

# TECHNOCRACY: PROGENITORS™



A Sourcebook  
for Mage: The Ascension™



# TECHNOCRACY: PROGENITORS™

At Life's Doorway



By Edward Winters and Judith A. McLaughlin, M.S. Human Genetics



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Due to the mature themes presented within, reader discretion is advised.

**Developer's Note:** The various references to drugs should not in any way be construed as an endorsement by White Wolf Games. Just thought you'd like to know.

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# TECHNOCRACY: PROGENITORS™

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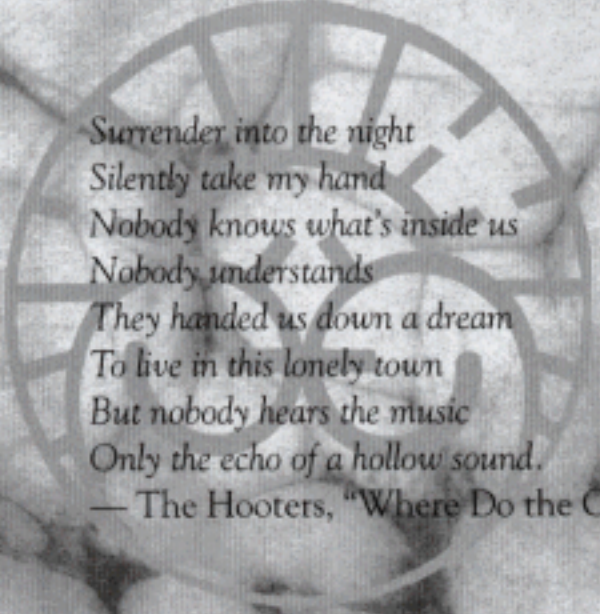
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# Book One: The Student's Journal



*Surrender into the night  
Silently take my hand  
Nobody knows what's inside us  
Nobody understands  
They handed us down a dream  
To live in this lonely town  
But nobody hears the music  
Only the echo of a hollow sound.*  
— The Hooters, "Where Do the Children Go"







# Chapter One: The Doors Open

*Take the power to set you free  
Kick down the door and throw away the key  
Give up your needs...  
Your poisoned seeds  
Find yourself elected to a different kind of creed.*  
— Annie Lennox, "Money Can't Buy It"



## Excerpts from the journal of Andrew Greene

### Epiphany

1/12/89

A very strange man approached me today after my presentation. He said he was impressed with my insights into the interaction between metal molecules and G proteins, and that he knew of a scientist who was working in that field. If I were interested, he could arrange a meeting with this gentleman for me. Naturally, I said yes. Making contacts is always important, especially when I'm looking for a good school and a good stipend.

1/15/89

Out of curiosity, I checked Grateful Med today for references to this Dr. Charles Reid. I was extremely sur-

prised to find that the man had several hundred articles to his name, not a few of which were G protein papers. This could well be a big break for me. My appointment is in a few weeks, down in Washington. In the interest of making the best impression possible on this man, I've begun to read all his pertinent articles from the last couple of years.

2/6/89

Dr. Reid is a phenomenon! I have never before spoken to someone so intelligent, so incisive, so driving. For hours, it seemed we discussed every aspect of biological science. We started with my research project and how it related to his work. My experiments, which had consumed all hours of my life for six months, paled to insignificance next to the brilliance and simplicity of his theories and hypotheses. He then began leading me down new roads, forcing me to think and rethink scientific applications that I've always taken for granted. It was as if he were guiding me down lines of reasoning that he'd long ago explored, but that were radical and new for me.



By the time we were through, I was mentally and physically drained. I hardly remember saying good-bye and setting up our next interview. All night, my mind continued to race through his paths of logic, reveling in the newness and wonder of them.

At night when I try to sleep, I can almost hear him talking to me, urging me to some new conclusions. It's almost as if he were still in the room with me, in the back of my mind. It's driving me nuts, but I've never before felt so driven!

3/15/89

In the month since I met with Dr. Reid, I have been rereading his literature with newly opened eyes, glimpsing the insights and sensing in those paragraphs concepts beyond what I can grasp right now. It's so frustrating!!! I can barely remember any specifics of anything he and I discussed. I can't write them down no matter how hard I try. I know there's a greater truth, some basic principle that lies there, but I can't understand it for the life of me!!!

On Dr. Reid's advice in the letter I received from him not long ago, I sent out my application and letters of reference to one of the universities where he has an appointment.

4/30/89

Myscientific paradigms have been overturned, crushed and trampled underfoot. Dr. Reid has revealed to me a whole new realm, the realm of true science. He told me that magic is real, and that with magic, technology can be advanced to heights beyond that which is possible in the mundane world.

The man is either a genius or a lunatic; I haven't decided which. His logic was inescapable, his proofs irrefutable. Magic is real, science is real, and reality is a mixture of both. He said that I can be either a subject of reality or a controller of reality. As his student, or a student of one of

his colleagues, I would have the latter option. It is not without its dangers, he added, for he and his colleagues, whom he calls "Progenitors," have dangerous enemies.

Dangers be damned! This is an opportunity for me to be everything that I ever wanted and more than I ever dreamed. I want this position, this life, and this power more than life!

5/1/89

I don't know how to describe how I feel. I would say that I've got the world's biggest hangover, but I haven't been drinking, and feel too clear, too awake, too sensitive to everything around me in any case. I feel intoxicated, but not drunk; let down, but still higher than I've ever felt in my life. Everything is a blur; I remember just enough for it not to make sense.

It is real, what we talked about, what he said. What Dr. Reid said, I mean. I mentally reviewed our conversation over and over and over, and it was as if he were standing right there, urging me toward some inescapable conclusion, and I reached out, physically reached out to where I thought he might be. It was like a trance, and I don't know what I was doing. Then the room seemed to bend around the edges, like I had ingested some hallucinogen (but I know I hadn't), and I started trembling and fell down on the bed, and the room seemed to spin, and I swear that when I closed my eyes I had this vision of myself as Prometheus, accepting a torch held out to me by some unseen hand.

Ever since I woke up this morning, everything seems so sharp, so vivid, so overpowering. I don't even pretend to know what happened, but maybe this is what people mean by "a stroke of genius," an insight so powerful and profound that it changes your life forever.

Dr. Reid is right. There is more than I ever imagined at work in the world. I want a piece of it so badly I can taste it!

6/15/89

What a grueling gauntlet of interviews! I think I've managed to talk to every biologist on the face of the Earth, or at least at this college, today. Question after question, lab after lab, professor after professor. Every professor asked me the same set of questions. "Why do you want to come here?" "In what area of the field are you most interested?" "How would you be a positive addition to our department?" "What has your previous experience been like?" Argh!

It seems to have gone well, however. The end of the day is pretty much a blur, because fatigue set in after I went to lunch with two of the students, Steven and Diane. I get the impression that Steven is one of Them (dare I say Us?), but something about Diane tells me that she is not party to the secret. Both were consummately professional, and Diane was particularly kind about my sore feet (from tramping about the campus).





6/20/89

I received Dr. Reid's phone call today. Classes begin August 25th.

8/24/89

Moving to Richmond, Virginia, was one of the most miserable experiences of my life. The apartment is a wretched, roach-infested studio in the Fan — a loud, labyrinthine student sector where I was serenaded with the sounds of gunshots, screams and parties. Classes start today, and I am looking forward to getting away from this place. Nervous though I am about facing my competition and my new mentors, anything has to be an improvement over this....

## Classes Begin

8/24/89

Well, all my fears were unfounded. The sizzingly brilliant minds I was prepared to face as my fellow students consist of a gorgeous blonde Southern belle named Mary Beth and some skinny, zit-faced geek named Rob. Mary Beth is just as charming and intelligent as she is gorgeous. *Summa cum laude* from Duke in chemistry, three years lab experience, and five papers published, plus a poster at last year's American Society of Human Genetics conference. Wow. And she suggested we do some studying together.

Rob stayed quiet, taking cramped little notes on every word that dropped from Dr. Smith-Nevans' lips, even though all she was doing was welcoming us to the school and introducing us around the department. There were a couple of other students, but none of them was in our program. Just the three of us.

.....

8/25/89 From the recorded tapes of Dr. Reid's Progenitor History class:

You have completed your reading of the required text chapters and journal articles. Now that you have finished with the basics, we move on to a better understanding of our own Convention, the Progenitors.

From ancient times, our efforts have been aimed at creating order and an understanding of the workings of the universe. Many of the misguided and unenlightened would have us believe that reality is never to be completely understood. The universe contains mysteries to which only supreme beings are entitled to know the answers. Rubbish!

From the genesis of the ideas that like breeds like and that two substances combined can form another substance, our forefathers were there, studying, learning and carving a path of knowledge out of the jungles of ignorance and superstition; leading primitive scientists from all walks of life down the long road of truth and enlightenment. Anyone who truly believes that order rules the universe, and that there is nothing we cannot understand, can be counted as an ally in our battle for Ascension.

Throughout the ages, our enemies have attempted to undermine the spread of our work. At the beginning, our power was new, still being tested. Theories and hypotheses needed to be proved or disproved. Fundamental laws and their applications had to be conceived, created, researched and understood. All this took time. And as our understanding grew, so did our realization that the helpless Masses were not prepared to deal with the unlimited and dangerous powers buried within each of them. They needed guidance and order, means of channeling this energy in a logical, patterned way.

While we struggled for reason and understanding, our rivals rose to power. They corrupted the Masses with superstition and supernatural gibberish. We were so consumed with our own thirst for knowledge that we were unaware of the damage these "free spirits" were inflicting upon reality.

While the ignorant Masses were scouring ditches and gullies for edible roots and grubs, our forefathers were planting seeds. While they were drunk and dancing naked with nymphs, early FACADE Engineers were studying the workings of the human body. And while they were on their knees begging a deaf god to save them, the first of the Pharmacopeists were curing their diseases....

8/28/89 Recorded excerpt from Dr. Reid's Progenitor History class discussion of the impact of early Progenitors:

...Some of the earliest members of our Convention spent their days and nights selectively breeding animals and plants long before the Masses even conceived of agriculture or the domestication of animals. Their actions were based on the observed fact that like mated with like produced like. This, of course, wasn't always true, but it was a good start. These early scientists fed and clothed mankind via careful observation, improved organisms and manipulations of growth and development. With science and magic they ushered in the first of the true civilizations.

As civilization waxed, some of our number began to organize the Masses, helping them by treating their ills with medicinal herbs and the first primitive surgeries. At this time we worked hand-in-hand with the other Traditions; indeed, we were indistinguishable from them. There were no "Traditions" as such in those days; the Traditions as we now understand them had yet to exist. Those who now call themselves the Verbena were our allies and partners. Soon, however, we — the Progenitors-to-be — were set apart by our vision of a safer world where the Masses were no longer in danger.

Thanks to us, the fight for survival was reduced to a mere skirmish, and cities grew. Groups developed within the Masses: the haves and the have-nots. The inheritance of property, money and influence was common, for it was widely believed that children inherit their parents' characteristics, and therefore are only as worthy or unworthy as their forebears.



With the rise of civilization and thought, the Traditions twisted away from us, corrupting our deeds. Soon the Masses believed that their survival was based on miracles and divine actions. In a jealous fit, the early Traditions turned on us, their saviors, and proceeded to manipulate the perceptions of humanity in an attempt to turn them away from science. They spread rumors, half-truths and old wives' tales rather than acknowledging our valid scientific accomplishments.

