difficulty is the Level

of the Fetish. A successful roll employs that Gnosis as the dice pool for the Fetish's effects, so a Gnosis 5 Fetish would have a five-die pool.

Periaps and Matrices simply store up Quintessence. Each item holds up to five points of Quintessence for each dot in that Wonder. Thus, a three-dot Matrix could hold a total of 15 Quintessence. To access that Quintessence, or to refuel the Wonder, a character uses a Prime 2 Effect, plus at least one turn of focused concentration, to channel Quintessence back into the Periapt. Without Prime of 2 or higher, a mage cannot employ such a Wonder.

Trinkets are easy to use, and pretty much anyone can do so. Jinx could put on a bulletproof hoodie and enjoy its protective effects without further skill or effort. Although such items – super-sharp blades, Prime-strengthened clothing, glass forged with Matter to become damn near unbreakable – require Sphere Effects when they're being crafted, their properties remain intact unless some other force (like unweaving countermagick) destroys them.



Do not be misled by our errors, our lack of vision, or the fear that makes men cruel; we serve a reality, my child, though we may not always perceive it clearly.



MAGICK

You have escaped the cage. Your wings are open. Now fly.

— JEDDALUDIN RUMI

Spheres

Spheres are what Mages call the areas, domains, or branches of magic. Each one is a distinct and specific area that allows a Mage to influence anything under that spheres purview.

Spheres Basics

Spheres govern what can be affected and how with your magick (what ‘sphere’ it operates on). Spheres, like Disciplines, are rated 1-5 (or 0 if you do not possess that sphere), where each rank means a certain level of interaction, awareness and control. Unlike V5 each level does not gain you a specific ability or power, instead it changes what you can do with your Sphere – what you specifically do is up to you!

SPHERE RATING	MAGNITUDE
●	Awareness
●●	Manipulation
●●●	Limited scale or unfocused control
●●●●	Large scale or intricate control
●●●●●	Vast scale or masterful control

EXAMPLE 1:

Let’s say Jaime wants Joe (and Joe’s gun) to shoot Josh. Jaime has the Mind sphere, if Jaime had Mind 2 he could coax and manipulate Joe to shoot but because he can only manipulate not control Jaime wouldn’t be able to magically demand Joe shoot Josh – he wouldn’t be able to create a new thought that wasn’t there. Also, if the thought to shoot someone was there but Joe strongly considered Josh a friend, Joe’s push to shoot might result in him shooting someone else. Manipulation does not create a new ‘thing’ and it cannot work at intricate levels, it’s more greasing a path...

However, if Jaime had Mind 3 he could yank on the thought directly or place his own, limited, thought to shoot Josh. Now the human mind is complex, so to give Joe a direct command he would follow immediately would need intricate (Mind 4) control (note that if it were a sheep holding that gun, maybe with hands given to it by a powerful Life mage, Mind 3 might be enough to directly command the sheep). Mind 3 is capable of only unfocused control so Jaime could place a suggestion to shoot Josh and strongly push him to. Obviously, such commands are much more persuasive when Joe already has a reason to want to shoot Josh. If, though, Jaime had Mind 4 suddenly Jaime can make an intricate command that blends in to the complex human mind and can command Joe to shoot Josh right now. With excess successes Joe might even have a fuzzy feeling that it was his decision and not an outside thought.

Mind 5 though would allow Jaime to command Joe and Josh and all their friends to shoot at each other (vast scale) while making them rationalize it as their choice and desire (masterful control). Admittedly Jaime might need a lot of successes to pull this off – but it’s within their Sphere!

EXAMPLE 2:

Dom has Forces 1, he can feel the electrical grid around him. Dick has Forces 2, he can cause the power grid to spark and overload and (with a few successes) manipulate it to surge out in arcs of electricity.

Diana has Forces 3, she can create limited bolts of lightning from her hand (note that although she is creating electricity the energy still has to come from somewhere, typically she'll be using Forces to drain it from somewhere else such as room temperature).

Diva has Forces 4, she can create bursts or lightning capable of leaping between multiple people or doing some serious very damage.

David has Forces 5, he can cause multiple lightning strikes to smash into the same point or blast multiple people with focused streams of electricity. David isn't subtle.

this last example, the harder you look for your car keys the less likely you would be to find them as the Entropy Sphere cannot violate your free will, only subtly guide you. So, if they are in the kitchen and you decide to look in the living room a weak Entropy spell would have no effect whereas the same spell with more successes might cause you to accidentally knock over a glass of water... and when you hurry to the kitchen for a cloth you would find them.

In essence Entropy cannot affect violate free will, it cannot affect the inner workings of one pattern (by itself) and it is very difficult to use it to impose change on one big singular event or object immediately. However, it excels at swaying many little things which can lead to the desired outcome. Application of high-level spheres of Entropy can force more and more unlikely single events to happen sooner ranging from manipulating the probability of a coin toss, to almost completely controlling the outcome of the coin toss, to having a tree happen to fall over on someone right now (which may require a lot of successes).

Entropy is also the root of a lot of classical curses or bindings, curses of misfortune are obvious whereas curses that inflict every first born member of a family with blindness by age 21 would also normally be done with Entropy. Entropy spells are best utilized where you have time for them to happen and/or you are unspecific. For instance a spell on someone's gun for the bullets to miss you could happen now but you don't really care where the bullets end up, whereas every single other sphere requires a concrete specific action or target. And this is the unique part of Entropy, it can make decisions.

Every other sphere the caster knows their ideal outcome and directs their magic as specifically as possible to make that outcome (for a Mind example: I want that driver to drive that car and stop in front of me right now), Entropy is the opposite. Entropy specifically works better when you give it the least specific mandate and the widest remit (I want any car to stop in front of anyone on this street in the next minute). It is theorized by some

Spheres Description

There are nine known spheres, and a long sought and theorized 'Tenth' sphere. The nature of which is hotly debated and a core part of the Mage metaplot.

CORRESPONDENCE (SPACE)

Also called Space, Connection, Locality or Location. Correspondence governs placement of patterns on the Tapestry. It can allow teleportation or even warping of distances by changing the placement or space involved.

ENTROPY

The strangest and least well defined of the Spheres. It governs probability. While everything is a consequence of every other interaction entropy allows a mage to, in effect, pull on the tapestry and makes certain outcomes more likely.

Entropy might be able to influence a coin toss but wouldn't be able to make your lost house keys appear in front of you (at least not without a very powerful spell) – it could however make you likely to find them by influence subtle events to make you stumble across them. Counter-intuitively in

Hermetic mages that this is because the sleepers unconsciously choose the final steps to the outcome for the mage, bridging the gap between the mages wishes and the outcome via the path of least resistance. This leads to the last surprising thing about Entropy: It is capable of binding, recognizing and enforcing Oaths.

FORCES

Forces covers forces such as the classical fire and wind (earth and water are Matter Sphere) but also gravity, electricity, radiation (although high level Entropy might manage similar effects), and even light.

LIFE

Life covers anything that is currently alive plants, sheep, people, bacteria and things of that nature.

MATTER

Matter covers the sphere of physical, tangible inanimate objects – cars, rain, lampposts, rocks and that sort of thing.

MIND

Mind is not typically seen as a Pattern Sphere but functions similarly in that it can be used to tie other spells to a mind (note however that big changes of mind or personality changes may render the pattern different enough for the pattern lock to fail). Mind covers anything with a higher level of reasoning above that of a plant – generally anything that possesses a physical brain. The Mind is a construction of that brain and while some might consider Mind to be a highly specialized subset of the Life Sphere it is vast enough, powerful enough, and widely enough practiced that it can be considered its own sphere.

