

## Timeline

- 2112 — December 7** RJ Brewster gets lost, triggering a cascade of events leading to a deeper investigation into the lost.
- 2115 — February ??** The first partially successful upload leads to a breakthrough and, shortly after, the foundation of the System.
- 2117 — ???** Michelle Hadje and Debarre pool their money to upload.
- 2124 — January 1** Systime set at year zero, day zero.
- 2125 — January 21** The System secedes from the planetary governments on Earth.
- 2170 — Throughout the year** Most planetary governments begin compensating the families of those who choose to upload.
- 2238 — July 28** Ioan Bălan uploads to use the compensation to help eir brother out after eir parents' death.
- 2305 — November 8** Dear, Also, The Tree That Was Felled of the Ode clade contacts Ioan Bălan for assistance with a project that leads to the publication of *On the Perils of Memory*.
- 2325 — January 21** The launch project concludes with the launch of the Castor and Pollux Launch vehicles.
- 2326 — October 30** The Bălan clade publishes *An Expanded History of Our World* In conjunction with May Then My Name Die With Me of the Ode clade's *An Expanded Mythology of Our World*, collected together as *On the Origins of Our World*.
- 2346 — May 28** The Artemisians make contact with the Castor launch.
- 2350 — January 21** Assassination attempt on The Only Time I Know My True Name Is When I Dream.

## **The universe**

### **Immersive tech**

Beginning in the late 2100s, immersive computing technology began to become commonplace. The mechanism by which one enters the 'net is a set of implants taking the form of metallic contacts on the middle carpals of the fingers, near-field pads beneath the skin of the forehead, interferites — microscopic neural blockers that prevent one from acting out in reality what happens when delved in — and an implant along the spine starting at the fifth cervical vertebra and running down to the bottom of the thoracic vertebrae. The exocortex contains much of the technology that actually controls the experience of interacting with the sim.

The net is comprised of simulated areas, or sims, where one can interact with objects and other people. Online, one is perceived through an avatar, or av, which can be whatever shape one chooses. These can be made, customized, purchased, and sold.

It's like VR, only actually good.

A new take on sims are fully immersive sims, wherein one becomes something more abstract than an avatar, such as an entire room, where moving means controlling lights or sound, and sensations can be those of microphones or any other sensor one might like.

### **Earth**

Sometimes referred to as 'phys-side', Earth continues to tick along.

### **Early 2100s**

At this point, the governments of earth are divided into two large political units comprised of smaller countries. The two

largest players are the Western Federation (WF) and the Sino-Russian Bloc (S-R Bloc), but others include the North-East African Coalition (NEAC), and Southeast Asia/Pacifica (SEAPAC). Many countries still remain independent, with Israel being a notable example.

The previous century is described as troublesome, and there's a marked decline in population, with global population hovering at around 7 billion. The climate has suffered greatly, but things are still habitable.

### **Around 2170**

While the climate has continued to suffer somewhat, income inequality has continued to increase and, under the guise of helping poorer families out, several governments have started to incentivize uploading, though in reality it comes across as thinly-veiled eugenics. This is largely due to influence sys-side by members of the Ode and Jonas clades, notably due to the work of Do I Know God After The End Waking

### **Early 2300s**

Earth is described as a 'shithole'. Global warming has proceeded to the pace where much of the population below a certain latitude lives below-ground, though many have simply moved towards the poles. Air quality is...not great, and many spend as much time as possible on the 'net in sims, with children getting implants at around 5 years old, though the minimum upload age remains 18.

### **The System**

Created in the early 2100s, the System (a vague name to keep the original project secret, though one which stuck around) allows for uploaded consciousnesses to live functionally immortal lives.

## Systime

The System measures time with systime. This takes the format of *years since 2124+day of the year 24-hour time*. For instance, Secession took place on 1+21 19:00 first contact from the Artemisians occurred at 222+148 3:06.