We felt that the Traditions were misguided adolescents and hoped that by showing them the truth they would join us in protecting the helpless Masses. So we allowed them to continue, to our everlasting regret....

8/29/89

Mary Beth and I studied together last evening. She is very insightful about the Progenitors' relationship with the rest of the world. When I commented that perhaps Dr. Reid was overdramatizing our role in history, she pointed out that the Progenitors were probably the first to apply scientific principles to the studies of life. In that light, I can see that we were probably responsible for agriculture, and therefore civilization.

9/1/89 Recorded excerpt from Dr. Reid's Progenitor History class discussion of early science and philosophy:

Still science trudged on. During these early times very few mortals approached even a dim understanding of our theories. With the appearance of the Greek philosophers, however, we began one of our most remarkable historical uses of a non-Progenitor think tank, embarking on one of the first pursuits of fundamental genetics. The Greek philosophers spent a great deal of time discussing the concept of heredity; Socrates, Hippocrates and Aristotle were preeminent among those whose theories lasted through the ages. Hippocrates was one of the few who suggested that men and women contributed equally to their offspring or child, and it was from Hippocrates that we took our old name, the Hippocratic Circle.

Aristotle was one of the earliest to suggest that the male contributed everything to the form, while the female simply supplied the matter. He was one hell of a physicist, but he should've left biology alone.

During these troubled times, the group that would eventually become the Pharmacopeists turned its attention once again to the civilizations at hand. Whenever problems arose that would in one way or another complicate our experiments, the Pharmacopeists ran interference for us by inciting some sort of political uproar with poisons and drugs.





However, the Traditions quietly gathered power while we focused our attention on science. They took advantage of our seclusion, for we would sometimes stay for years in our castles and towers, not bothering to emerge and see what the Masses had recently wrought. During these times of cloistering, the Traditions spread their poisonous "truth" throughout the world. And our precious sciences were all but forgotten....

9/2/89

In reviewing my lecture notes from Dr. Reid's history class, I can't help but wonder why he takes it all so damn personally. Every reference to the Traditions is laced with such venom. Why despise ignorance?

## Persecutions of the Circle and the Age of Enlightenment

9/4/89 Recorded excerpt from Dr. Reid's history class discussion of the Middle Ages to Mendel:

...The spread of religious dogma during the medieval era robbed science of hundreds of years of potential progress. The unenlightened ruled, oppressing those who would explain their "divine mysteries" with cold, hard facts. Persecution of the intellectual via exile, excommunication and even murder began then. It has not yet stopped.

Not until the late 16th century did reason emerge from these dark times. Then the light began to dawn. Harvey determined that all things spring from eggs. Spontaneous generation, a widespread belief among the ignorant Masses, was disproved by Francesco Redi's study of spoiling meat and flies.

Anton van Leeuwenhoek, however, was the most influential scientist of those early times. He methodically used a microscope to disprove spontaneous generation, to discover bacteria, and to discover sperm cells in semen. Aristotle's influence prevailed, however, as poor Anton believed that there was a tiny, fully formed being in each sperm cell, just waiting for a woman in which to grow.

Finally, in 1827, someone found the mammalian egg. Hertwig then observed the fertilization of the egg by a single sperm. Having finally shaken off the religious debris of the past, we had reached the Age of Enlightenment.

Going back to our basics of breeding, a number of scientists began trying to calculate the mathematics of inheritance. There had to be rhyme and reason to this seemingly chaotic phenomenon. Gregor Mendel published his work in 1865. Though a monk, he had one of the greatest inspirations and greatest strokes of luck available to any of us. He theorized the concept of genes. Each

organism's gene has two copies, called alleles. An offspring has a 50% chance of inheriting either allele from each parent, leading to a new and different combination of genes.

Unfortunately, Mendel's work was buried under the novelty of Darwin's evolutionary theory, only resurfacing posthumously.

## The Modern Progenitors

*From my heart and from my hand*

*Why don't people understand*

*My intentions?*

— Oingo Boingo, "Weird Science"

9/7/93

I can't believe that these "Traditions" weren't wiped out a long time ago. Ignorant idiots! I understand now why Dr. Reid hates them. It's a good thing that we took control of reality. Things are pretty bad now, but they were so much worse then!

These "Traditions" sound like those moronic New Age types or those idiots who dress up like knights and queens and beat each other up with padded weapons while playing King Arthur. Fun's fun, I guess, but I'd love to send a few of these dingbats back to those Middle Ages they prize so highly and see how they'd like wading in raw filth or bathing once a year.

Don't any of them realize what we've done for them?

9/10/89 Excerpt from *Progenitors and Modern Culture* by Cameron, 1899 (in preparation for my seminar on past failures of Tradition projects):

...It is commonly believed among those involved in the Oxford laboratory group that the creature fictionalized by Mary Shelley earlier in this century was the result of material stolen from the laboratory of a well-known Graft Specialist on the Continent, a Dr. N. According to sources at the time, a conference held in Paris permitted Progenitors, Sons of Ether and scientists from other fields to gather and present their current research. During this conference, it is believed that an Ether scientist of ill repute, named Frankenstein, who was fiercely jealous of Dr. N's seminal work on the rejoining of disconnected tissue, attempted to acquire Dr. N's personal notebooks. His attempt was interrupted by a student of Dr. N's, and Frankenstein escaped with but a single book.

Frankenstein slipped out of Paris and returned home. Using the radically advanced, but incomplete, information the notebook contained, he created the monstrosity that caused his death....



9/10/89

It is interesting to note that neither Dr. N's stolen book nor Frankenstein's notes were ever recovered. What could have happened to them? It would be interesting to find those papers and study this entirely misguided experiment.

.....  
**9/12/89 From Dr. Reid's history class discussion of Mendel through W.W.II:**

...While Mendel was breeding his pea plants in the monastery garden, scientists were generating mathematical formulas to analyze certain traits. In 1865, Galton published his major work on statistical genetics, establishing himself as the father of eugenics. In 1895, Ploete published *Rassenhygiene*, a text on eugenics that contained some of the seminal ideas of the Nazi movement.

In 1900, Mendel was rediscovered, despite the convenient disappearance of his work from the scene. Different names appear in this time period, some of them great Progenitors: Garrod, who applied Mendel's laws to humans for the first time; Hardy and Weinberg, who explained mathematically why there is an equilibrium between the existence of dominant and recessive genes; Sutton, who observed that chromosomes from the sperm can be matched to nearly identical chromosomes in the egg, suggesting that the particles of inheritance, the genes, were carried on the chromosomes.

Before I continue, I must state that we were unused to the politics of the 20th century. We were scientists, the intellectual elite, and we didn't dirty our hands with such underhanded, illogical manipulations. Our past manipulations were far more sophisticated and elegant.

The rise of Nazism was a fantastic opportunity to experiment openly upon the Masses. Maybe Mengele was one of ours, maybe not. Not even our oldest members know for sure, but the consensus is that he probably couldn't manage the leap of faith, so to speak, to grasp our most basic principles. The concentration camps, our first gross manipulations of the 20th-century society of the Masses, were roaring successes. The data gleaned from these places set our Convention well ahead of any science that was subsequently revealed to the Masses.

This was a turning point in Progenitor history. Here, our knowledge pool grew to such a proportion that we were forced to specialize. Until Nazi Germany, we were "jacks of all trades," so to speak. The possibilities for research blossomed, and lab groups diverged in all directions, eventually forming the three basic Methodologies: the Pharmacopeists, the FACADE Engineers and the Genengineers.

However, our persecutors struck during the 1930s, destroying one of our largest holdings in the world, a facility in the Soviet Union. The Genengineer director of an enormous medical genetics institution in the USSR mysteriously disappeared. Human genetics was declared a Nazi science, and a methodical purge of the intellectual community took place. All who did not subscribe to the state version of

genetics were somehow eliminated, and a figurehead of "science" was set up to control experimentation and beliefs. It is believed that this last-ditch effort to destroy our influence was implemented by either the Traditions or the large contingent of vampires who preyed upon the sheeplike Soviet populace. True science, however, can never be restrained....

.....  
9/13/89

How could Reid be so blatantly callous about genocide? How could he insinuate, no, proclaim the slaughter of the Jews "a roaring success"??

Vampires? I know that I heard him correctly. This whole thing has taken on a weird cast, and I'm not always sure just what to think of it. Still, deep down, all of this rings true somehow. I think that I'll reserve judgment, at least for now.

.....  
**9/15/89 From Rob's paper on the beginnings of modern genetics:**

...In the 1940s, Beadle and Tatum proclaimed the "one gene, one enzyme" law, which states that each gene encodes a single enzyme or protein. Avery, MacLeod and McCarty discovered that the stuff of genes was deoxyribonucleic acid...otherwise known as DNA. DNA is made up of four "bases": adenosine, thymine, guanosine and cytosine. A, T, G, C. Chargaff found that the quantity of A equaled the quantity of T, and that the same relationship was true for G and C. Franklin, in the early 1950s, discovered that the DNA molecule had some kind of helix shape.

1953. Watson and Crick discover that A molecules bond with T molecules, as do G and C. Great reason for the equal ratios, right? DNA is a double helix that "unzips" to make templates for replication.

1956. The human chromosome count is finally determined to be 46.

1966. It is discovered that three bases in sequence encode a single amino acid in a protein. The genetic code is broken and is determined to be the same in all life....

**9/19/89 Recorded excerpt from Dr. Reid's class on Modern Genetics:**

The era following the discoveries in 1956 through 1966 was a logical extrapolation of steadily improving techniques and equipment. Now, understanding more about the human makeup, we could move away from seat-of-the-pants herbalism into true drugs, vaccines and antibiotics. With the advent of this technology, we easily convinced the Masses that we had a treatment for every ill, a drug for every pain and mood swing. From the 1940s onward, our medicines and even our street drugs have been panaceas for the Masses, who seek a quick fix for the stress of chaotic reality.

This is easy to understand when we realize that the Masses have no coping mechanisms for the supernatural,



and few even for the natural. The Masses will seek to medicate themselves with or without our help, as they have done for centuries, so we have done no wrong in applying our science to their urges. We have tried to atone for centuries of failing to wrest control from the Traditions by buying the Masses a little more sanity.

Of course, some people were initially reluctant to use our "products." The Traditions had been shoving hogwash down their throats for a millennium, and still attempt to do so today. But when Bette Davis lit a cigarette and sipped a martini on screen, everyone knew it was acceptable, eh?

We now have enzymes that cut DNA wherever we need it cut. We have bacteria and viruses whose DNA we can manipulate. We have techniques to produce large quantities of specific DNA sequences rapidly. Of course, we have had all this for a very long time, but some of the trade secrets have been leaked to the Masses: intentionally, or by the disgruntled or the spies that riddle our expanding science.

It was sometime in the 1970s that we allowed non-Progenitors to become relatively successful biologists and chemists. Until then, we had retained a relative chokehold on the biological community, keeping our science for ourselves, with a few chosen pawns to use as our Technicians. We realized that we needed to give these new scientists something toward which to work, and we ourselves needed a modicum of relief from "grunt work." So we created the Human Genome Project to occupy the tiny minds of the unenlightened.