PRIME

Prime is the only foundational sphere known – it is the sphere governing the building blocks of the patterns around us and everything built upon them, Reality. Often referred to as The Tapestry it is the weave that defines the world around us, the specific weave and pattern of that tapestry defines the world around us and other worlds on top of us. To use a computing metaphor the Tapestry is your computer, it stores your data which both contains information such as Patterns (a blue car), locations

(50m above you), forces acting on them (gravity) and far more. Without the Tapestry everything would be both in the same place (which would be nowhere since space wouldn't exist) and would not exist (since there would be no Tapestry to store the patterns).

Prime is the control and focus of this tapestry, it can be used to solidify pattern locks (otherwise they tend to 'slide off' since they aren't attached in the tapestry), damage patterns on a fundamental level (or even remove them at Prime 5!) or create raw energy or matter where there was none (when combined allowing pattern spheres to not have to gather their building blocks from anywhere at all!).

Some see Prime as the foundation of every sphere and while the Tapestry does control everything, simply because you have the Prime Sphere does not mean you can build a car from the Tapestry. You would need the appropriate Matter Sphere (just because you are really good at refining silicon does not mean you know anything about the software running on the computer chip made from that silicon). Matter, Life, Forces (and to an extent Mind and Spirit) are the Pattern Spheres – they govern structures.

They control things that, to a greater or lesser extent, exist in the world. In some cases, there are physical things you can touch, as in Matter, Life and sometimes Spirit; feel as in Forces and sometimes Spirit and Mind; or have given rise to things of the world, such as Spirit and Mind. They describe a definitive instance of something, for want of a better word. They can also be used as vectors to tie or lock other spheres to them by pattern locking. This allows spells to attach or connect with these patterns. For instance, you might attach a luck boost locked to a car – Entropy pattern locked to Matter). Otherwise, the spell merely flings some luck out without a proper connection with the car as it has no way of attaching to the pattern.

SPIRIT

Spirit affects the spirit world, ghosts and even to an extent the reflection of complex enough beings in the spirit world that some people know as

'souls'. A Pattern Sphere that can be used to bind other spheres this doesn't work on the vast majority of 'souls' as they are too weak a reflection and too flexible to lock a spell to.

Time, Correspondence and Entropy are known to some as the meta-pattern spheres. They generally deal with information about patterns stored in The Tapestry such as its time and place.

TIME

Time has caused headaches down (and up) the ages, and in many cases far, far worse. Time governs the 4th dimension, the forwards-backwards of time's flow, and as with most flows it is far easier to go downstream than it is to swim against the current. Time can (and I stress 'can') allow a Mage to go forwards in time, backwards in time, slow down or even speed up time. A common combination is to use time to set 'triggers' or 'timers' to spells allowing them to go off on a delay or once a certain input (within the spell's Spheres) has been met.

Guide

This is a rough guide for common uses and powers at each sphere rank it is not a definitive list by any means. Mage powers are limited by the scope of your sphere rank and by the creativity of your mind... And by the successes on your dice roll. Consider this more a list to inspire your imagination.



Correspondence Effects

COMBINING: When using correspondence combined with other spheres as a means of extending the range of those spheres effects the rank of the mage's correspondence acts as a limit to the maximum rank of any other sphere being utilized in the spell. You cannot conjure fire at a distance if you only have correspondence 2 as conjuring is a rank 3 effect, at best you could manipulate fire at rank 2.

PATTERN EFFECTS: Correspondence can only

affect whole patterns, not parts of patterns (unless another sphere is combined that can provide that effect).

PHYSICAL PROXIMITY: When using Correspondence to teleport the mage can teleport objects and beings they are physically touching without restriction but to do it at a distance they need the appropriate sphere for the pattern.

Level 1

IMMEDIATE SPATIAL PERCEPTION: Basic spatial understanding allows a mage to sense things in her immediate vicinity even if she can't perceive them with her normal senses such as warps, anomalies, wormholes, etc. – especially the ones caused by other Correspondence Effects.

Level 2

EXTENDED SENSE: Allows the mage extend to their senses beyond their current location.

DISTORT SPACE: Allows the mage to slightly distort space throwing people off balance, making targets harder to hit with firearms or similar.

REACH THROUGH SPACE: With adjacent Spheres of Life or Matter, they can draw small lifeforms or objects through space.

THICKEN WALLS OF SPACE: You may thicken the walls of space making it harder for space to be manipulated or cover space manipulations.

Level 3

CO-LOCALITY PERCEPTION: You can split your senses over multiple locations allowing you to perceive multiple locations. However, without Mind 1 or possibly 2 (or similar) perceiving all at once would overwhelm a normal mind.

TELEPORT: You can now teleport yourself and small loads and items through space. With pattern spheres you may teleport small loads and items from a distance. You can teleport up to a few hundred kilometers.

Level 4

SPATIAL GATE: Make openings between one place and another by connecting space allowing travel between locations. More success can make the

opening bigger or last longer.

Co-Locate Self: You can now be in multiple places at once or more precisely multiple places are the one you are in. Bear in mind that similar to Co-Locate Perception you may need other spheres to perceive all locations at once without issue. In addition, all locations of you do the same actions as it is just one of 'you', however with Life 3 you could make them act independently.

Greater Teleport: You can now teleport yourself, other people, large vehicles and huge loads through space – similarly to Teleport. You can teleport up to a few thousand miles.

Seal Space: Create small pockets of space divorced from normal space. These eventually merge back but can be used with auxiliary spheres to seal patterns into their own realms.

Level 5

Master Teleport: You can now teleport yourself and huge objects including buildings and city blocks – similarly to Teleport. You can teleport anywhere in the globe.

Warp Space: The mage can now bend and warp reality allowing space to be stretched increasing distances or shortened. The mage can twist space upon itself making cities hang upside down over oceans or roads appear to be loops.

Co-Locate Space: The mage can now merge chunks of space together allowing buildings be in multiple places at once or overlaying one city upon another. This creates all sorts of issues.



Entropy

Effects

Sleepers and Pattern Locks: Sleepers are especially vulnerable to disorder and order and do not have the innate protection that mages and many supernatural creatures gain from their awareness of the world. Most entropy spells used on sleepers or objects, events, or items that are not innately magical do not need a pattern sphere to lock to. This means that Entropy 4 could cause a



person to be curse to stand on rakes forever without needing Life to ‘lock’ it to the person.

Level 1

SENSE PROBABILITY: You know the exact odds of obvious chance games (card games etc.) and the approximate odds of more esoteric events (such as a yellow car passing by in the next minute).

Level 2

INFLUENCE PROBABILITY: The mage can now control the probability of simple games of chance and slightly influence single actions with a large luck component (allowing them to bestow a +1 or -1 automatic success on non-casting rolls). The difficulty of the roll should reflect the time taken for the event to happen, instant events being more difficult. As you can perceive the probability of actions this action may be taken immediately after a roll to represent your knowledge of the probability of the outcome, although the difficulty should be increased.

Level 3

CONTROL PROBABILITY: The mage is now able to strongly influence probability allowing them to push or pull events to suit their needs within reason. They can also guarantee the outcomes of games of chance.

CREATE AND REMOVE ENTROPY: At this level you can increase or remove entropy from predictable patterns such as making a car never break down, or break down constantly.

Level 4

ARRANGE FATE: You can attempt to arrange for events to happen. The likelihood of the event should represent the base difficulty and the wider the scope and longer the time given for the affect should make it easier, and the inverse harder.