The date of midnight on January 1, 2124 was chosen as the opening of the reputation markets, as such a time scheme was needed for marking transactions. The use of systime is not universal among the inhabitants of the System, as getting the current time (an experience akin to remembering what time it is) provides both systime and standard phys-side dates, but those who work most often with history and sim design rely on it heavily for both mapping events and seasons of the year, should the sims in question require seasons.

## Uploading

Uploading is a one-way, destructive process. The body dies while the consciousness continues within the System. There is a small chance of failure (around 1% as of 2130, <0.5% as of 2140, <0.25% as of 2150, <0.001% as of 2200).

Consciousnesses are uploaded to the system at the L5 point via the Ansible, a networked series of upload centers with a direct radio connection to the System itself. By the 2300s, this is largely automated and consists of signing a form and hitting a button.

Once uploaded, individuals are greeted by volunteers (later automated) to orient them to the concepts of creating clothing, simple objects, moving between sims, sensorium messages, and forking. Early uploads tend to live communally in larger sims, and many remain there, while the rest tend to flock towards smaller communities of like-minded individuals.

## Forking

Introduced almost by accident, the concept of forking allows one to create a new *instance* of oneself. This copy is completely identical, but as soon as they're created and their experiences begin to differ, that instance starts to undergo the process of *individuation*. They form their own memories, and their experience of the world is colored by those memories.

An instance may *quit*. When they do so, their memories are provided to their *down-tree* instance to remember or not in a process called *merging*. A merge may be wholesale (sometimes described as *blithe*) or *cherrypicked*, wherein the down-tree instance is able to choose some of the memories but not others in a labor-intensive process.

The greater the individuation between and up- and down-tree instance, the greater the chance for *conflicts*. These occur when memories don't line up — that is, the experiences may be of the same event, but the conclusions drawn from the event may be different. As time goes on, individuation will affect the entire personality of an individual, as personality is built in part atop memories. Cocladists who have diverged by decades or centuries may find such merges incredibly difficult.

Forking incurs a reputation cost. This is tied to available capacity on the System, and as capacity grows, the cost of forking decreases, to the point where, in the 2300s, it's negligible. This cost is incurred after five minutes of forking or as soon as that instance forks, whichever comes first. The new instance begins with reputation equal to the cost of forking, though transferring reputation within a clade is possible. Several other things such as information production and exchange, sim creation, and some experiences can lead to reputation exchange.

The *root instance* of an individual will find it very difficult to quit as, to quote May Then My Name Die With Me of the Ode clade, “the System is not built for death”. This applies to their *up-tree* instances as well; it is easier to quit the shorter one has

been around or if a newer up-tree instance exists (for instance, if Jace Doe#Tracker forks into Jace Doe#1234abc, #Tracker may quit easily right away, though it will get steadily more difficult as #1234abc individuates; similarly, if #1234abc forks into Jace Doe#5678def and #5678def individuates long enough, #1234abc will find it difficult to quit).

## Clades and dissolution strategies

Groups of instances forked from a single individual are known as *clades*. Although these are all highly unique, the oh-so-human need to bucketize the world into useful categories has led to three general strategies:

**Taskers** Taskers fork infrequently and only ever for short-lived tasks, choosing to remain primarily a clade of one. *Example:* Tycho Brahe (from *Nevi'im*) is a tasker who forks so rarely he has a lot of trouble even managing it. Merging back down to his #Core proves difficult.

**Trackers** Relying more heavily on forks to accomplish tasks, trackers may keep instances around for months or years, and sometimes more than one at a time. However, these instances tend to retain a strong sense of identity with their root instance and will almost always merge back down. *Example:* Ioan Bălan, as a tracker, forks quite often for eir work, but those forks tend to be associated with projects and, on completion, will merge back down into eir #Tracker instance (with a few notable exceptions: Codrin Bălan individuated enough to become eir own person, and Sorina Bălan forced her own individuation to leave memories behind as best she could).