The Sleeper scientists of the Project grind through millions of base pairs and generate a complete map of genes' locations on the human chromosomes. It keeps them happy, and when we have the complete map, we will be able to control every nuance of human life, from eye color to mental illness to the way the Masses wear their hair. Genes are the stuff of life, and their influence is all-encompassing.

In return we give the Masses "cloning" techniques involving frogs, transgenic mice, test-tube babies, and gene therapy. We give them genetic testing, cancer treatments and amniocentesis. Watch their culture change and grow around these things we allow them to have! We are the eternal guardians of knowledge. We are like Prometheus with fire. If Prometheus had handed his torch to a child, that child would have burned himself. But he handed it to a grown man, who could realize the potential of this gift even as he burned himself. If the Masses knew what we know, they would destroy themselves. And so they must be protected from the universe as we know it to be....

9/29/89

Our potential gains are clear. How could I have ever thought of being just a biologist? Mary Beth and I agree that if even half of what Reid has told us is true, we can be gods.

Why don't we just take the world and shape it directly, make it logical and orderly? What keeps us from being all that we could be?

## Structure of the Convention

10/5/93 Excerpt of lecture notes from Dr. Martinez' Overview of the Progenitors class:

### Students:

A prospective Student can be any young person, from a dedicated adolescent to a graduate-level student, that is recruited by Progenitor field operatives. The recruit is always an individual with an unusually enlightened grasp of biology or chemistry. Recruits are sometimes chosen to placate certain laboratories that are actively seeking Students; more often, however, recruits are simply "discovered" and later placed according to their interests and aptitudes.

Students pursue a general course of study, which varies in length from two to eight years. Students' progress is followed closely by the Primary Investigator assigned to advise the Student. This advisor reports to a chosen committee on the Student's progress. A Student will either graduate or "burn out." Burnouts are dealt with, in one way or another, by Damage Control. Graduating Students finish by writing a thesis or dissertation on their research and defending its contents to their committees. New theories are crucial to our continued success.

### Research Associates:

A graduate Student then becomes a Research Associate in a laboratory working in the Student's field of interest. The RA performs research as dictated by the lab's Primary Investigator. Ambitious and creative RAs can pitch informal proposals to their PIs, who can then integrate this potential research, if acceptable, into their own grant proposals for funding. RAs use this time to build their reputations and support bases in hopes of eventually supervising their own laboratories. Networking is essential; it's not what you know but whom you know in the world of science.

Less ambitious or able individuals often remain RAs for life, stagnating as they watch their peers surpass them. They often become bitter, cynical and recalcitrant. These are the people to watch carefully, because they sometimes begin feeding information to competitors or the Traditions. If this occurs, Damage Control must be notified immediately.

### Primary Investigators:

A Primary Investigator has extensive abilities in her own areas of expertise. Primary Investigators teach and counsel most Students. Failing either to instruct or to guide is intolerable and may result in an "opening" in a particular lab. Funding, type and quality of research, and the ability to attract new Students are the criteria for status at this level of the hierarchy. Those who stop on this rung of the success



ladder are usually those who annoy the review board or Administration, obsess into a tiny corner of virtually useless research, or lack the magical competence to proceed further.

Scholarship, research and service are the tenets of our science. Those individuals who excel in the service aspect (i.e., serving on committees to increase productivity and reduce bureaucracy), but who lack the drive to succeed in research, are removed and groomed for a post in Administration.

PIs run laboratories of their own; these include at least one Technician and a couple of dedicated Students, and possibly an RA as well.

#### **Research Directors:**

Research Directors are the respected and revered masters of their trade. Some are centuries old; some just seem it. All Research Directors share two things: uncanny knowledge of their magical specialty and an amazing perception of how research can proceed in new and effective directions. These scientists have often transcended the human need to overcomplicate the matters of the universe, instead living by the principle of KISS: Keep It Simple, Stupid.

Research Directors oversee a number of laboratories that are associated either geographically or by collaborations and joint appointments. The least successful RDs have a pair of joined labs, two PIs, and the RAs, Students and Technicians associated with the PIs. The most successful run a large department in a university, possess enormous laboratories of their own, and collaborate with, or have joint appointments at, other universities and corporations.

A Progenitor-run department is easy to find. The PIs are held in tight control, they have plenty of funding, the Students are happy, and the Administration is quite partial to them. Non-Progenitor departments tend to be chaotic, filled with petty battles for petty recognition, riddled with funding problems, and the subjects of frequent reviews by Administration. The students (note the lower case; Martinez called attention to it) are generally unhappy, underachieving and uninspired. Our recruiters periodically tour these departments as reviewers, trying to pick out the few promising students who slipped through our fingers at the undergraduate level.

#### **The Administration:**

Little is known of this secret Progenitor order. However, the Administration pervades all aspects of Progenitor existence. The Administration has final say on all projects. The Administration provides funding or takes it away. The Administration organizes and supervises large Progenitor movements in the world of the Masses, or against the Traditions. Administration's enforcement arm is called Damage Control, and can be activated with a single phone call.

The Administration is the most secretive and powerful section of the Progenitors. Recruiters, secretaries and administrative assistants are the only visible agents of the

Administration. No one sees, meets with, or speaks directly to the Administrators. Their instructions come through showers of memos, e-mail and messages through agents.

The Administration has absolute control over all Progenitor laboratories. With the constant perils to our Convention, this is, perhaps, the way it should be.

.....

10/5/89

Dr. Martinez insinuates that the Administration is part of the government, or even runs the government. I know that there are several large health and science departments in the U.S. alone, but the Progenitors couldn't have complete control of the FDA, NIH, CDC and all the smaller departments, could they?

Martinez also suggests that we all walk a very thin line of secrecy and etiquette. I'm afraid that I might cross that and never know it until "Arnold" is in my face with a sawed-off shotgun, telling me I should never have had lunch with that Buddhist friend of mine. What is the line? Where is the book of rules by which the Administration goes? Have I gotten into something where the word "deadline" has a literal meaning?

## **Progenitor Methodologies**

10/6/89 Excerpt from a conversation with Chain, an RA Pharmacopeist:

"Oh, yeah, Martinez always goes through that "organizational structure" crap. You need to get together with my old advisor, Dr. Burns. She'll show you "organization." We have the same basic stuff, but then there's the important shit. She's got a lab in Church Hill — man, you gotta see it to believe it. Old, rundown warehouse. We gutted it about six years ago and put in state-of-the-art tech. We got one of the sweetest setups on this coast."

All the learning in the world could not have prepared me for meeting a Progenitor scientist named "Chain." What could have possessed me to agree to go with him to see the lab tomorrow?

10/8/89 Note following my visit to the Pharmacopeist lab:

The Pharmacopeist laboratory itself was set up like any other Progenitor lab. Everything was very clean and organized, with machines I couldn't even begin to understand. However, it seems that Pharmacopeist street lab groups are very different from other Progenitor lab groups.

The street-level lab groups deal mostly in illegal or dangerous drugs, and their entire setups are constantly guarded and maintained by well-armed thugs and some nightmares that only the FACADE Engineers could've designed. Street operatives come and go at predetermined times to gather more supplies and drop off the money they have collected. The street operatives seem to be the



Pharmacopeist equivalent of Technicians, in that they know very little of the inner workings of the Progenitors and just do what they're told.

The Students in these laboratories perform the technical work of producing and purifying the drugs. The supervising PI rarely shows her face at the lab, and then only under the cover of night and disguises. For the most part, the lab's day-to-day work is supervised by resourceful and savvy RAs like Chain.

The dealings outside the laboratory proper are very...sordid. Chain tells me that in order to keep a handle on how business is going, he takes to the streets personally on occasion. I wish he hadn't thought it necessary to take me with him last night. No one interacted with me, but just being that close to the lowlife Masses in the street, the stupidity that seems rampant outside the Technocracy, the dirt and grime and darkness, made me come home and take a long, hot shower to try to purge that feeling from my body. I thanked Chain for the experience, but more for showing me an aspect of the Progenitors in which I wanted no involvement.

10/10/89

I don't believe what Mary Beth has just told me. Rob, that pasty-faced, pencil-necked twit, has been invited for a special rotation in Dr. Reid's lab!!! I can't believe I was passed over for him! What has possessed Reid?

10/11/89

Mary Beth has attached herself at the hip to Rob. She follows him everywhere, talking in that sickly sweet Southern voice of hers. She's busy, she told me; Rob is tutoring her tonight. I know what kind of tutoring she's talking about. I don't believe this. I'm passed over for a place in Reid's lab, then some power-hungry blond bitch dumps me for a rail with glasses. My last exam was miserable; I scraped an 85 out of 100. My life is coming apart!

## FACADE Engineers

10/12/89 Recorded notes from Dr. Linda Smith-Nevans' seminar on the current Methodologies:

"All right, now that you have been taught the basics of how our labs are run and what is expected from each of you, why don't we begin discussing the three individual Methodologies that make up the Progenitors today?

"In all of this, it is important to remember that despite minor skirmishes between the different Methodologies, they all maintain a scientific camaraderie and can usually turn to another lab of any type for assistance. Now, with which group shall we begin?"

Mary Beth, that underfed blonde with the sunken eyes, raised her hand while calling out, "How about the FACADE Engineers?" Brown-nosing little bitch. She knew damn well that Dr. Smith-Nevans is a FACADE Engineer.



EMT  
WV



"...We are known as the Forced Adaptation and Clone Alteration Developmental Eugenicists, or the FACADE Engineers."

The FACADE Engineers have influenced science around the globe for centuries. We are directly responsible for some of the legends of mythological man-beasts and creatures whose bodies combine the features of more than one animal, for the dawn of selective breeding, and for the perpetuation of the ideal of the perfection of breeds and races.

Throughout the centuries, FACADE Engineers have conducted experiments for the purpose of adapting humans to the vagaries of different environments. Early Egyptian Progenitors created hybrids by transposing certain body parts, such as the head. The Masses later mistook these creations for gods and goddesses such as Bast, Anubis and Horus. Later, more elegant, work by Middle Eastern Progenitors involved the mixing of body parts from diverse species, producing such phenomena as angels and many Hindu mythological figures. Greek Progenitors blended the forms of man and beast, producing such creatures as centaurs, the Cretan Minotaur, harpies and aquatic merfolk. It is believed that the merfolk lived on and reproduced in the open sea, which explains the various legends of "mermaids" spawned by sailors. (Note: And I always thought the dugong was responsible for such! Perhaps I should raise the point after class.)

In more recent times, some of us have taken credit for the numerous large, furred humanoid creatures sighted in various parts of the world, including North America, Tibet and Indonesia. Some Progenitors claim that these "sasquatches" or "yetis" are in fact humans adapted to harsh climates. There have also been whispers that the so-called "Jersey Devil" was a goat-footed hybrid escapee from one of our laboratories in the Pine Barrens of New Jersey.

The force of Paradox has, fortunately, made such creatures obsolete. They now die within days. The continued tales of such creatures are legends, nothing more.

The cloning techniques long ago perfected by the FACADE Engineers have been instrumental to the growth of the Progenitor cause. Not only are they used to protect our scientists from betrayal and assassination by the Tradition Mages, but we have in essence achieved a form of immortality. As our bodies pass their prime and begin to deteriorate from age, wounds or disease, we transfer our minds to younger, stronger clones of ourselves, thus allowing us to continue our work forever. Some among us, working with Genengineers, have altered their clone bodies to be more fit, to look different, or even to appear as one of their enemies. Death holds no fear for a Progenitor.