IMPROVED CREATE AND REMOVE ENTROPY:

An improved form of the Rank 3 ability, this now allows you to introduce disorder or order for an unpredictable pattern such as a living being. Making it possible for that person to be plagued with

stabbing their toe or more nefarious ends. Such influence, as noted above, inflicts or heals aggravated damage

Level 5

OATH: Fates are now capable of creating and binding oaths to people as triggers for spells. As part of a spell, you may use an oath as a trigger. If someone, knowingly makes an oath or gives you their word, knowing they are making an Oath then they are considering bound and breaking that oath (from the standpoint of an informed, reasoned, average person’s viewpoint in the local consensus) will cause the spell to take effect. Oaths accepted without knowing the result if they break it increase the difficulty by 1.

BIND FATES: The mage can tie the fates of people, objects, or events together. Making it possible for people to repeatedly meet, never manage to get rid of an item, or similar.



Forces

Effects

TEMPEST: Forces damage always an additional 1 extra damage on a success due to the incredibly damaging nature of forces.

Level 1

PERCEIVE FORCES: The mage becomes privy to Forces patterns around them, transcending the limits of human sensory organs.

Level 2

CONTROL MINOR FORCES: The mage can alter existing forces within sensory range. Applications are varied and allow a mage to warp light to make things invisible, change their colors by altering the spectrum of localized light, render them silent by bending sound waves in their vicinity, and manipulate currents of electricity, make fires dance according to specific images and spread.

Level 3

TRANSMUTE MINOR FORCES: The mage can manipulate Patterns of Forces, allowing them to convert forces into other types, or even shift their intensity radically.

Level 4

CONTROL MAJOR FORCES: The mage can manipulate Forces patterns on a wider scale, allowing them to use former effect on more than one Pattern. This allows them to change the weather, insulate a whole building or area of forest from fire and electricity, divert light into a series of rooms, banish all sounds from a huge cavern, or render a Chantry invisible to normal sight.

Level 5

TRANSMUTE MAJOR FORCES: The mage can use their power on nearly all Forces Patterns within their surroundings, summoning storms of fire, massive charges or electricity, shadows that blot out entire city blocks, and typhoons even in the midst of a calm day.



Life

Effects

INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE: Generally, effects that can be done to other people can be done to the mage by themselves at 1 sphere rank lower than usual due to their innate knowledge of their own pattern and self.

HEAL: From level 2 onwards the caster starts to heal at a cost of 1 success spent on potency per superficial damage and 2 (and 1 quintessence) per aggravated.

Level 1

SENSE LIFE: The mage can sense the potency of a Life Pattern, measuring its relative health and well-being, as well as basic information (age, sex etc.)

Level 2

ALTER SIMPLE PATTERNS: The mage can influence simple life forms, like fungi, invertebrates, or plants.

HEAL SELF: The mage can fix damage to their Pattern.

BOOST SELF: You may alter your physique adding or subtracting up to 1 dot of any physical attributes.

Level 3

ALTER SELF: The mage can alter their Pattern in small ways. They may change the color of their hair, enhance their eyesight, grow clawlike fingernails or suspend their need to breathe oxygen for several hours. They may add even dots to physical attributes.

TRANSFORM SIMPLE PATTERNS: The mage can transform simple life forms into others, transforming i.e. a snail into a turnip.

HEAL/HARM OTHERS: The mage can fix/infect damage in other Life Patterns.

Level 4

ALTER COMPLEX PATTERNS: The mage can alter complex Life Patterns of vertebrates, possibly inflicting serious damages or enhancing their natural capabilities.

TRANSFORM SELF: The mage can transform their own pattern, allowing them to assume the shape of an animal of similar size or mass or transform their physical features to resemble another human.

Level 5

TRANSFORM COMPLEX PATTERNS: The mage can transform complex life forms into a simpler form, transforming i.e. an attacking human into a frog.

PERFECT METAMORPHOSIS: The mage can alter their own Pattern according to their wishes. They may assume any form they wish, free themselves from corporeal needs like hunger and become immune to all known diseases.



Matter

Effects

RADIOACTIVE SCIENCE: Due to the current consensus, radioactive materials are outside the scope of low rank matter spheres.

Level 1

MATTER SENSE: The mage knows information about material objects and may be treated as a specialist in their design or may recreate them using higher rank matter spells.

Level 2

BASIC TRANSMUTATION: Allows the mage to change one homogenous substance into another without affecting its shape, temperature, or basic state. Stone to iron is possibly, stone to gold harder, stone to fog impossible.

Level 3

RESHAPE: You can reshape objects as you will although they must still generally be one piece or homogenous.

STATE CHANGE: You can change the nature of the object turning it into a homogenous number of similar pieces allowing you to turn stone into fine grains or even atoms, briefly turning it to fog before the density would cause it to collapse (combined with prime to alter the mass you could make a fog of stone).

Level 4

COMPLEX TRANSFORMATION: Shape objects into ones with multiple different pieces and materials or vice versa.

Level 5

ALTER PROPERTIES: By bending the limits of what materials are capable of you can make materials only possible by magic and beyond the scope of modern science. Incredibly atom perfect polymers and alloys without a single flaw and materials hard-

ened by interwoven layers of elements of different states and structures.

RADIOACTIVE: At matter 5 you can also control and transmute radioactive substances.



Mind

Effects

EXAMINING THE CAUSE: All mind powers performed with spheres under rank 5 to subvert a targets freewill leave evidence of a targets altered consciousness. These differences between conscious and subconscious, or micro fractures in their memories and rationalizations can be detected by a skilled mind mage. At rank 5 in mind however the target can be reshaped to rationalize their actions as their own and the memories are entirely replaced instead of being papered-over.

INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE: Generally, effects that can be done to other people can be done to the mage by themselves at 1 sphere rank lower than usual due to their innate knowledge of their own pattern and self.

Level 1

SENSE EMOTIONS: You can read the surface or strong emotions of a target. You can also use this more crudely to detect consciousness nearby allowing you to sense people nearby via any strong emotions.

MIND SHIELD: You can bolster your defenses against mental attacks or manipulation.

EMPOWER MIND: You can empower you mind increasing the speed at which you process mental tasks or even allowing you to add 1 dot in any 1 mental attribute.

Level 2

READ SURFACE THOUGHTS: Allows a mage to skim the surface contents of another's mind.

PUSH EMOTIONS: You can push and stoke emotions present in another to try and influence them and their feelings.

TIE EMOTIONS: Establish a link between people

allowing them to share basic strong emotions.

FORTIFY MENTAL SHIELD: You can strengthen your mental defenses making it harder for Mind effects to be used on you.

Level 3

MENTAL LINK: Allows a link that can transfer ideas and images in raw form between two targets.

DREAM CONTROL: Allows the mage to control their dreams and those of others.

ILLUSIONS OF THE MIND: Allows the mage to force a person's mind to perceive things that aren't real. In effect this makes an illusion for the target only.

PSYCHIC ANGUISH: The mage can attack a person's mind and force them to experience emotions, thoughts, ideas and torment. This causes the target to take willpower damage.

Level 4

CONTROL MIND: The mage may order and control another human to do actions. With enough successes the person might even rationalize it as their own choice as they 'own' the action to resist the concept that their mind was under someone else's control.

ALTER MIND: The mage may alter the targets memories by overwriting them and can also plant suggestions and commands.

ASTRAL PROJECTION: The mage may divorce their minds from their body and roam freely.

SHRED MIND: The mage can attack a person's mind directly, shredding their very concept of self and identity.