**Dispersionistas** Dispersionistas don't give a fuck. They fork at need and those forks may quit, may retain some sense of their identity, or may individuate and become their own individuals down the line. *Example:* Michelle Hadje founded the Ode clade, which nominally has 100 members,

but they're not super strict about it and many have long-lived instances they don't really talk about.

Clades can form quasi-familial units or not even really talk to each other; it's really up to the individual. There's a mild taboo against relationships between *cocladists*, though the greater they have differentiated, the less that seems to be an issue.

## **Sims**

Locations in the System are known as sims, an artifact from the pre-System 'net days. Sims may be public or private. Public sims are usually open to anyone and can be accessed by querying the perisystem architecture for their *tags* (e.g: Josephine's#aaca9bb9).

Private sims are generally owned by a single individual, clade, or family. These sims generally have much more restrictive ACLs (from 'access control lists', but now generally used to refer to fine-grained permissions) which can limit who may enter, whether or not the location is visible to others, who in the sim may create new objects, modify boundaries, and so on. The owners have full ACLs, including the ability to grant others owner status and rescind their own (though every sim must have at least one owner).

## **Reputation market**

Although by the 2200s the System mostly exists as a post-scarcity society (or non-society, as it is not at all unified), a market was put into place early on when capacity was at a premium. This market worked on reputation (marked  $\hat{R}$ ) which was gained via recognition. Appreciation of someone or the works they produce increases their reputation, which can then be spent on various things such as forking (which only costs a nominal amount by 2250), creating sims, seeking information from individuals, and so on.

With technological advancements increasing System capacity exponentially, the reputation market shifted in purpose early in the 2200s to be a place for sharing information between individuals, with one gaining reputation by way of producing content and spending it by requesting content from others.

### **Perisystem architecture**

The perisystem architecture is the conceptual foam of computer-stuff in which individuals reside and items such as sims, food, very nice fountain pens, and very fine paper exist. However, it also contains large amounts of information in the form of books, the reputation market, and various information feeds.

Some maintenance of the perisystem architecture is required, usually by engineers both sys-side and phys-side. In the instance of the two launch vehicles, for instance, PA engineers managed the DMZ later called Convergence

### **Other notes**

**Children** Not a thing, sorry.

**Pets** While there is no uploading of pets, many common animals can be created.

### **Communication between sys-side and phys-side**

Communication between the two levels of existence was limited to text-only until A/V communication was unveiled in 2350 based on information gained from the Artemisians.

Any other questions? Feel free to ask!

## **Characters**

As the Post-Self universe contains billions, you're perfectly free to create your own characters to live, work, love, and hate within



the setting. The following are those included in the canon, which you are welcome to use.

Spoilers for the Post-Self Cycle itself are marked as such: Yikes!. Hover to expose the spoiler.

## **RJ Brewster / AwDae (ey/em)**

A sound tech for the Soho Theatre Troupe, RJ Brewster was among the lost in the early 2100s. Ey, along with Dr. Carter Ramirez, was instrumental in bringing to light the origin of the lost and ending that whole saga. As a member of the furry subculture, ey commonly appeared online (and while lost) as an agender anthropomorphic fennec. Ey focused strongly on making eir avatar (or av) as realistic as possible, down to the inability to form the same consonants that a human mouth would. Ey was instrumental in the creation of the System, being the first semi-successful upload; while ey did not wind up living to see the System, eir consciousness formed the foundation of the System itself, described early on as a half-sensed presence within the System. Eir friend Sasha, so torn by eir loss and confronted by eir sensed presence after uploading, used eir poem *Ode to the End of Death* for the names of her forks. Early political circumstances required that her relationship with em be kept secret, leading to a near pathological obsession with keeping eir Name from being known.