The science of cloning has made the FACADE Engineers an intricate and deadly espionage force. We have become so adept at regrowing lifeforms that we can create replacements of our enemies or members of their families,

reprogramming the clones to act as spies and assassins for the Progenitors.

Usually, the state-of-the-art cloning processes are used only to produce important Progenitor scientists or to clone true Progenitor allies. The difference between the two types of clones is that the most frequently used doppelgangers, the Type Ones, are not 100%-perfect replicas. The bodies are identical all the way down to the fingerprints and DNA, but the personalities sometimes show slight variations or inconsistencies. Type Ones may not replicate every mannerism or personality quirk perfectly. For instance, a Type One may eat eggs even though the original used to hate them, or it may have lost the nervous habit of cracking its knuckles. It might be missing scars of which the Progenitors had no prior knowledge. Such oversights, if noted by family and friends, sometimes necessitate the unfortunate elimination of those hapless Sleepers.

The second method of cloning is a much more effective and costly technique; it requires access to both the donor's mind and body. This is how the Progenitors transfer the mind of one of their dead or aging colleagues into an already prepared clone body. These clones, known as Type Twos, are exact in their appearance, or may be altered to be stronger, more attractive, or possibly even of a different sex or race. The minds of these clones are very carefully transferred, leaving no inconsistencies. Indeed, original and clone share the same personality.

The paranoia such clones create in Tradition mages, and even our colleagues in the Conventions, is extreme. One never knows whether his spouse, child, master or even beloved pet could in truth be a Progenitor agent.

It is not unknown for the oldest, most paranoid FACADE Engineers to activate and interact with clones of themselves because of their distrust of others and their belief that only they (or another "they") can truly understand the brilliance of their work. This has not shown great success, and has in many cases led to infighting and the destruction of more than one Progenitor.

The FACADE Engineers seek to maximize the evolutionary fitness of every organism on Earth. Those we cannot maximize, we eliminate or save for future work. This forced adaptation to a stable environment will eliminate dangerous extremes and perpetuate the safety of the Masses.

We are the backbone of the Progenitors. Our invaluable group is responsible for the prolonged life of some of this Convention's most brilliant and insightful scientists. The power of the Progenitors is not in numbers, but in the accumulated knowledge of centuries of work and the immortality of the masters of their craft.

The FACADE Engineers are a tightly organized and very secretive Methodology. The older scientists prefer a more solitary approach to their research, only meeting or collaborating with other lab groups when absolutely neces-



sary. These ancient researchers are paranoid and protective of their work. Anyone working for one of these hermits may not know why he is required to do a specific experiment or gather particular data until years have passed and his work has been published.

While the ancients seemingly have infinite patience with their plodding, but completely secret, research, the more modern approach of the large lab group churns out data at a much more respectable pace in this publish-or-perish world.

10/13/89

Immortality could certainly be useful. I only hope that my work allows me to qualify for it some day. I would also dearly love to see Mary Beth's head on a jackass, instead of the reverse.

But still, it's hard for me to swallow that all the beasts of myth and primitive gods came straight from whatever passed for FACADE Engineer labs. Maybe some of them, like the Minotaur. I could buy that, because it was biological magic that brought it about in the myth.

The clones: now there's a scary thought. Very *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. Your mother, father, brother, sister, lover...the dog, for God's sake, could be a spy for the FACADE Engineers. Maybe they do run the government, all the governments, and the leaders are just brainwashed clone puppets.

Then again, maybe they're exaggerating just a bit.

## The Genengineers

*Subjectively, to evolve must most often have amounted to suffering from a disease. And these diseases were of course molecular. The appearance of the concept of good and evil, interpreted by man as his painful expulsion from Paradise, was probably a molecular disease that turned out to be evolution.*

— E. Zuckerkandl and L. Pauling, *Horizons in Biochemistry*

10/19/89 Recorded excerpt from Dr. Sheffan's seminar on the Genengineers:

"I gather that Dr. Smith-Nevans has told you about the FACADE Engineers, so I will proceed with a lecture on the Mutagenic Engineers," the doddering old man mumbled almost incoherently.

Mary Beth, with a broad smile, piped up, "Aren't they called Genengineers now?"

He glared at her sharply. "Just so, young woman, they are. Trendy claptrap...."

This is the newest Methodology. Its members trace their scientific roots from the rediscovery of Mendel's work in 1900, making this branch of the Progenitors less than 100 years old. The Genengineers, however, are fast becoming the leading contingent of our Convention. Its members are young; all of them are children of the 20th century. In





the dark present, where we must defend ourselves against subtle bureaucratic maneuvers, political tides and devastating funding cuts, those spawned and molded by this culture are more likely to survive its violent convolutions.

"Multidisciplinary" is the buzzword among this group. Genengineers constantly collaborate, creating national and even international ties between laboratories and entire lab groups. Genengineer techniques are simple and elegant, drawing on centuries of knowledge held among the Pharmacopeists and the FACADE Engineers. Their technologies are in constant flux because of their close interactions with other Conventions, like Iteration X.

The Genengineers, like the Pharmacopeists, frequently interact with the Masses. Unlike the Pharmacopeists, the Genengineers use non-Progenitor intelligentsia to perform "menial" research, such as mass data collection and statistical analysis, gene mapping and the grinding search for clues to previously unknown proteins. There is a vast spectrum of schools of thought and means of research within their ranks. Practically every aspect of molecular genetic research is represented among the Genengineers. These Progenitors are usually under a certain kind of dynamic tension, making them interesting, if stressful, individuals with whom to work.

Genengineers have been distressed of late by recent shifts in the biological community. With the inclusion of more non-Progenitor intelligentsia into this exploding realm of science, many Tradition mages, particularly the Verbena, have infiltrated the Convention under the guise of scientists, using this facade of authority in an attempt to undermine our work. The Genengineers have more contact with these impostors than the rest of us, and enjoy discovering them, rooting them out and destroying them (with help from their brother and sister Progenitors).

The Genengineers seek complete knowledge of the mysteries of the genes. Knowing everything at this microcosmic level will in turn allow them an understanding of every organism in the world and every phenomenon in existence, for the principles learned at the molecular level can be extrapolated into all else. Ascension and true enlightenment can only be reached when all life has been analyzed and understood down to the very atoms.

It is rumored that some Genengineers in Europe and California are working on an immortality/regeneration gene, deriving their work from the regenerative invertebrates of the world. To my knowledge, they have yet to approach success, though their failed experiments are truly spectacular.

The Genengineers dominate the best genetics departments at universities around the world. They also base themselves among certain corporations that engineer genes and sell genetic products. They have formal conferences about once per year, with informal meetings taking place at large conferences that include non-Progenitor scientists. The informal meetings often include socializing in hotel

rooms and congregating amid large poker games. This allows the Pls to touch bases with former Students and strengthen the ties of the academic family.

Students are usually recruited from the ranks of promising graduate and undergraduate college students who take a class taught by a Genengineer, or perhaps do some short-term research in his/her laboratory. In recent years, the Genengineers have become more compulsive about driving potential troublemakers out of departments. Mysterious equipment malfunctions, experiments that continually go awry, inexplicable failing grades, or simple erosion of the student's confidence in his/her ability are all employed.

10/20/89

Mary Beth and Rob are all over each other now. Maybe I should become a Genengineer. I could delete the genes for Mary Beth's tongue and whiny little voice, and just delete Rob altogether. From what I understand, his rotation with Dr. Reid is just going swimmingly. He's such a cocky little ass now. He's got the dream job, the brains, the recognition and the blonde.

Stephen came around and asked for cell donations for his most recent project. He was paying \$25, so all three of us said "sure." He took a 5mm wide and 4mm deep circular punch out of the skin on the inside of my arm. Hurt like a bitch; he didn't wait for the Novocain to take effect.

I can't say that it wasn't a pleasure to see Mary Beth and Rob in pain. I never knew that I could be such a vindictive sonofabitch.

## The Pharmacopeists

10/26/89 Excerpt from Dr. Travis' seminar on the Pharmacopeists:

Dr. Travis looks like the typical picture of Satan, sans hooves and horns. His eyes are shadowy and glitter in a really eerie way when he looks at you. He dresses very well, especially for a professor. He was decked out in the latest fashions and looked as if he had just had lunch with a movie star. There wasn't much sanity in his eyes as he glared around at us, and we just kept our mouths shut, something surprising for Mary Beth. He started to pace and talk.

The Pharmacopeists are devoted to understanding the interactions between artificially induced chemicals and the intricate biochemical makeup of a living body. It is our belief that the use of drugs both on and by the Masses will better allow us to protect and control the unenlightened, and through them, this reality!

The Pharmacopeist Progenitors are among the oldest and most respected scientists. We began as herbalists and alchemists, first mixing and gathering rudimentary poisons from plants and animals. As this science grew, it expanded to include medicine, recreational drugs and so-called magic



potions. Because of the expansion of our field, we have often been confused with alchemists throughout history; indeed, many of our number came from the ranks of the alchemists.

Our keen understanding of poisons and their applications quickly earned us a reputation as very resourceful and thorough assassins, a field in which we quickly excelled. More recently we have demonstrated our aptitudes in politics, public relations and advertising. We have always had the most contact with the world of the Masses. Unlike the other Progenitors, the Pharmacopeists have always been aware of the Masses' goings-on. Sometimes we stood quietly by and watched with a cold and calculating scientific eye. At other times we have assisted mankind against the ravages of plague and famine, sometimes with great losses among our own, but always to gather data in the name of science.

The members of the Pharmacopeists' lab groups are far more diverse than those of any other Methodology. Members can range from street-level pushers, talent agents, or even sanitation technicians and candy-stripers, all the way up to presidents of pharmacological companies, heads of the Food and Drug Administration, international spies and even the rulers of drug-exporting nations.

The main responsibility of the Pharmacopeists has been to keep the Masses in control and to ensure that they accept the reality that we force upon them. Thanks to our drugs and subtle brainwashing, we have come to dominate reality.

Man is an ape, and wishes to return to that state! He recognizes his bestial side, seeking to embrace it with one hand while the other hides his eyes. From the beginning of time, he has eaten fungi, swallowed potions and chewed herbs in an effort to disguise the world around him or as an excuse to do the things he really wanted to do all along! We of the Pharmacopeists have only refined and channeled a basic primal urge. Whole periods of history have been controlled by the fear or drug-induced muddle that we have spread in an attempt to control the Masses. All this in anticipation of the day we would rise up and save this reality.

We began in ancient times by introducing new drugs, and subsequently, drug addictions, to entire cultures — for example, opium in the Far East. In the Middle Ages, our assassination of kings, queens and nobles became so frequent that the position of wine and food taster was created in an attempt to prevent poisoning....

During a conference in the early 1950s, a bitter fight broke out when an angry group of Genengineers declared that they were the last of the only true scientists, that the Pharmacopeists were no better than witch doctors or Verbena! The Pharmacopeists tried to explain that the mutations their newest pregnancy drug had generated on children were totally unexpected; the drug's original experimental purpose was to cause birth defects or spontaneous

miscarriages of lycanthrope-related and other nonhuman children. The Genengineers, certain that the Pharmacopeists were trying to tamper with their work, were not convinced. This opened a rift in the scientific community; battle lines were formed as the youngest Methodology prepared to rise up against the oldest.