Level 5

CONTROL SUBCONSCIOUS: The mage can rewrite the person's psyche, beliefs, personality as well as rewriting existing memories or removing them.

UNTETHER: You can now untether your mind from your body allowing limitless projection.

FORGE MIND: You can create a mind from nowhere, although you would still need other spheres to anchor and instantiate it.



Prime

Effects

PRIME ENERGY: Mages skilled in the prime sphere (anything of rank 2 or above) can be easier to spot by mystic means as their connection to the Tapestry is unique and more easily picked up on.

LIMITS: Although Prime is a powerful sphere it relies on other spheres to shape things into being.

Level 1

ETHERIC SENSE: The mage can perceive quintessential energy, and can perceive when someone uses magic in their vicinity.

CONSECRATION: Allows the mage to enchant an object with their own resonance making it shape change with them or always count as within immediate perception for them.

Level 2

PRIMAL FORCE: Allows disruption of patterns to cause damage on a primal level to the target.

ENCHANT PATTERNS: Allows a mage to tap into an object's quintessence, allowing it to interact with spirits and affect other objects enchanted with prime.

CREATE SIMPLE PATTERNS: Allows a mage to create a simple pattern from nowhere, however each use or turn costs one quintessence unless it is made real by imbuing it with another appropriate sphere (such as creating a rock using Matter 3).

Level 3

CAPTURE QUINTESSENCE: Allows the mage to hold additional quintessence or even store it in an object.

ACTIVATE QUINTESSENTIAL LIFE: Allows a mage to create a living pattern from nowhere, however each use or turn costs one quintessence unless it is made real by imbuing it with another appropriate sphere (such as creating a rabbit using Life 3).

ENCHANT LIFE: Allows a mage to tap into a living being's quintessence, allowing them to interact with spirits and affect other beings enchanted with

prime.

Level 4

EXPEL QUINTESSENCE: Allows the mage to drain quintessence from other patterns collapsing them and gaining quintessence from some.

RESONANCE LOCK: Allows the mage to see the unique resonance of each and every pattern and differentiate between them and the imprints they leave.

ALTER FUNDAMENTAL PROPERTIES: The mage can now alter the fundamental properties of patterns and materials making water that isn't wet, iron that isn't magnetic, or making wood that doesn't burn.

Level 5

INFUSE QUINTESSENCE: Store quintessence in living beings.

NULLIFY PARADOX: Remove temporary paradox.

QUINTESSENTIAL PERMANENCE: Make enchantments permanent.

CREATE NODE: Create a permanent node.



Spirit

Effects

GAUNTLET: Spirit Sphere magick traffics in the hidden side of the natural realm. As a result, its Effects typically use the Gauntlet Ratings to determine the difficulty of their associated rolls: An node might be 2, an urban alley 3 or 4, whereas a sterile lab environment might go as high as 6 (or 2 for Dimensional Science).

Level 1

SPIRIT SENSE: You can peek into the other side of the Gauntlet.

FEEL WALLS: You can sense strong impressions left in a place from powerful emotional events.

Level 2

TOUCH SPIRIT: The mage can affect small things on the other side of the Gauntlet.

THICKEN SPIRITUAL WALLS: You can thicken the walls of reality making it harder for entities on one side to perceive, effect, or cross over to the other.

ESSENCE SENSE: You can sense powerful emotions associated with objects.

Level 3

STEP INTO THE GAUNTLET: You can step from one side of the Gauntlet to the Gauntlet or back.

ROUSE AND LULL SPIRIT: You can rouse or lull the spirits of objects and places.

DAMAGE SPIRIT: You can directly damage spirits at this rank.

Level 4

REND/SEAL GAUNTLET: You can make rifts into and out of the Gauntlet or collapse them.

BIND SPIRIT: You can summon and compel spirits.

Level 5

ECTOPLASM FORGINGS: The mage can summon and shape the material of the spirit realm as they see fit creating new realms or healing spirits.

OUTWARD JOURNEYS: The mage can cross the Outer Horizon.

GILGUL: The mage can affect and attack other mage's avatars.

SOUL SUMMONING: Souls can be created or altered which can then be used for living things created from other spheres.



Time

Effects

REVERSING THE FLOW: Going against the flow of time is far harder than going with it, and any attempt to actually reverse time increases difficulty by 3.

TIME PARADOX: When going back in time any paradox you gained or lost during the intervening time is not undone, paradox follows you since it is a product of the Tapestry and is outside our mortal Space-Time.

MEMORY: Just remember that if you rewind time, you also undo the memories of people affected, including your own if you are affected! Mind 2 combined would allow you to avoid having your memories altered.

Level 1

TIME SENSE: You always know what time it is exactly and are aware of distortions of local time.

Level 2

PRE/POST-COGNITION: Allows you to see backwards and forwards in time. The impressions are hazy, not entirely accurate, and bound by the limitations of the time and place (what a bystander could perceive under the circumstances).

THICKEN TIME WALLS: You may thicken the walls of time making it harder for time to be manipulated in the vicinity.

Level 3

TIME CONTRACTION OR DILATION: Allows the mage to slow or speed up the flow of time compared to the normal world.

LOOP TIME: Allows the mage to create short loops of time that repeat.

REWIND TIME: Allows the mage to rewind time up to the duration of a scene.

Level 4

STOP TIME: Allows a mage to stop time in its tracks.

TRIGGER EFFECT: Allows the mage to generate a paused spell that can be triggered based on an input under the purview of a sphere.

ANCHOR POINT: Allow the mage to create an anchor point in time allowing them to find their way back to 'their' present with much more ease.

Level 5

TIME TRAVEL: The mage can travel in time.

TIME IMMUNITY: The mage can become immune to time allowing them to step in and out of time's flow.

Spellcasting

System

There are two approaches to Spellcasting, the Storyteller is free to use whichever suits best. When something specific to a Spell System is used, it will have its acronym indicating it.

ARETE-BASED SYSTEM (ABS)

Lowest Sphere involved + Arete

[Difficulty: Highest Sphere involved + modifiers]

Spells are cast using a dice pool consisting of the lowest sphere involved and your Arete, plus or minus any modifiers.

SKILL-BASED SYSTEM (SBS)

Lowest Sphere involved + Appropriate Skill

[Difficulty: Highest Sphere involved + modifiers]

Spells are cast using a dice pool consisting of the lowest sphere involved and one of your Skills, plus

or minus any modifiers.

System

Spellcasting results in the following general effects, but each of these can be increased through spent extra successes on spell factors or by Reaching.

- The spell grants a one-die bonus or penalty, deals one point of damage, or heals one wound.
- The spell lasts for one turn.
- The spell hits one subject, or an area equal to an arm's-length circle around a point.
- The mage must be touching the subject of the spell, or be casting on herself.
- The spell takes an amount of time to cast based on Arete.

Types of Spells

DIRECT SPELLS

Direct spells are spells created on a target and affecting that target. They use a simple spell casting



roll.

INDIRECT SPELLS

Indirect spells are those which launch a mundane projectile to have an effect and so rely on the spell-casters ability to get the projectile to the target, can also be spells used on the fists or on a melee weapon, but always with the enemy being able to dodge. Classic examples include creating and throwing an arc of lightning to the target. Unlike direct spells a target can usually dodge such attacks in a mundane manner and cover factors into the hit roll, however extra successes on the hit roll often result in additional damage. This means that indirect spells are generally harder to hit with but do additional damage and do not suffer the range limitations of direct spells.