*Appears in:*

- *Qoheleth*
- *Toledot* (mentioned)
- *Nevi'im*
- *Mitzvot* (mentioned)
- “Selected Letters” (mentioned)

## **Dr. Carter Ramirez (she/her)**

Dr. Carter Ramirez was a neuroscientist and researching of the lost at the University College London during their brief exis-

tence. She went on to become something of a political proponent of individual rights of uploaded personalities.

*Appears in:*

- *Qoheleth*
- *Toledot* (mentioned)

## **Michelle Hadje / Sasha**

Michelle Hadje uploaded early on during the System's creation and is considered one of the founders and a member of the Council of Eight along with Debarre, Zeke/Ezekiel, Jonas Anderson, user11824, and the three nameless Sino-Russian Bloc representatives.

She is best known for being the founder of the Ode clade, and is no longer extant on the System as of 2306.

Due to her experience while lost, her and her up-tree instances have a 'unique relationship to language' that primarily manifests with a lack of contractions, florid speech with occasionally irregular word order (anaphora using dative/ablative fronting, e.g: "I set up *for myself* an archetype"), and well-placed uses of the word 'fuck'. She and her clade deal with the effects even within the System and will occasionally describe themselves as 'mad', for lack of a better term. Additionally, the experience left her struggling to maintain a single form post-uploading, often alternating between skunk and human form, which is described as extremely unpleasant.

- *Qoheleth*
- *Toledot*
- *Nevi'im* (mentioned)
- *Mitzvot* (mentioned)

## The Ode clade

The Ode clade consists of, nominally, 100 instances. In 2124, Michelle forked ten instances from herself corresponding to the ten first lines of the stanzas of the “Ode to the end of death”. From there, those ten instances were free to fork as they would, and each quickly picked up on interests as they went.

*Note:* Given the unwieldy names, many Odists go by shorter versions, which are shown with *italics*.

**Dear, Also, The Tree That Was Felled (it/its)** Dear is an instance artist, meaning that it plays around with the meaning of self in a world where one can create multiple copies of oneself. It was instrumental in the investigation of the events as described in the Bălan clade’s *On the Perils of Memory*. It takes the form of a fennec fox with somewhat iridescent white fur, a result of it forking a few too many times in order to shift its sensorium to try and forget a fact. It is described as wearing natty, fanciful dress, whether that be a tux, dress, or whatever. It has opted out of gender.

It is in a relationship with Codrin Bălan and one other unnamed individual.

*Appears in:*

- *Qoheleth* and Gallery Exhibition: A Love Story
- *Toledot*
- *Nevi'im*
- *Mitzvot*
- “Selected Letters” (mentioned)

**May Then My Name Die With Me (she/her)** May Then My Name (or simply May to those with whom she is closest) is an author, actor, and hopeless romantic. She takes the form of a short, chubby anthropomorphic skunk, and is the author of the well-received *An Expanded Mythology of Our World*. She falls in love easily and deeply, and her primary instance is in a relationship

with Ioan Bălan, though several long-running forks remain in relationships with others. She dresses for comfort.

*Appears in:*

- Toledot
- Nevi'im
- Mitzvot
- "Selected Letters" (mentioned)

**The Only Time I Know My True Name is When I Dream / Sasha (she/her)** True Name is a politician and one of the movers and shakers of the System as one of the Founders and member of the Council of Eight. She takes the form of an anthropomorphic skunk, though is taller and slimmer than her up-tree instance, May Then My Name. She is described wearing rather nice clothes; blouses and skirts or slacks.

She is/was in an on-again-off-again relationship with Zacharias, a dapper, snarky red fox.

*Appears in:*

- Toledot
- Nevi'im
- Mitzvot
- "Selected Letters" (mentioned)

**Life Breeds Life, But Death Must Now Be Chosen / Qoheleth (he/him)** Life Breeds Life was a historian and author involved in early historiographical efforts on the System. He's described early on as a middle-aged human man, usually wearing a suit, but later as taking the form of a 'biblical notable', wearing a linen tunic and trousers with a robe.