We accepted the challenge from the Genengineers. The rise in prescription drug addictions, alcoholism and designer drugs is our demonstration to the rest of the Convention! We are the power controlling the Masses on the large scale! The Genengineers have since been awed by this show of sheer power and by their own greed to possess such power for themselves. They have recently made amends and are now working closely with us in several different fields of interest.

The Tradition mages have just recently become aware of the far-reaching implications of our plans and have begun to launch contingency plans. However, in most cases, the damage has already been done.

We control popular soft drinks, cigarette and coffee companies; we are also involved in governmental and privately owned meat plants such as those used by fast-food establishments. The Verbena retaliated by ensuring that the vegetarian movement gained new popularity; in response, we began to "enhance" fertilizers and commonly used pesticides. The chemical substances in these items are not readily detectable as harmful, but prolonged exposure kills the Masses' sleeping Avatars, thereby making them easier to control and less likely to harm themselves with the awesome powers sleeping in each of them.

We have two direct rivals. The first is our sister Tradition, the Verbena. Our mutual hatred goes back as far as can be remembered. Over the centuries, it has become a deep, consuming loathing. It is not unheard of for a Pharmacopeist and a Verbena to seek one another out for purposes of harassment or destruction.

Our second major adversary is the Celestial Chorus. Because of the recent Progenitor movement to destroy the hibernating Avatars of the Masses, thereby silencing their voices, the Celestial Chorus has seen this as a personal affront and a blasphemy against their "One." The Chorus is seeking a means of halting this "insidious plot," and this brings them into relatively frequent confrontations with our agents.

Well, that's about it. Any questions? No? Good! Ciao.

.....

10/26/89

Travis has got to be off the edge. There's no way a subgroup of a small group like the Progenitors could have its collective hands in every major vice and every minor thing that involves chemicals. A conspiracy of that proportion would have been detected long ago.

Or would it? What if someone detected it and became a clone? Or died of a mysterious genetic affliction that no one else in his family ever had? Who would know, espe-



cially with the medical community under the control of the Progenitors....



## Media Infiltration and Indoctrination

*As the spectacular triumphs of technology mounted, something else was happening: old sources of belief came under siege... The thrust of a century of scholarship had the effect of making us lose confidence in our belief systems and therefore in ourselves. Amid the conceptual debris, there remained one sure thing—technology.*

— Neil Postman, *Technopoly*

**10/31/89 Excerpt from Dr. Ishida's lecture on the Progenitors' interaction with the Masses:**

The Conventions use media indoctrination of the Masses to create the cultural belief system. This allows us to pursue whatever aspect of science we wish. Popular science fiction, for example, is thought by some critics to have been a Syndicate creation designed to expand the ability of the Conventions to manipulate reality. Because the Masses' perceptions directly control all reality, books, stories and movies about cloning, biological monsters and genetic engineering have all made possible, through the paranoid beliefs of the gullible Masses, the existence of these spectacular biological practices.

Because of the need to monitor closely what the Masses see, hear and read, the Pharmacopeists have firmly entrenched themselves in key media and medical industries. For most of the last 100 years, they have used their centuries of practiced skill in infiltrating society, as well as their considerable contacts in public relations, advertising and politics, to maintain a tight rein over many individuals in the public eye. This can easily be seen in the stars and starlets of the '40s and '50s, when the studios doled out tranquilizers and other drugs to control their artists. Does the name Judy Garland ring a bell?

### The Glamour Trap

*Keep young and beautiful,*

*It's your duty to be beautiful.*

*Keep young and beautiful*

*If you want to be loved.*

— Annie Lennox, "Keep Young and Beautiful"

We have recently released another joint project upon the unsuspecting Masses, aimed largely at the female half of the population. Several decades ago, some FACADE Engineers created a batch of female clones whose genetic makeup was based on some of the most beautiful and

talented women throughout history: Helen of Troy, Catherine de Medici and Sarah Bernhardt, to name just a few.

When this was completed, the Genegineers stepped in, making them perfect human specimens. They gave the clones perfect eyes, perfect hair and perfect bodies. The clones were then introduced to the Masses as models, starlets and other celebrities. The Pharmacopeists, using their considerable talents and influences in the areas of advertising and the media, shot these women into the spotlight, where they subsequently rocketed straight to the top.

We have been observing the reaction among the Masses, as women in every Westernized culture have flocked to the stores for diet formulas and cosmetics, and to hospitals for facelifts, implants and other surgeries — all, of course, Progenitor-controlled processes. These women all attempt to reach the impossible goal of making themselves look like the Progenitor-produced perfect women, thus keeping them relatively busy and out of trouble. The multimillion dollar weight-loss and beauty industries that developed have included the Syndicate and New World Order in administrative aspects, but the seminal ideas and research developments are solely of, and for, the Progenitor cause. This, need I add, has been a very lucrative sideline for our Convention.

### Recruiters

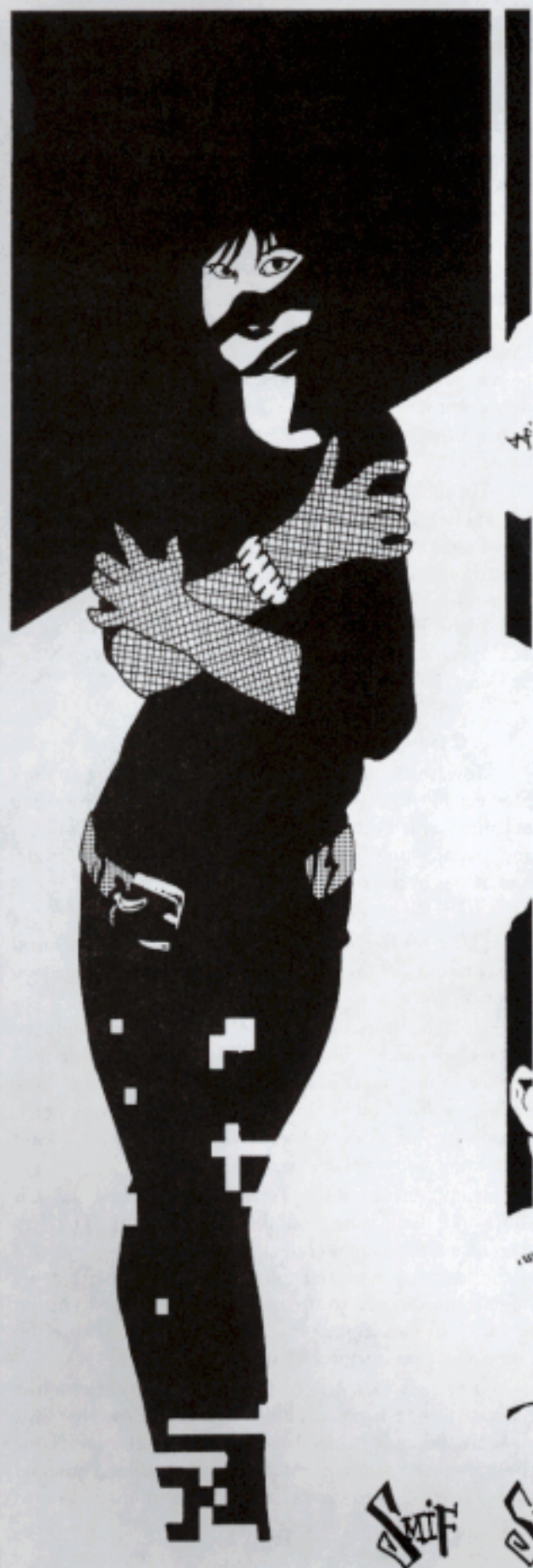
**11/1/89 Recorded excerpt from Rob's paper on his work with the Recruiters:**

It is the Recruiters' primary duty to travel to different college campuses and analyze the potential of rising students in the life sciences. I traveled with a pair of Recruiters to the University of Delaware last weekend on just such a search. We spoke to a number of professors (only one of whom was a Progenitor) and interviewed several students, particularly those in the biological honor society. Two seemed promising, but both had already established preferences as to their graduate schools of choice, so they were discarded.

Because of the mobile nature of their job, Recruiters are also expected to monitor possible Tradition activity. This way, Damage Control can be contacted and any new growth can be nipped in the bud. We moved around the town, meeting with some other members of the Technocracy and speaking with students. One store, which has a number of medieval weapon replicas and some games in the front window, is apparently regularly checked. Another concern is the growth of a New Age store across the street, for it might be a Verbena center.

When we returned to Virginia, we filled out independent reports on our trip. I recommended that the two stores be eliminated to preclude any potential problems.





Rob has been contradicting Reid in class lately. It's kind of nice to see that pompous ass's face turn purple when his "prize student" tells him that he's dead wrong about an organic reaction he's using as an example for the class. I overheard the Big R chewing out the stick-figure after class. Rob was just looking at him like he was a moron. Boy, you get laid once by a really experienced (and I mean that) woman and you get attitude....

## Damage Control

11/3/89 Recorded excerpt from Dr. Sheffan's lecture on Damage Control:

...Progenitors can sometimes be discovered by searching their bodies for small scars where tissue samples have been removed. These are usually hidden in places not readily visible, such as the inside of the upper arm. These samples are then taken and used in some Progenitor experiments. Only the cell samples of Primary Investigators and Research Directors are specially treated for the purpose of growing clones. Sometimes very popular or useful Research Associates are cloned, but only if they have proved themselves invaluable in some way.

The cellular samples taken are not just used for cloning. These samples ensure the safety of Progenitor ideals, plans and personnel. Any member of the Convention who attempts to leave his chosen duties or reveals confidential data will probably find himself a victim of a specially designed retrovirus that targets only the intended victim (and possibly the victim's genetic relatives).

Most major First and Second World nations house DNA libraries containing not only interesting genetic samples taken from people over the last 50 years (JFK, Gandhi, and Elvis, for example), but complete samples of all Progenitors and Progenitor affiliates ever based in that country. The DNA library in the USA is located in Bethesda, Maryland.

11/4/89

I've heard jokes around the department that a common rite of passage among the Students who hope to become FACADE Engineers is to perform, as a project in advanced cloning classes, the replication of a famous personality. Apparently, a common subject is Elvis. So the King lives, and lives, and lives....

11/2/89 Recorded excerpt from Dr. Robinson's lecture on Damage Control enforcement:

Avoid the enforcers like the plague. If you reveal information about the Progenitors, steal ideas or material objects from a colleague, perform experiments without authorization, assist renegade or blackballed scientists, or in any way betray the Convention to the Traditions, Damage Control enforcers will be the first line against you.



These enforcers range from hired killers with high-caliber weapons to hideous creatures out of the labs of the FACADE Engineers. Damage Control answers only to the Administration. If the Administration has deemed such a brutal method appropriate for the situation, you had best hope that you are not their target.

The enforcers are also called out during dire confrontations with the Traditions, Marauders, Nephandi or any other violent threat to the reality we have molded. Emergency calls will likely produce at least one enforcer, if not a squadron of them.

11/19/89

I had the misfortune of seeing the enforcers at work today. They broke into the lab next door at about 3 a.m. I was working on my oral report when I heard a crash and a scream. I stepped into the hall and saw a reptilian tail disappear through the broken door. There was another scream from the room, and then silence, punctuated only by a couple of crunching sounds and the breaking of glass. When all was quiet, I stepped around the corner and looked into the dark lab. Six glowing red eyes glared around at me; I heard a hissing growl and smelled a nauseating stench. I have never run so fast in my life.