Dice Pool:

- **(ABS)** Arete + involved Skill (usually Athletics, Brawl, Firearms or Melee).
- **(SBS)** Appropriate Attribute + involved Skill (usually Athletics, Brawl, Firearms or Melee).

Spell Control

When maintaining an ongoing spell, the caster takes a -1 to all casting attempts for every two full spells they have cast that are still in effect.

Multi-Casting

Mages may combine their spheres together to cast spells that require spheres that no one mage has. To do this the spell must not be quick cast as the coordination takes time and precision.

SYSTEM: Participants in multi-cast spells must all follow a broadly similar tradition (technocrats and traditional mages for instance would be unable to co-cast) and all spells cast use the dice pool of the Lowest Sphere involved and...

- **(ABS)** the Arete of the person with the highest Arete.
- **(SBS)** the Skill of the person with the highest Skill.

Counterspelling

To counterspell a spell you are aware of being cast or affecting someone or something in your vicinity you roll and reduce the successes of the spell by your number of successes by siphoning power away from the caster. This can reduce the spell's factors as appropriate.

SYSTEM: To do so you must have at least one of the sphere's being used in the spell and then roll a dice pool consisting of one of the sphere's being used in the spell plus...

- **(ABS)** your Arete -1.
- **(SBS)** you Occult (for magick) or Science (for Technomagick) -1.

You can try gain bonuses to counterspelling as you normally do with spells but counterspelling does not normally generate paradox unless it is an Instability Failure.

Reactive Spell

Similar to counterspell this allows instant reaction to an event in a split second but by shaping a spell instead of directly disrupting a spell and can also be used to react to other circumstances such as gunfire or falling. This can only be used against threat that you can perceive and allows you to instantly try and cast a spell outside of your normal turn or turns worth of casting time (although it comes at a penalty).

The restriction is that it has to be directly targeted at preventing the damage in some way and cannot be offensive.

The Art of Will

Magick demands a combination of enlightenment and Will. If you are Impaired Willpower, then receive -2 on casting rolls.

Withstanding

If a spell must overcome some aspect of its subject to take full effect, the Storyteller defines a Withstand rating (usually a Resistance Attribute: Stamina, Composure or Resolve). Withstood spells

reduce their Potency by levels equal to the Withstand rating. If this leaves the spell with no levels in Potency, it still counts as an active spell against spell control but has no further effect. Spells with multiple subjects apply their Potency against the Withstand rating of each individual subject, so may take effect against some of them.

Reaching

The reality for Mages is somewhat malleable, but the more they forces it, more it hits back in the form of Paradox. This act of touching the Tellurian fabric is called Reaching.

The mage can utilize different techniques to get more out of her base spell after she determines the spell effects and the level of each Sphere involved. Mages can Reach to move from a Standard to an Advanced spell factor. Those changes affect the difficulty or Paradox Checks rolled.

SYSTEM: Each time she Reaches, she adds +1 to Paradox Check or +1 to difficulty.

Spell Factors

The previous rules assume the most basic spellcasting aspects; that a spell's subject is a single, touched individual, and the spell lasts for a short amount of time. A mage can cast a spell that affects an entire group of people, or an enchantment that lasts an entire day. The elements of a spell — the size or number of subjects — are called spell factors, and the mage can increase them with extra successes on a Spellcasting roll.

Potency is a measure of the spell's power. It determines the extent of the effect of a spell. For example, attack spells use Potency for how much damage is applied.

Duration is how long a spell lasts. Once the spell's Duration elapses, the spell ends.

Scale is a measure of how large a spell is. It determines how many subjects the spell can affect, the size of an area the spell encompasses, and the size of the largest subject.

Range is how far the spell can be cast. Spells either require the mage to touch her subject, or be in sensory Range of her subject to cast. Mages with

three dots in Time or two dots in Correspondence can cast on a subject's past existence, or across the world via sympathetic ties.

Casting Time is how long it takes the mage to cast the spell. Mages may gain bonuses for taking longer to cast spells.

A mage can increase her spell's various factors, though she does so at the cost of extra successes. She can change some factors with a Reach. All spells have a primary spell factor of either Potency or Duration.

Some spells may use a spell factor more than once — for example, a spell transforming a truck into an elephant must account for the size of both. In these cases, use the highest success cost for each factor.

Potency

Potency matters for spells that grant bonuses, impose penalties, or provide graduated levels of effects, such as dealing damage or increasing dot-ratings of traits. Each level of Potency increases the spell's main effect up to a maximum equal to Arete. Mages may spend Reach to gain Advanced Potency, which increases the spell's Withstand ability against dispellation or counterspell by +2 (as if the spell had +2 Potency).

Duration

Duration is simply how long a spell lasts once cast. The highest level of the Duration chart is "Permanent," meaning the spell lasts until dispelled or the caster cancels it.

Scale

The scale of a spell is how large the spell is. Mages must decide when casting whether they are targeting specific subjects or a blanket area of effect. Indirect spells (see below) must use area of effect, centered on wherever the mage aims.

If the mage uses Number of Subjects for Scale, the factor determines how many subjects may be affected. Once decided, a mage can affect fewer subjects than the scale of her spell permits.

If using Area of Effect for Scale, the factor

instead determines how large the area covered by the spell is, applying the spell effect to anyone or anything within.

Range

Range determines if the spell requires the mage to touch her subject, or simply be in sensory range to create an effect. Range does not increase incrementally with Extra Successes like other factors. The standard Range factor for all spells is **touch/self**, meaning that the mage can cast the spell on herself or a subject she touches without any penalties. A mage can target an individual she cannot touch with a self/touch spell by succeeding on an Indirect Spell roll (see below). The Advanced Range factor is sensory, meaning that the mage must be able to directly see, hear, or sense her subject. Viewing a subject remotely but in real-time, whether by security camera or magic scrying window, requires an additional Reach. A spell cast with sensory range is called Direct Spell, cannot be dodged by the subject, and does not require an Indirect Spell roll.

Unless using correspondence to extend the range Direct Spells can be directly created only where you can perceive significant detail of the target with normal human sense range. This distance varies for each object; some examples are where 20/20 eyesight can perceive a person's eye color, building number, or a car license plate.

Casting Time

Casting time determines how long the mage takes to create her effect. Standard casting takes time, and all spells are ritually cast. By taking extra time and extending his ritual, the caster may gain bonus dice.

By using a Reach, a caster may instead cast immediately, in a single turn. Immediate spells cannot gain extra dice from taking extra time, but may take several turns of preparation to use all the Tools the caster wishes to include. Ritual spells can benefit from teamwork, while an immediate spell cannot.

Rotes

The diverse powers of the Awakened are without measure. Despite vast collections of rotes, Procedures, and other such applications of the Arts, each mage is his or her own spellbook, crafting Effects to suit the circumstances of that moment. Even so, every Awakened and Enlightened group has special tricks and rituals that its members use when necessary. The following section presents a very brief look at the established Effects of the Awakened world.

There are three types of Magick Rotes:

MAGES:

- **Rotes:** In the more traditional applications of the Arts, magick remains unashamed of its reality-bending nature. A mystic practitioner doesn't have to stage mind games with himself in order to justify what he does – he simply does it. Still, there's a lot to be learned from those who have done such things before. And so, the various Awakened factions share spells, rotes, and rituals that help a mage accomplish various feats, from growing talons to saving data that appeared to be lost. Unlike Technocratic Adjustments and Procedures, the following rotes appear to be exactly what they are: acts of magick. Although certain spells are more subtle than others, they tend to be vulgar magick in most regions of the modern world, unless they're focused through technology or concealed within apparently mundane activities. Still, the mages who employ them remain proud of such legacies. After all, if you're gonna be a mage, then you might as well indulge yourself and enjoy the magic!