*Appears in:*

- Qoheleth
- Toledot (mentioned)
- Nevi'im (mentioned)
- Mitzvot (mentioned)

## Other Odists

**Do I Know God After The *End Waking* (he/him)** Ranger skunk, in charge of phys-side finances as they pertain to the System early on, but has since grown repentant of his actions. In an on-again-off-again relationship with Debarre.

- *Toledot*
- *Nevi'im*
- *Mitzvot*
- “Selected Letters” (mentioned)

***Serene*; Sustained And Sustaining (she/her)** A fennec like Dear, Serene was forked when her down-tree instance wanted to explore a twinned interest in instances and sims. She build fantastic, nature-based sims, including Dear’s prairie and End Waking’s forest.

- *Qoheleth*
- *Toledot*
- *Nevi'im* (mentioned)
- *Mitzvot* (mentioned)
- “Selected Letters” (mentioned)

**That Which Lives is Forever *Praiseworthy* (she/her)** Another skunk-type Odist, Praiseworthy focused on shaping sentiment early on in the System’s history. No one’s sure what she’s up to now.

- *Qoheleth*
- *Toledot* (mentioned)
- *Mitzvot* (mentioned)

***Why Ask Questions Here At The End Of All Things* (she/her) and *Why Ask Questions Here At The End Of All Things* (she/her)** Commonly described as shitheads, Why Ask Questions and Answers Will Not Help shaped sentiment, with the

former focusing on building camaraderie sys-side and the latter working via the text line to build support phys-side.

- *Toledot*
- *Nevi'im*
- *Mitzvot*

**Time Is A Finger Pointing At Itself** A human-type Odist who has devoted herself to theatre. She's described as a somewhat taller, somewhat more slender human Odist, dressing chic and modern, but with a simple desire to be everyone's friend.

- *Toledot* (mentioned)
- *Nevi'im*
- *Mitzvot*

### **Douglas Hadje (he/him)**

Douglas Hadje-Simon is Michelle Hadje's ancestor and the phys-side launch coordinator for the launch project.

*Appears in:*

- *Toledot*
- *Nevi'im*
- *Mitzvot*
- "Selected Letters" (mentioned)

### **Jonas Anderson (he/him)**

Jonas Andersen was another member of the Council of Eight and worked to guide the System throughout the years. Described as lanky, 'well-preserved forties', tousled blond hair, the consummate politician.

*Appears in:*

- *Qoheleth* (mentioned)

- Toledot
- Nevi'im
- Mitzvot
- “Selected Letters” (mentioned)

## The Bălan clade

### Ioan Bălan (ey/em)

Ioan Bălan (*yoh-ahn buh-lahn*) is a historian, investigative journalist, writer, and much later, actor and playwright. Ey uploaded in 2238 to help eir brother, Dragoș Bălan, after their parents' death, and began working with Dear, Also, The Tree That Was Felled of the Ode clade in 2305 on a project that resulted in the well-received book *On the Perils of Memory*. Later, while working on *An Expanded History of Our World*, ey entered into a romantic relationship with another Odist, May Then My Name Die With Me. Ey's described as of average height, a little soft, and with tousled blond hair. Ey has kept eir masculine name and relatively masculine appearance from phys-side, dressing in 'faux-academic garb' (usually slacks, a dress shirt, a sweater vest, a bow tie, and occasionally a jacket), though ey describes eir gender as fluid. May Then My Name occasionally uses the pet name Ionuț (*yoh-nootz*)

*Appears in:*

- Qoheleth
- Toledot
- Nevi'im
- Mitzvot
- “Selected Letters”

### Codrin Bălan (ey/em)

After the conclusion of eir project with Dear, Ioan forked a new long-running instance, Codrin Bălan (*co-dreen buh-lahn* or *co-drihn*), who moved in with Dear and its partner and later joined

their relationship. Ey has grown eir hair out and leaned much harder into androgyny, eir features shifting away from masculine, wearing sarongs and tunics. Eir partners occasionally use the pet name Codruț (*co-drootz*).

