CLONES

Human Cloning

Creating fully human clones proved too expensive - and dangerous - for the labour force. Talk on "true human" clones are rare among humans (the ruling class), but widespread in gossip tabloids and novelas (soap-operas), popular among the clones (the working class). Clones ("false humans") have lab-grown human bodies with three key differences.

First, it takes around 5 years in a cloning factory to grown a work-condition adult clone. Maybe. The process is unreliable and the failure rate a trade secret.

Second, this lab-grown body is infertile, but immune to the "viroses" (influenza viruses) that are widespread on the surface, and deadly to humans. It is also resistant to most forms of cancer and engineered to respond to certain artificial chemical substances - for both good and ill.

Third, the body's nervous system is a biological-mechanical hybrid. The central nervous system is mechanical, with the brain for I/O and processing, and the spinal cord for local database storage. This local storage is very limited, and clones must stay connected to a network to have its database supplemented. The data stored at the top of spinal cord is progressively quicker to access than at the bottom. This local storage data and it's allocation is modifiable. What is prioritized is decided internally, but influenced by network data.

Free Will

For both efficiency and for redundancy during network outages, this prioritization cannot be made remotely. This "internal data storage prioritization" is sometimes compared to "free-will" for these thinking-machines, but the concept is hotly debated among authorities on the subject.

Clones are programmed by network content. During development, this content is necessary to generate the clone's "artificial memories", data from some long-dead human whose persona was recorded enough in the pre-collapse internet.

The network also assists in real-time interpretation and processing for connected clones. If a disconnect happens unexpectedly, a clone's exception handling forces a sleep mode ("temporary shutdown") or at least low-power mode ("dazed") while internal storage data ("memory") is wiped to make room for offline processing, resulting in permanent memory loss.

In Society

How a clone's behaviour changes once they stay offline for too long is an undefined behaviour, but loss of long-term memory is a guarantee. Clones who live outside of the network without permission are seen as a dangerous to both society and to themselves, and the practice is illegal.

The few surviving humans live secluded lives, either in the upper class of the last remaining industrial centers or miserable and harsh lives "away from society" - deep in the jungle or far off in the sea.

In industrial centers, clones are the labour force, stuck in debt servitude to pay for healthcare, network access, and living conditions. Those who leave without permission are called *disconnects*.

In the Drylands, *disconnects* are hunted down by the State