TECHNOCRATS:

- **Procedures:** Sometimes, you need to haul out the Big Guns. And so, although the following Procedures are refined and standardized techniques among the Technocratic Union's ranks, they lack the pristine subtlety of Adjustments and may risk the Paradox Effect under many circumstances. Even when she chooses to

be vulgar, though, a Technocrat still needs to use practices and instruments in order to make such things come to pass. As noted elsewhere, a Technocrat believes so strongly in the principles behind her Procedures that she cannot perform them without the proper tools and techniques. A Progenitor (to use an example out of a very old Mage chronicle) cannot simply wave her hyper-scalpel and cut someone who's several yards away; she MUST have a valid scientific reason for the things she can do. Unlike those mystic Reality Deviants, she doesn't make the Consensus dance to her whims but rather employs advanced principles of technology to make things work her Will.

- **Adjustments:** Subtle acts of Enlightened understanding and manipulation, Adjustments remain coincidental except under the most extreme or skeptical circumstances. Although the Syndicate and New World Order specialize in such workings, other technomancers can employ them too. With minor variations in practice and instruments, a mystic mage can use these Adjustments as well – probably under another, more poetic name, but with the Spheres and systems intact.

System

A Rote is a spell that has been used and perfected through the time, you can turn your everyday magick into a Rote, learn it from an ancient tome or from your Tradition mentor, regardless of the learning method, all Rotes, Procedures or Adjustments have the following effects:

- **Practice:** +1 on Spellcasting
- **Level:** The level of a rote is the highest rating of the spheres involved
- **Cost:** 3 experience per Rote Level

The duration for learning the Rote is Storyteller discretion. You still need the involved Spheres to learning and use the Rote.

You can see **M20** page 601, **M20 Technocracy Reloaded** page 170, **M20** The Operative's Dossier

page 75 and **M3 Traditions/Crafts/Conventions Books** for a list of Rotes.

Magick Damage

Unless stated otherwise, magic damage will be always non-halved and:

- **Base Damage:** 1
- **Superficial Willpower:** Mind Sphere Effects.
- **Superficial Health:** Most other Sphere Effects.
- **Aggravated Damage:** Any Sphere when charged with Prime 2 and a point of Quintessence.
- » Fire or Electrical Forces Effects (Electrical only for creatures without Enhanced Resistance).
- » Vulgar Entropy-, Life- or Prime-based Effects that directly disrupt the target's Pattern.

Correspondence and Time inflict no damage unless they're combined with other Spheres.

The Forces Sphere adds +1 to Damage.

Entropy inflicts damage only through indirect attacks until Rank 4; after that, damage is aggravated.

Paradox Burn damage will be halved when Superficial.

Skill Requirements

(Arete-Based System only)

Because of the nature of many Spheres and the way they can be used on a microscopic level on mass an optional rule is that to do intricate powers the mage must have a specialty related to that field or a certain level of mastery in the Skill.

EXAMPLE 1:

Jane wants to make Joe angry, but she only has Life rather than the Mind sphere. Now Life cannot directly make him angry but it could flood his system with hormones ‘suggesting’ or ‘swaying’ him towards anger.

However since this requires knowledge of human biology to know which hormones to push and where the Storyteller may rule Jane needs either a sufficiently high Medicine skill (probably only 1 or 2 since anger is a simple hormonal emotion to push) or a specialty in Endocrinology.

EXAMPLE 2:

This time Jane wants to interfere more directly with Joe and wants him to fire the gun he is holding. Using Life she can either try and flip the reflex in his brain to pull the trigger with his finger (needing a Medicine of 3 or 4 or a 2+ with an appropriate specialty) or go into the nerves system between the brain and the finger direct and fire a nerve (requiring a similar Medicine score but using a different specialty).

EXAMPLE 3:

Alternately if Jodie wanted to do the same without Life or Mind but with Forces instead, she COULD simply will an electrical impulse down Joe's nerves to his finger. This however would require a very high medicine, a specialty and a failure to meet those requirements might cause nothing to happen, the wrong finger to move, the entire arm to convulse or physical damage.

EXAMPLE 4:

Jake has Matter and wants to create a F-22 fighter jet. A state-of-the-art modern military jet would be complex enough that Jake would definitely need a high skill and probably a specialty too in order to just conjure one on the fly.

WORK-AROUND:

Matter 1 gives a detailed awareness of an object for a short time. If Jake could get close enough and used Matter 1 to become innately aware of a F-22's matter pattern he would be treated as having perfect knowledge of the matter properties of the F-22 and could then duplicate one without having to have any applicable skills or specialties. However, without Forces that F-22 wouldn't have any electricity in it.

Magick Charts

CASTING SITUATION	MODIFIER
Point of Quintessence Used (max. 3)	+1
Casting a Rote	+1
Cast on Node (Depending on Node Strength)	+1 to +3
Casting Duration 1 Step Higher than Needed	+1
Casting Duration 2 Steps Higher than Needed	+2
Casting Duration 3 Steps Higher than Needed or More	+3
Sympathetic Link (Depending on item/part)	+1 to +3
Counterspell	-1
Reactive Spellcasting	-2
Impaired Willpower	-1
Spellcaster Distracted	-1 to -3
CASTING DURATION	STEPS
Default	0
1 Scene/Hour	1
1 Day	2
1 Week	3
1 Month	4
1 Year	5
MULTI-CASTING	MODIFIER
Intimately Familiar (life partners, etc.)	+0
Very Familiar (good friends, etc.)	-1
Known (vague colleague, etc.)	-2
Acquaintance	-3
Unfamiliar	Impossible
Different Sect, Same Faction (stacks)	-1
Radically Different Faction	Impossible

BASE MAGICK DIFFICULTY	
SPHERES MAGNITUDE	DIF
1 - Awareness	1
2 - Manipulation	2
3 - Limited scale or unfocused control	3
4 - Large scale or intricate control	4
5 - Vast scale or masterful control	5
CORRESPONDENCE FAMILIARITY	
Within immediate perception	+0
Very familiar (home, etc.)	+1
Familiar/saw recently in person	+2
Visited briefly/saw recently via recorded media	+3
Heard or saw it described	+4
Totally blind	+5
CORRESPONDENCE CONNECTION (INC. BONUS FOR SYMPATHETIC LINK)	
Body Sample	+0
Close Possession or Companion	+1
Possession or Friend	+2
Object Used or Passing Friend	+3
Briefly Touched or Briefly Met	+4
No Connection	+5
FEATS OF ILLUSION	
Simple	+0
Complex	+1
Moving	+1
Moving and Interactive	+2
One Sensation	+0
Two Sensations	+1
Multiple Sensations	+2
MOVING THROUGH TIME	
Within the scene	+0
Within the day	+1
Within the month	+2
Within the year	+3
Within 10yrs	+4
Within 50yrs	+5
Within 500yrs	+7
Within 1000yrs	+9
More than 1000yrs	+11

BASE SPELL FACTORS

Potency	I
Duration	Instant/Only This Turn
Scale	I Subject/Arm's reach from a central point
Range	Touch/Self
Casting Time	Takes some time (cannot be used in combat)

EXTRA SUCCESSES SPENT (ES) AND REACH**POTENCY CHART**

+1 per Extra Success Spent (maximum equal to Arete)