*Appears in:*

- *Qoheleth*
- *Toledot*
- *Nevi'im*
- *Mitzvot* (mentioned)
- “Selected Letters”

### **Sorina Bălan (she/her)**

Forked from Codrin in order to continue along on Artemis’s journey, Sorina owned her Romanian heritage perhaps more than either of her down-tree instances, most often seen in traditional Romanian garb from ~1800s — an *ie* (blouse), waist belt, skirt, and *fotă* (apron), all heavily embroidered — and speaking more frequently in her first language.

*Appears in:*

- *Nevi'im*
- *Mitzvot* (mentioned)
- “Selected Letters”

### **Aurel Bălan**

An occasional instance inspired by Debarre’s habit of keeping a fork for his relationship with End Waking, which tends to last only a few months at a time before the skunk asks for solitude, Ioan forks Aurel (*ow-rel*) when Sasha (*née True Name*) is up for a relationship. She’ll occasionally use the pet names Aurică (*ow-ree-kuh*) when ey’s in a more masculine mode and Aurica (*ow-ree-kah*) when ey’s in a more feminine mode.

- “Selected Letters”



## **Tycho Brahe (he/him)**

Born under a different name, Tycho chose the name of the Danish astronomer when he agreed to be interviewed by Codrin for the *History*. An anxious and often depressed individual, he's depicted as a graying middle-aged man, working as an astronomer on the System, and one of the first to make contact with the Artemisians.

*Appears in:*

- *Toledot*
- *Nevi'im*
- *Mitzvot* (mentioned)
- "Selected Letters" (mentioned)

## **Other characters**

### **Yared Zerezghi**

A 'net addict and DDR (Direct Democracy Representative) junkie, Yared was instrumental in the secession of the System from the rest of the governments on Earth. He's described as a tall Black man from Ethiopia, the events of Secession having left him incredibly anxious.

*Appears in:*

- *Toledot*
- *Mitzvot* (mentioned)

### **Sarah Genet (she/her)**

Sarah is a psychologist and one of the emissaries chosen to meet with the Artemisians. She later becomes a mentor for Codrin as ey works on moving towards psychology as a career. She's described as having short, gray hair and wearing business casual sorts of clothes.

*Appears in:*

- *Nevi'im*
- *Mitzvot* (mentioned)

### **Debarre (he/him)**

Having lost his boyfriend to the lingering effects of getting lost, Debarre uploaded along with Michelle Hadge. He's usually depicted as an anthropomorphic weasel dressed in all black. He's in an on-again-off-again relationship with End Waking, along with a few others in the form of parallel monogamy.

*Appears in:*

- *Qoheleth*
- *Toledot* (mentioned)
- *Nevi'im*
- *Mitzvot* (mentioned)

### **Zeke/Ezekiel (he/him)**

Zeke (later known by his full name, Ezekiel), is an Israeli Jew who uploaded early on and worked to implement forking while on the Council of Eight. He's described as anything from a pile of dirty rags or rubbish, barely recognizable as human, to a homeless man.

*Appears in:*

- *Toledot*
- *Nevi'im* (mentioned)
- *Mitzvot* (mentioned)

### **user11824 (he/him)**

All anyone can really tell about user11824 is that he's male. He's described as being so utterly boring that one's eyes simply slide right off him. This fact, combined with his anonymous chosen

name, make him quite interesting, much to his chagrin. He described himself prior to uploading as ‘a nobody, but a Maori nobody’.

*Appears in:*

- *Toledot*
- *Nevi'im* (mentioned)
- *Mitzvot* (mentioned)

## **Zacharias**

A dapper and snarky red fox. In an on-again-off-again relationship with True Name.

*Appears in:*

- *Nevi'im* (mentioned)
- *Mitzvot*
- “Selected Letters” (mentioned)