11/20/89

It's really odd. Rob wasn't in school today. Even Mary Beth seemed confused. But it occurred to me that the

laboratory next to mine was where Rob had been working with the ultracentrifuge....

## Technicians

11/21/89 Recorded excerpt from my oral presentation on working with Technicians:

Last weekend, my project was to assist in a Genegineer production lab. As a Technician, my duties consisted of mixing fresh reagents, cleaning glassware, pouring electrophoresis gels, and otherwise preparing things for an RA's experiment. When the RA arrived, we began to extract DNA from a cell culture, a very long and involved process on which we spent a good 36 hours. When I asked why we were doing it manually, he explained to me that it was good to learn the basics of the science we allow the Masses to know.

The job of a Technician is to assist the scientists in the lab and to keep the lab clean and functional. Good Technicians are retained and sometimes evolve into Students, even though they are usually older than the usual Students. In small labs, one Technician is sufficient, but in some larger labs, like the one I toured in New Jersey, 30 or 40 Technicians work in an enormous space with a number of Students, RAs and PIs.

11/21/89

He wasn't in today either. Mary Beth told me that she's been getting no answer at his apartment, just his answering machine, which is full of messages. She went by his place, and his car wasn't there. When she drove in this morning, his car was in the parking lot....

11/22/89 Recorded excerpt from Mary Beth's oral presentation on the control of clones and homegrown agents:

The laboratory in which I worked produces and programs clones and engineered agents. The whole lab looked like something out of a science-fiction movie. There were large cylindrical tanks along one side of the room, pipes, wires, racks for small IV bags, and other stuff that I don't even know about yet.

There were about five Technicians in the lab on each shift, and there were 'round-the-clock shifts. The RA showed me the computer designs for the genetic sequence of the test organism. They were making a dog with near-human intelligence to use as a spy. They were fixing to replace this Dreamspeaker's Cocker Spaniel and use the clone to spy on him and his friends.

They said that one of the other Conventions had requested they make a clone of some priest that was somehow related to a member of the Celestial Chorus. I saw the preliminary preparations of the clone tank, and watched some Pharmacopeists come in and inject some drugs into





the tank after the Technicians had started to grow the body. They showed me the nutrient fluid tanks in the labs next door, and how to refill them with concentrates and such. The PI came in and enhanced the growth on all the tanks; none of us could do that yet. It was all very interesting and educational.

.....

11/23/89

Well, it's easy to see who got the most out of his project. Unless, of course, we consider all the bedroom fieldwork Mary Beth was doing with one of the RAs in that lab. "Networking is essential!"

Rob came back today, though. He wasn't quite the same, more like he was when he first came here. Mary Beth was actually pretty upset at being ignored by him (serves the bitch right). He bent over his cramped little notes, brow furrowed and glasses sliding off his face. Reid made a few more mistakes in class, and Rob didn't react.

What happened?

Oh, God. I just realized. They have it, they have me, they have my cells, they have all of us! It's not Rob! It is, but it isn't. He'll never go any further. They could just as easily do the same to me, to Mary Beth, to any of us!

I couldn't leave now if I wanted to....







# Chapter Two: The Maze of Secrets

*What is this  
Is it fear  
I am walking away  
Wake us up  
By the light of the moon  
Break the dam down.*  
—Theories of the Old School, "Walking and Waiting"



11/28/89

I can hardly sleep anymore. I feel the tugging of some inner force, something inside me that beckons me further into this nightmare.

I'm scared. I hate to admit it, but I'm terrified. Rob's "replacement" shakes me so deeply inside that I had to skip class. I'm almost afraid to call in sick, for fear of the type of "cure" Dr. Reid might send.

I should go. I know it, but I can't; more to the point, I won't. I've gone this far and won't back off now. Rob was an idiot, screwing a fellow Progenitor and mouthing off in class to a superior. I won't make his mistakes.

God help me. I've just read what I've written, and it doesn't sound like me at all. So cold, so callous. What have I become?

Merry Christmas, Mr. Greene.

## External Relations

12/4/89

We have begun studying the other Conventions of the Technocracy and the way we deal with each other. Some of these other "Technomancers" sound like lunatics or worse. And there are hints, and more than hints, that this "magickal reality" includes more than just humans.

I would never have believed some of this stuff six months ago, but the past few months could shatter anyone's illusions. I can feel the power, feel my growing hold over the reality around me. This isn't just about wild tales by bearded psychopaths. This is real. A sick part of me can't wait for the next curtain to be withdrawn. Whatever is behind it, I think that I'll be ready.



## Iteration X

*Exterminate!*

— The Daleks from Doctor Who

12/5/89 Recorded excerpt from Dr. Martinez' seminar series on our fellow Conventions:

...Iteration X has a simple but effective way of dealing with any who threaten its plans. It destroys them. To this end it continuously needs bigger, nastier, more enduring biological organisms to which it can add bigger, nastier, more enduring cybernetic parts. Over the years, we have worked out an ongoing trade agreement with Iteration X. We provide engineered and genetically enhanced organisms in return for needed technological equipment.

The organisms are grown in cloning tanks after an acceptable genetic pattern is designed and tested. When the clones reach certain stages of their development, specially adapted enhancement drugs are introduced into the cloning system by Pharmacopeists, as are various mind-bending drugs that are administered from the time of "conception."

The FACADE Engineers can generate a single, made-to-order lifeform or a number of identical clones. Rumor has it that the FACADE Engineers maintain a large Horizon Realm linked by Portals to remote areas around the world. This Realm supposedly contains thousands of clone

tanks. All of these tanks could potentially be activated within a matter of hours by a concerted effort of associated lab groups assigned to these duties. This would in turn provide Iteration X with an army of mindless, cybernetically enhanceable clones.

Certain lab groups receive a considerable proportion of their funding by providing Iteration X with continuous shipments of HIT Mark-able lifeforms. These subjects range from cats and dogs to adult humans and humanoids. Some are specially ordered, very carefully made using specific DNA samples collected from willing, unwilling or even unsuspecting donors. This allows the Progenitors to create a HIT Mark duplicate of a certain person involved in an Iteration X plot. The clones created for Iteration X and other non-Progenitor Conventions are of a lower grade than those the Progenitors are capable of creating. Other Conventions always receive Type One clones, which often have personality inconsistencies and slight quirks.

As a failsafe, whenever we produce any organism for Iteration X's use, we encode a certain genetic sequence in its DNA. The actual sequence is, of course, unknown to everyone but the top-level Progenitors. This gene can be activated by a fast-acting Genengineer retrovirus or a metabolic poison made by the Pharmacopeists. Once it has been introduced to a HIT Mark's biosystem, it triggers an almost instantaneous organic death by stopping all cellular functions. This precaution has been taken just in case Iteration X decides to end the partnership or, for some reason, turn on us.

## The New World Order

*Every breath you take*

*Every move you make*

*Every bond you break*

*Every step you take*

*I'll be watching you.*

— The Police, "Every Breath You Take"

12/5/89 Recorded excerpt from Dr. Martinez' seminar series on our fellow Conventions:

The Pharmacopeists are our primary link with the Convention called the New World Order. Both have common interests in the brainwashing and total control of the Masses. The Pharmacopeists provide the New World Order with an arsenal of useful drugs, poisons and chemical substances. The quality and power of the drugs are much higher than those available from any other source.

The FACADE Engineers occasionally assist the New World Order by cloning replacements for individuals. Such a process allows the NWO the extra benefit of replacing a troublesome individual with a productive spy. This also handles the messy problem of trying to explain the mysterious disappearances of their targets....





12/5/89

Iteration X is trying to control people by melding them with computers and such. And it's already starting to happen, with designs for wetware and implants to supersede sensory handicaps. The New World Order seems to have our thoughts on tap, and my own Convention is cloning my classmates. It's hard not to feel paranoid.

Rob has stopped coming to class. Mary Beth says he's a Technician in Reid's lab now. She looked scared. As scared as I feel....

## The Syndicate

*Religion and sex are power plays*

*Manipulate the people for the money they pay*

*Selling skin, selling God,*

*The members look the same on the credit cards.*

— Queensryche, "Spreading the Disease"

12/6/89 Recorded excerpt from Dr. Martinez' seminar series on our fellow Conventions, with guest lecturer Dr. Vincent Carichi:

Believe me, boys and girls, the Syndicate is very happy with the Progenitors right now. We have handed the entire medical profession into the open arms of the Syndicate. Do you have any idea how much financial control this gives the Syndicate? The population of the world is aging, but we can prolong life until every system in the body fails. We could probably keep it going even then, but when the EEG goes flat, the families have an edge with the justice system. At any rate, the fees for any kind of medical treatment are exorbitant. If it weren't for insurance companies, I'm sure that no one could afford doctors at all....

Long-term illnesses, such as certain cancers, AIDS, genetic diseases, and congenital deformities, are even better. Insurance companies tend to drop people at the most inopportune moments, and bank loans only go so far. Many people stay under the financial thumb of the Syndicate all their lives.

The advent of genetic testing, which we, of course, control, has given the Syndicate even more financial leverage with which to play. A large number of Syndicate-controlled insurance companies have been trying to use genetic predisposition as a condition either to refuse to pay some exorbitant bills or to simply drop people from their policies altogether. This has sometimes proved a useful ploy for Syndicate agents, who enjoy destroying people's lives before actually destroying the people themselves.

The Syndicate shares some direct involvement in our plans. It controls most of the finances and bookkeeping for our plans involving beauty products, the weight-loss industry, and certain "aspects" of our street-level pharmaceutical dealings. It also is a key to our interests in some fast-food chains, soft-drink corporations, and large-scale meat producers, all of which market Pharmacoepist-drugged products.

In the event that the Syndicate were to turn its allegiances away from us, we have prepared a contingency plan to sabotage systematically every aspect of the Syndicate's businesses in which we are involved. If all, or even some, beauty products, food, beverages and drugs suddenly became tainted with extremely toxic and untraceable substances, the Syndicate would find itself in a very nasty corner, shelling out millions of dollars in restitution for the damages. Does anyone remember "Batman"? The Syndicate does!

12/6/89

Maybe Travis wasn't exaggerating. Maybe the Progenitors do have their hands in all these things through these other Conventions! I never dreamed that these others existed, much less that they had the control they seem to have!

## The Void Engineers

*Knowledge of the universe bestows awesome power. To understand the secrets of atoms and galaxies is to become like gods. And we fly to the moon, light the fires of the stars, and perhaps someday probe a black hole. Whether we use these abilities for the betterment of humanity or for the devastation of our planet is entirely a matter of our own free choice.*

— William J. Kaufman III, *Black Holes and Warped Spacetime*





12/7/89 Recorded excerpt from Dr. Martinez' seminar series on our fellow Conventions:

We generally have very little contact with the Void Engineers, although the Genengineers enjoy the potential challenge of adapting lifeforms to space travel and exploration. Also, some experiments may be easier to perform within a zero-gravity environment. Experimental designs created specifically for zero-gravity environments could result in some truly spectacular results.

As a result, those of us who are interested in different directions or alternative applications of their research, or who just enjoy a good challenge, are rather fond of the Void Engineers. Some labs, especially among the Pharmacopeists, have elected to assist the Void Engineers by developing drugs and vitamins to assist in space travel. The problem of calcium loss in the bones when the body is exposed to zero gravity for long periods of time presents a particularly interesting field of study. Perhaps you, young lady, will find a place alongside the Void Engineers....