REACH: +2 to Withstand ability against dispellation or counterspell

DURATION CHART**ES**

I Scene/Hour or Permanent when spending I Quintessence per Scene/Hour	I
I Day [Perma.: I Quintessence per Day]	2
I Week [Perma.: I Quintessence per Week]	3
I Month [Perma.: I Quintessence per Month]	4
I Year [Perma.: I Quintessence per Year]	5
Permanent (Counts for Spell Control)	6

SCALE CHART**ES**

SUBJECTS	AREA	ES
2 subjects	Car-Sized	I
4 subjects	Bus/Shack	2
8 subjects	Flat/Small Building	3
16 subjects	Medium Building	4
20 subjects	Large Building	5
40 subjects	City Block	6
80 subjects	City District	8
160 subjects	City	10

RANGE CHART

REACH: Sensory

2 REACHS: Remotely but in real-time

CASTING TIME CHART

REACH: Instant/I turn (can be used in combat)

PARADOX GENERATION**DICE POOL**

Coincidental / Failure	0
Vulgar	I
Vulgar with Witnesses	2
Instability Failure Coincidental	Highest Sphere
Instability Failure Vulgar	Highest Sphere +I
Instability Failure Vulgar with Witnesses	2x Highest Sphere +2
In a Sanctum/Laboratory	+I or -I depends on your Sect
Reaching	+I

PARADOX BACKLASH ROLL

COST	REQ.	No. of Backlash	EFFECT
I	I	Burn I	
I	I	Trivial Paradox Flaw	
2	4	Minor Paradox Flaw	
3	6	Significant Paradox Flaw	
3	6	Paradox Spirit Visitation	
5	9	Permanent Paradox I	
4	9	Severe Paradox Flaw	
4	9	Banishment to a Paradox Realm	
10	11	Drastic Paradox Flaw	

MAGICK DAMAGE**DAMAGE**

Base Damage	I
Forces Sphere	+I

DMG. TYPE

Mind Sphere Effects	Sup. Will.
Most other Sphere Effects	Sup. Health

Any Sphere when charged with Prime 2 and I point of Quintessence.

Agg. Health

(Willpower in case of Mind)

Fire or Electrical Forces

Vulgar Entropy-, Life- or Prime-based

Effects that directly disrupt the target's Pattern.

Mind 3/ Life 3

Agg. Will.

Paradox Burn

Halved Sup.

or Agg.

Unless stated otherwise, magic damage will be always non-halved.

PARADOX	FLAWS	DURATION
WISDOM		DURATION
Enlightened (Wisdom 8-10)		One Scene
Understanding (Wisdom 4-7)		One Chapter/Day
Falling (Wisdom 1-3)		One Story/Month
Fallen One (Wisdom 0)		One Chronicle/Year



Writing is a curious endeavor, swerving from moments of splendid delirium into others of stunned puzzlement, and from there into stretches of calm, focused craft.

Character Creation Summary

CORE CONCEPT

What was your character's name? What did they do? Where and when were they Awakened? Where are they now? Choose your Ambition and Desire. Write your character's name on the Relationship Map.

AWAKENED CONCEPT

Pick your avatar Essence, your Sect, your Affiliation Faction and your Focus (a Paradigm, a Practice and several Tools, see page 8 and M20 page 565).

ATTRIBUTES

Take one Attribute at 4; three Attributes at 3; four Attributes at 2; one Attribute at 1. Health = Stamina + 3; Willpower = Composure + Resolve.

SKILLS

Pick one Skill distribution.

- Jack of all trades: One Skill at 3; eight Skills at 2; ten Skills at 1
- Balanced: Three Skills at 3; five Skills at 2; seven Skills at 1
- Specialist: One Skill at 4; three Skills at 3; three Skills at 2; three Skills at 1

Add free specialties to Academics, Craft, Performance, and Science Skills. Take one more free specialty and one from your Sect.

SPHERES AND ROTES

Allocate 5 points between any number of spheres, with their Sect Affinity Sphere receiving the first dot. Begin with one Rote from your Sect or one of the general ones.

ADVANTAGES

Spend 7 points on Advantages, and take 2 points of Flaws. Add any new supporting cast from Advantages and Flaws to the Relationship Map.

CONVICTIONS AND TOUCHSTONES

Start with one Convictions related to your Paradigm or Practice, one to your Sect and one optional of your choice. Each mage begins with one

to three humans Touchstones. Together with the Storyteller and other players you choose Chronicle Tenets (V5 page 174). Add all of them to the Relationship Map. Set your Wisdom at 7.

SEA OF TIME

Together with the Storyteller and other players, decide if your cabal are:

■ RECENTLY AWAKENED / ENLIGHTENED:

- » Arete 1
- » Quiet 0
- » Choose only 2 dots on Spheres

■ INITIATE / INITIATED OPERATIVES:

- » Arete 2
- » Quiet 1
- » Each player spends 15 experience points

■ DISCIPLE / AGENT:

- » Arete 3
 - » Quiet 2
 - » Each player adds 2 points of Advantages
 - » Each player adds 2 points of Flaws
 - » Each player subtracts 1 Wisdom
 - » Each player spends 35 experience points
- Set your Quintessence equals your Arete.

TRAIT COSTS: EXPERIENCE

TRAIT	EXPERIENCE
Increase Attribute	New Level x 5
Increase Skill	New Level x 3
New Specialty	3
Sphere	New Level x 7
Rote	Rote Level x 3
Advantages	3 per point
Wisdom*	New Level x 10
Arete*	New Level x 10

* Special conditions

For Technocratic players replace:

- Awakening for Epiphany
- Avatar for Genius
- Rote for Procedure/Adjustment
- Essence for Eidolon;
- Arete for Enlightenment
- Quintessence for Primal Energy

MAGE: THE ASCENSION

Summary Sheet

ATTRIBUTES

- **Strength:** Exertion of force by the muscles (Physical)
- **Dexterity:** Agility, grace, eye-hand coordination (Physical)
- **Stamina:** Toughness, resilience, endurance (Physical)
- **Charisma:** Charm, magnetism, strength of personality (Social)
- **Manipulation:** Getting others to do what you want (Social)
- **Composure:** Self-control, cool, calm head (Social)
- **Intelligence:** Memory, reasoning, intellect (Mental)
- **Wits:** Cleverness, intuition, spur-of-the-moment decision-making (Mental)
- **Resolve:** Focus, concentration, attention (Mental)

SKILLS

- **Academics:** Humanities and liberal arts, book learning (Mental)
- **Animal Ken:** Animal handling and communication (Social)
- **Athletics:** Running, jumping, climbing (Physical)
- **Awareness:** Senses, being aware of your surroundings, spotting threats (Mental)
- **Brawl:** Unarmed combat of all types (Physical)
- **Craft:** Crafting, building, shaping (Physical)
- **Drive:** Operating vehicles (Physical)
- **Etiquette:** Politeness in social settings (Social)
- **Finance:** Handling, moving, and making money (Mental)
- **Firearms:** Using ranged weapons, such as guns and bows (Physical)
- **Insight:** Determining states of mind and motives (Social)
- **Intimidation:** Getting another person to back down (Social)
- **Larceny:** Breaking and entering, guarding

against that (Physical)

- **Leadership:** Directing and inspiring others (Social)
- **Medicine:** Healing injuries, diagnosing disease (Mental)
- **Melee:** Armed hand-to-hand combat (Physical)
- **Occult:** Secret lore, both real and unreal (Mental)
- **Performance:** Expressing art in person to an audience (Social)
- **Persuasion:** Convincing others (Social)
- **Politics:** Handling, moving, and making government (Mental)
- **Science:** Knowledge and theory of the physical world (Mental)
- **Stealth:** Not being seen, heard, or recognized (Physical)
- **Streetwise:** Understanding the ins and outs of criminal and urban society (Social)
- **Subterfuge:** Tricking others into doing your will (Social)
- **Survival:** Remaining alive in adverse surroundings (Physical)
- **Technology:** Understanding and using modern technology, computers, and online activity (Mental)

ESSENCES / EIDOLONS

- **Dynamic:** Passionate force for progress and change
- **Static:** Grounded agent of secure stability
- **Primordial:** Elusive figure of primal mystery
- **Questing:** Wandering dreamer of new horizons

FACTIONS

- **The Traditions:** seek a return to the days of High Magick or a new dawn of mystic potential. Bitter enemies of the Technocracy, they appear to have been losing the battle for reality. (See M20 page 148)
- **The Disparates:** protect their ancestral ways, nurture their chosen people, and disdain this war that has caused untold misery. Often dismissed in the battle for reality, these groups have largely gone underground and now begin

to band together for mutual protection. (See M20 page 202)

- **The Technocracy:** enforces global order under their Enlightened guidance and protection. Dedicated to wiping out Reality Deviants, they've spent over 500 years at war with the mystic Traditions. (See M20 page 186)

The Council of Nine Mystic Traditions

- **Akashayana:** Masters of mind, body, and spirit through the Arts of personal discipline.
 - » Affinity Spheres: **Mind** or Life.
- **Celestial Chorus:** Sacred singers who give a human Voice to the Divine Song.
 - » Affinity Spheres: **Prime**, Forces, or Spirit.
- **Cult of Ecstasy:** Visionary seers who transcend limitations through sacred experience.
 - » Affinity Spheres: **Time**, Life, or Mind.
- **Kha'vadi:** Preservers and protectors of both the Spirit Ways and the Earthly cultures that have been looted, abandoned, and oppressed.
 - » Affinity Spheres: **Spirit**, Forces, Life, or Matter.
- **Euthanatos:** Disciples of mortality who purge corruption and bring merciful release from suffering.
 - » Affinity Spheres: **Entropy**, Life, or Spirit.
- **Order of Hermes:** Rigorous masters of High Magick and the Elemental Arts.
 - » Affinity Spheres: **Forces**.
- **Society of Ether:** Graceful saviors of scientific potential.
 - » Affinity Spheres: **Matter**, Forces, or Prime.
- **Verbena:** Primal devotees of rough Nature and mystic blood.
 - » Affinity Spheres: **Life** or Forces.
- **Mercurial Elite:** Reality-hackers devoted to rebooting their world.
 - » Affinity Spheres: **Data/ Correspondence** or Forces.

The Disparate Crafts

- **Ahl-i-Batin:** Seers of Unity through Divine connection and subtle influence.
 - » Affinity Spheres: Correspondence or Mind.
- **Bata'a:** Inheritors of voodoo, dedicated to re-

storing a broken world.

- » Affinity Spheres: Spirit or Life.
- **Children of Knowledge:** Crowned Ones devoted to alchemical perfection.
 - » Affinity Sphere: Matter, Forces, Prime, or Entropy.
- **Hollow Ones:** Dark romantics laughing in the face of ruin.
 - » Affinity Sphere: Any.
- **Kopa Loci:** Defenders of Nature, the Old Gods, and their culture.
 - » Affinity Sphere: Any.
- **Ngoma:** African High Magi, sworn to restore what's been taken from their home and people.
 - » Affinity Spheres: Life, Mind, Prime, or Spirit.
- **Orphans:** Self-Awakened mages surviving in the shadows of other sects.
 - » Affinity Sphere: Any.
- **Sisters of Hippolyta:** Guardians of the Sacred Feminine.
 - » Affinity Spheres: Life or Mind.
- **Taftāni:** Middle Eastern mystics shaping the gifts of Allah and the Arts of man.
 - » Affinity Spheres: Forces, Matter, Prime, or Spirit.
- **Templar Knights:** Bastions of chivalry in a corrupt age.
 - » Affinity Spheres: Forces, Life, Mind, or Prime.
- **Wu Lung:** Preservers of heavenly wisdom, order, and nobility.
 - » Affinity Sphere: Spirit, Forces, Matter, or Life.

The Technocratic Union

- **Iteration X:** Perfectors of the human machine.
 - » Affinity Spheres: Forces, Matter, or Time.
- **Agents of the New World (ANW):** Custodians of social order and global stability.
 - » Affinity Spheres: Mind or Data/ Correspondence.
- **Progenitors:** Innovators dedicated to the potential of organic life.
 - » Affinity Spheres: Life or Prime.
- **Syndicate:** Masters of finance, status, and the power of wealth.
 - » Affinity Spheres: Entropy, Mind, or Primal

- Utility.
- Void Engineers: Explorers and protectors of extradimensional space.
- » Affinity Spheres: Dimensional Science, Correspondence/ Data, or Forces.

SPHERES

- **Correspondence:** Understanding of the connections between places, spaces, and things
- **Entropy:** Study of mortality, probability, and chaos
- **Forces:** Command over elemental energies
- **Life:** Influence over organic beings and the physical structures of living bodies
- **Matter:** Control of inert materials, objects, and solid elemental structures
- **Mind:** Influence over emotions and thoughts, including the ability to project consciousness from one's physical body
- **Prime:** Control over primordial energies
- **Spirit:** Contact with Otherworldly spaces and entities; considered an Art by mystics and a Science by Technocrats, though in game terms it's all the same thing
- **Time:** Perception of, and influence over, temporal states and time-based phenomena

Technocratic Spheres

- **Data:** Tracing connections through information (Correspondence)
- **Dimensional Science:** Hyperphysics of alternate dimensions (Spirit)
- **Primal Utility:** Employment of quantum valuation energies (Prime)

ADVANTAGES AND FLAWS

Merits

(V5 page 181)

- Linguistics (All)
- Looks (All)
- Archaic (All)

(H5 page 70)

- Nutritionist (All)
- Substance Abuse (All)

(M5 page 62)

- Avatar Capacity

- Avatar Resonance
- Avatar Strength
- Bard's Tongue
- Beast Affinity
- Curiosity
- Cursed
- Echoes
- Enemy
- Faith
- Bard's Tongue
- Love
- Enemy
- Folklore Bane
- Haunted
- Health
- Lifesaver
- Love
- Memory
- Pain and Suffering
- Paradox Merits
- Phylactery
- Quicken
- Sect Paradigms
- Sight
- Substance Use
- Territorial
- Will

Backgrounds

(V5 page 186)

- **Allies** (All): Sleeper associates, usually family or friends
- **Contacts** (All): The information sources you possess
- **Fame** (All): How well-known you are among sleepers
- **Haven** (All but Warding – named as ‘Safe House’): A place to sleep safely
- **Influence** (All): Your political power within sleepers’ society
- **Resources** (All): Wealth, belongings, and income
- **Retainer** (All): Followers, guards, and servants
- **Status** (All – adapted): Your standing in Awakened society

(H5 page 72)

- **Mask (All):** A false identity, complete with documentation
- **Mentor:** A Mage or Technocrat who advises and supports you: a mentor, patron, or confederate

(M5 page 66)

- **Demesne:** Personal inner dream-space
- **Enhancement:** Cybernetic or biotech improvements to your body
- **Familiar/Companion:** Non-human helper with special abilities
- **Requisitions:** Access to Technocratic hardware
- **Safe House:** A refuge from harm
- **Wonders:** A Talisman, Fetish, or Device that contains its own reality-bending power