## The Technocracy in General

12/8/89 Recorded excerpt from Dr. Martinez' seminar series on our fellow Conventions:

Given enough good reasons (money, favors, defense agreements or whatever), we are more than happy to clone other powerful Technomancers. As a rule, all such clones are Type Two, but unbeknownst to the clone recipients, they contain a special self-destructive gene similar to that used in the Iteration X HIT Mark. Thus, instant destruction can be wreaked by Progenitors who are attacked or even simply provoked by the cloned Technomancers.

The Pharmacopeists also happily provide a vast array of helpful drugs (megavitamins, magic-assisting drugs, enhancement drugs, etc.) to anyone willing to use them. Most of the drugs have some side effects, but the Pharmacopeists believe that the pros definitely outweigh the cons. We also willingly cure any mage of a disease or Progenitor virus into which they accidentally happen to stumble — provided said mage is willing to pay the price.

The Conventions may control the world, but the Progenitors control the Conventions. We are integral to the functioning of the Technocracy as a whole, and we never let them forget that!





## The Nine Traditions

*Looking for a savior in these dirty streets,  
Looking for a savior between these dirty sheets,  
I've been raising up my hands  
Drive another nail in.*

*Where are the angels when you need them?*

— Tori Amos, "Crucify"

1/4/90

Some vacation! Between a crushing workload before the end of the semester, finals, shopping, and my general paranoia, it seemed like I would never relax. Mom was wondering what was wrong with me. As if I could tell her! I'm afraid that I've become a very good liar. At least, I hope that I have!

Mary Beth called me up during the holiday. She sounded upset, but I don't feel as though I can trust her. It was satisfying to hang up in her ear, but I felt pretty bad afterward.

To top it all off, I came back into class to find Chain hanging around. He said something about "extracurricular studies," but I don't buy it. He's here to keep an eye on us. I know it. Dr. Reid started the semester by going into detail about the Traditions. Chain's reaction to the whole subject has been so scary that I'm sure that he's here just to dissuade us from even thinking about defecting.

Not that I would, of course....

## The Akashic Brotherhood

.....

1/6/90 Excerpt from Mary Beth's extra credit paper on the Traditions:

The Progenitors are disturbed by the recent spread of the Akashic Brotherhood's philosophy into Western civilization through the martial-arts fad. Many Technomancers believe that the Akashic Brotherhood is deliberately trying to spread its word among the world's populace, prompting new explorations of mysticism and mind/body control.

The serene, introspective lifestyle of the Brotherhood could pose a dangerous threat to our hold on reality if it actually captured the imaginations of the Masses. The Pharmacopeists in particular are bothered by the Brotherhood's ideal of the pure body, which encourages holistic and herbalist medicine instead of carefully supervised medications, self-healing rather than frequent visits to medical professionals....

## The Celestial Chorus

*"Fools!" said I, "you do not know,  
Silence like a cancer grows."*

— Simon and Garfunkel, "The Sound of Silence"

1/6/90 Recorded excerpts from Chain's class presentations on "Pharmacopeist enemies and Progenitor threats":

...No Tradition more deserves to be crushed by the Technocracy than does the Celestial Chorus. Its members stand against everything we believe. We have targeted their Tradition for termination and have beaten them into submission with our reality. We have repeatedly kicked them while they were down on their knees with the Masses, praying to their false god to save them; all the while they ignored the fact that the "One," as they call it, is deaf to her children's cries.

The Progenitor plan to destroy the Avatars in the Masses, thereby rendering them harmless, is the ultimate blasphemy to the Celestial Chorus. Its members believe that a piece of the One — that is, the Avatar — is represented as a mystic voice within each and every person. If they can manage to get the entire world to sing again in harmony, all will Ascend. Hey, I ask, what about the people who can't sing? I know guys that couldn't carry a tune if it had a handle on it.

But anyway, because our plan to sterilize the Avatars of the Masses would silence those voices, and thus kill a little piece of the One, the mages of the Celestial Chorus have their panties in a bunch. The strict, militaristic members of this group of fruits constantly raid Progenitor labs and continuously assassinate our operatives. I myself have been killed by them four times. They back all sorts of groups that try to stir up trouble for scientists, like the terrorist anti-animal research types: "Don't hurt the cute little fuzzy bunnies, you bad scientists." I mean, please! We don't even use rabbits for our freaking experiments any more. We use children instead...

That's a joke. Get it?

## The Cult of Ecstasy

*Give yourself over to absolute pleasure,  
Swim the warm waters of sins of the flesh.  
Erotic nightmares beyond any measure,  
and sensual daydreams to treasure forever.*

— Dr. Frank N. Furter, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*

1/9/90 Excerpt from Mary Beth's extra credit paper on the Traditions:

The Cult of Ecstasy is one of the few Traditions over which we have some control. Its members' free use of drugs allows us to infiltrate and manipulate them. On the other hand, the Cult's "open-your-mind" ideal has had a lot of effect on the Masses. This is the Tradition that supposedly made psychoactives fashionable in the first place.



Not all of members of the Cult use drugs, but all of them firmly believe that drugs allow humans to explore reality in new and different ways. They often use our hallucinatory and magick-affecting drugs to enhance or control their perceptions. We freely allow them access to our drugs, even our enhanced varieties, though they often do not know that they are receiving these drugs directly from us. How ironic that the Pharmacopeists now use the Cult of Ecstasy's vaunted tool of enlightenment to dull the Sleepers' collective consciousness. Our street drugs would not be nearly as popular without the cult's "help," and the mages know it.

The Cult of Ecstasy probably isn't as simple to control as Mary Beth makes it seem. Chain hates the Cult with a passion. It seems that the Cult's control extends to anything that makes the youth of the country rebel against the staid, ordered world of the Technocracy. Turn on MTV and you'll see its influence. Some influence! No wonder we're on opposite sides.

## The Dreamspeakers

*What is life? A frenzy. What is life?*

*A shadow, an illusion, and a sham.*

*The greatest good is small; all life, it seems,*

*Is just a dream, and even dreams are dreams.*

— Calderon, "La Vida Es Sueno"

1/9/90 Recorded excerpt from Chain's class presentations on "Pharmacopeist Enemies and Progenitor Threats":

The Dreamspeakers believe that science is slowly killing both the world and them. While they wasted their time attempting to commune with an Earth-spirit whom they believe to be the world itself, we instituted science and technology. Now that they have bothered to stop day-dreaming and look around them, they notice what has happened and say that the Earth is not happy.

So now they attempt to reclaim "Mother Earth." This places them in direct conflict with all aspects of the Technocracy, especially us. I heard somewhere that the Dreamspeakers started that "Gaia hypothesis" that was so popular a few years ago. They're not usually organized enough to pose much of a threat, but should be knocked off singly if the opportunity presents itself.

## The Euthanatos

*40,000 men and women everyday,*

*Like Romeo and Juliet,*

*40,000 men and women everyday,*

*Another 40,000 coming everyday.*

— Blue Oyster Cult, "Don't Fear the Reaper"

1/9/90 Excerpts from my extra credit paper on the Traditions:

The Euthanatos are believed to manipulate humanity to their own ends, creating psychotic serial killers and killing individuals who they feel should be removed to provide more options for everyone else. We can understand this approach, combining reincarnation and eugenics; it seems very similar to the actions of the early Pharmacopeists before the advances of the Hippocratic Circle. It is our doubtful hope that the Euthanatos will eventually see the wisdom of our ways and join the fold of the Technocracy. If not, they must be destroyed along with the rest.

Since August, I've become a really good liar, even in my papers. I was always good at picking up and regurgitating whatever my professors wanted to hear. My writing on that paper was awfully stiff, though. I hope that they don't suspect....

## The Order of Hermes

*Energy is contagious*

*Enthusiasm spreads*

*Tides respond to lunar gravitation*

*Everything turns in synchronous relation.*

— Rush, "Chain Lightning"

1/9/90 Excerpt from Mary Beth's extra credit paper on the Traditions:

The Order of Hermes seeks to turn magick into a easily learned and recorded art, something on which they can depend. They refine their formulas to a real science, one that they can easily teach, reuse and pass on to others. They hate us because we had similar ideas and took them to their logical conclusion, science — a leap they could never make.

Sources indicate that the Order of Hermes had a strong grip on the Masses during the Middle Ages, and threw the Hippocratic Circle out of its fellowship when the Circle tried to dig through the metaphors and find the scientific realities in its craft. These same sources indicate that the Order is not pleased that their old prodigals have replaced them at the top of the reality chain....

Speaking of "Chain," I would swear that Mary Beth is snuggling up to that long-haired, greasy bastard now that Rob is out of the way. Am I being paranoid, or is she just ever so the social climber?

## The Sons of Ether

1/10/90 Recorded excerpt from Chain's class presentations on "Pharmacopeist Enemies and Progenitor Threats":

These pathetic pseudo-scientists who pursue pipe dreams and pots of gold at the ends of rainbows need to be wiped out almost as much as the Celestial Chorus does.



Their "sciences" are not much more than the graspings of the mad at delusionary straws. One need only look at the example of their most famous member, Victor Frankenstein, to see what miserable failures most of their experiments are.

At least their research usually destroys them in the process, keeping their numbers small. When we get some free time, we should probably slip them one of our textbooks and let them wipe themselves out with a genetically engineered virus while they try to cure some disease!

## Verbena

1/11/90 Quote from Dr. Reid's textbook *The Progenitors versus the Traditions: An Age-Old Battle*, 1965

In the ancient days, we were very much like the Verbena, but they have refused to progress as the ages have worn by. They are primitive, barbaric, and useless in this age of understanding. They play in blood and sap, dance naked around trees, and chant to the open sky. They battle us with ecoterrorism and activism, vainly seeking to block our conquest of knowledge. They are herbalist witches and holistic freaks with no place in our clean, safe world.

## Virtual Adepts

1/13/90 Personal note on one of Dr. Reid's Progenitor science lectures:

Mary Beth raised her hand. "Dr. Reid, I heard someone mention the Virtual Adepts the other day. Why haven't we heard anything about them? Aren't they a Tradition too?"

I have never seen Dr. Reid so angry. He turned scarlet and shouted, "Traitorous scoundrels! They betrayed the Technocracy to join the Traditions, a crime that can never be forgiven. You will kill them on sight!" He calmed down a little after that, but his outburst was really weird. "We are presently working with Iteration X to construct a nanotech virus," he said, "made of molecular machinery as well as DNA, that will destroy any Virtual Adept who contacts any international network. The Pharmacopeists have also been producing smart drugs to burn out the minds of many Virtual Adepts. They made their bed; they'd best be ready to lie in it."

I can't deny that I've thought about leaving, but I know that I'd never get away with it. The walls have ears, the streets have eyes, and that's not much of an exaggeration!

Like Dr. Reid said, I've made my bed. Time to pull up the covers and make myself comfortable.



SMF



# Other Supernatural Entities

*Monsters and madmen all come alive*

*And the dead start walking*

*There's no place to hide*

*There's no place to hide.*

— Oingo Boingo, "When the Lights Go Out"

1/18/90

Now I know that I'm losing my mind. Dr. Reid, the brilliant scientist who blew my world to pieces a few short months ago, has started talking about monsters. I can see why he has waited to broach the subject. With all of the doors that we've opened in the last semester, a few monsters seem almost tame.

Almost.

Excerpts from Dr. Reid's lecture on supernatural threats to the Masses:

## Vampires

*Everything has a mirror image — except, of course, a vampire.*

— Morrison and Boyd, *Organic Chemistry*

Some of us have had encounters with the creatures known as vampires. Few have managed to escape an encounter unscathed or with any concrete data. Ancient tales are full of bestial creatures who possess the power to change their form and are consumed with an evil bloodlust. These bloodsucking ghouls are believed to be undead beings who prey on humanity and innocent societies.

The intriguing mystery of the vampire has led many a curious Progenitor on a merry chase. Intent on proving the existence of these creatures, some Progenitors spend years seeking subjects for vivisection and analysis. This has resulted in the loss of many promising scientists.

We now accept as fact that vampires do indeed exist and have for many centuries. This has led us to the conclusion that perhaps the legends of the vampires have some scientific merit. Because we have control over and extensive knowledge of any living thing, it would certainly be in our best interests to gather some concrete facts about these creatures of the night.

Several lab groups have recently devoted themselves to the study of vampiric activity, habits, abilities and biological functions. The only fact of which we are relatively certain is that vampires must consume certain quantities of human blood to exist. Because of the apparent correctness of the legends on this point, the Progenitors must also consider that perhaps at least some of the other legends involving vampires could also be true.

It matters little to these creatures whether they derive their sustenance from one of the Masses or a Technomancer.

This makes them a threat that we must attempt to neutralize, though perhaps our fellow Conventions, like Iteration X, might be better prepared to deal with animate corpses. It has been theorized, however, that true "mage" blood could produce strange and unexpected side effects if consumed by a vampire. These effects are completely unknown, but might be quite interesting to observe.

Some of our scientists within the Center for Disease Control have begun to notice a curious pattern in the transmission of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS; the virus is being passed to some people without any evidence of sexual contact, drug use, etc. This has piqued the CDC's interest in vampiric phenomena and has given them a new means of studying it. Some young Progenitors have sought leads derived from these patterns, but have never returned with their conclusions.

## Werewolves

*Burning inside with violent anger  
bitterly*

*I speak to my heart*

*Created from matter,*

*From the ashes of the elements*

— Carl Orff, *Carmina Burana*

For many centuries, we have been aware of the existence of lycanthropic creatures. Many of our oldest members have had an encounter with some form of lycanthrope. Regrettably, these encounters have garnered us little concrete data. All we have to date are a few loose hypotheses and many conflicting personal reports of the creatures' activities and wide range of abilities.

We have managed to discern that there are individual breeds of werewolves, and that their abilities vary depending on pedigree. It is interesting to note that there seems to be at least one group of mongrels that seems intent on the destruction of their own kind. All lycanthropes seem fractious in the extreme, but this breed, called "Black Spiral Dancers," is an oddity among oddities, and dangerous to boot.

Recently, some vague information about these shapechangers has been passed to us at the 1990 International Conference of Progenitor Science. A PI from Developmental Neogenetics Amalgamated (DNA) revealed that several werewolves have recently been captured and examined by his corporation. Our brief analyses have been able to glean some small degree of information before our specimens and records were destroyed by other lycanthropes. Certain peculiarities in the werewolf genetic template have been isolated, but have yet to be analyzed. The company involved is seeking more subjects for study in order to accumulate data on reproduction, the nature of lycanthropes' ability to change forms, and werewolf culture, if such a thing could truly exist.

Two interesting sticking points when studying lycanthropes are the creatures' seeming immunity to Para-





dox and their ability to remain hidden in plain sight. We suspect the former relates to the lycanthrope's traditional place in the Masses' folklore, thus exempting it from Paradox. The latter seems to derive from a sort of mass hallucination suffered by the Masses when lycanthropes appear before them. There is, it would seem, much to learn from deeper studies on the lycanthropic question.

## Mummies

The existence of these creatures is mostly rumor and hearsay, though I have spoken to an ancient FACADE Engineer who claims to know one. He claims that they are truly immortal and have lived for thousands of years, perhaps even since prehistoric times. He babbled something about the great science of Atlantis, etc., so one must obviously take all his comments with a large grain of salt. I have.

## Faeries

*Ouch! It bit me!"*

*"What did you expect faeries to do?"*

*"I thought they did nice things, like, like granting wishes."*

*"Huh. Shows what you know, don't it?"*

— Sarah and Hoggle, *Labyrinth*

Yes, I believe in faeries. I have met a few by accident. And no, I am not joking. They are dangerous creatures, and when they breach our barrier against their world, they

wreak more havoc than any other supernatural threat — save, perhaps, the Marauders.

Their types are unclassified and uncounted, but they have been observed disappearing, changing form, and controlling minds among the Masses.

Some are affected, as the legends state, by iron, but a true scientist shouldn't count on that. Best to find some way of banishing them back to their world, if high-caliber firepower doesn't take them down first. Remember, these faeries are a danger to the Masses and must be destroyed or removed. It is your duty, the duty of every Technomancer.

## Ghosts

*Ooh, let me have it,*

*Let me grab your soul away.*

— Kate Bush, "Wuthering Heights"

There is some sort of supernatural hogwash about trapped souls remaining on this plane. There are no ghosts. There are entities who occasionally pierce the Barrier with the assistance of the Traditions or the Marauders, and these, of course, must be eliminated. Please remember that you are a scientist of life...we very, very rarely are ever effective against spirits, though we do use them as slightly sentient energy sources for some of our necessary items. However, we can certainly deal with the individuals who summoned them.

.....



1/28/90

I wanted science and all I get is fantasy, a fantasy that is as real and hard as science. The Progenitors don't have control, but they do. They hunt people down and turn them into antiseptic horrors, but the things that go bump in the night are still there. These things are real? I don't know if I should go mad or just go. But I can't go. Beyond the DNA, beyond lovers with the eyes of strangers, beyond even right and wrong, I realize that this is the only magic I can wield, the only power I'll ever have....

Everything I hear further convinces me that everyone around me is insane. The world is insane, a nightmare that I'm only now aware of. God help me!

.....

## The Marauders

2/7/90 Recorded excerpts from Chain's class presentations on "Pharmacopeist Enemies and Progenitor Threats":

The Marauders are totally insane. Above any other threat, these mages are our enemies. The fabric of reality warps and rips around them, freeing spirits and demons from the Umbra. It is our duty as members of the Technocracy to protect the world from the chaos the Marauders spread. Given a choice between battling a Tradition mage or battling a Marauder, the Marauder must take priority, even if it means a temporary truce with the Tradition mage.

Killing a Marauder is always preferable to banishing it or driving it off. First, it eliminates one more of our enemies; second, it gives us something to dissect and analyze, so we can find quicker and more effective ways of killing them.

## The Nephandi

The Nephandi are threats not only to reality, but to everything existing in it. If we were ever to assist the Traditions in an endeavor, it very well could be the destruction of the Nephandi. We have already banished their Demon Hordes from earth.

The Nephandi corrupt everything we have struggled to build. They come to the Awakened, tempting us with unholy power and unspeakable promises. The Demon Hordes they serve seek the magical essence contained in each human being, giving us yet another reason to purge the Avatars of the sleeping Masses and be done with it. We have theorized that this will have the effect of rendering the Masses unappetizing and unusable by the Nephandi and their allies.

2/9/90

Vampires, werewolves and worse. The Marauders, the Nephandi, the Traditions. Madness, destruction and ignorance. The Progenitors embody all these and more! Is this what I had in mind? I swear this isn't what I wanted!

Reid has told us to come to his laboratory in Washington tomorrow. There's something he wants to show us all, he says, some final revelation. I'm not sure that I can handle another one! Do I dare see it? If not, how do I avoid it?

The past few weeks have held too many answers for me. I once thought that I wanted all the knowledge I could grab, but now I see the madness in that course. I can still feel that tugging inside, though, even now, dragging me into things about which I'd rather not know. Is this my Avatar? I guess that it is. If it is, how do I deny it?

Deep down, I have to know. A part of me must know, now, everything. I'm going. Nothing can be worse than the things I have already seen and heard.

One final revelation. I wonder how I'll handle this one?

End of journal



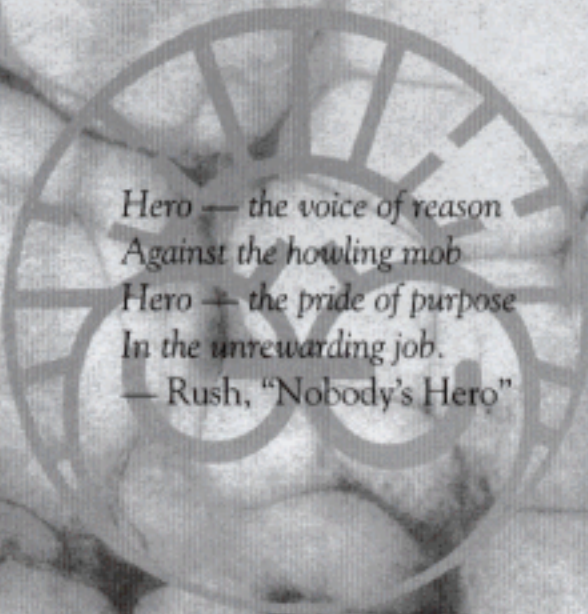








# Book Two: Systems



*Hero — the voice of reason  
Against the howling mob  
Hero — the pride of purpose  
In the unrewarding job.  
— Rush, "Nobody's Hero"*







# Chapter Three: Order of Battle

This section is divided into two parts; the first deals with the magick and devices used by Progenitor mages,

while the second concentrates on Progenitor character templates, home-grown nasties (homework!) and a few beasts from Damage Control.

## Magick and Science

*When Catholic priests use wine, wafers, and incantations to embody spiritual ideas, they acknowledge the mystery and the metaphor being used. But experts of Technopoly acknowledge no such overtones or nuances when they use forms, standardized tests, polls, and other machinery to give technical reality to ideas... They would have us believe that technology can plainly reveal the true nature of some human belief because the score, statistic, or taxonomy has given it technical form.*

— Neil Postman, *Technopoly*



The Technomancers use magick, to be sure, but their effects must be tied to their conceptions of reality. Few Technomancers can simply whip out their pocket computers and warp reality to their whim. Technocracy magick relies on solid theories, and these theories may take years to perfect.

Progenitor magick, based as it is upon the Life Sphere, must affect some aspect of a

living body. Genetic tinkering makes no difference if the subject is long dead. Progenitors can effect changes in living material, however — bacteria, blood corpuscles, etc. Progenitors are not bound to Life magick only, but their spells and traditional effects concentrate heavily on this Sphere; coincidental effects like heart attacks, brain aneurysms and sudden attacks of super flu are a Progenitor's best friends.



# Foci

*We apologize for the inconvenience.*

— Douglas Adams, *So Long and Thanks For All the Fish*

All Technomancers, regardless of their enlightenment, use some sort of focus. Their world-view requires some sort of material basis for reality alteration. Simply snapping one's fingers to accomplish magick will not do in the Technomancers' world. By their own definition of reality, magick without a focus is not possible.

Foci are hardly universal. The nature of a given focus depends largely on the definition of the magickal effect. One Progenitor may swallow a handful of pills to alter his genetic structure, while another might connect herself to a portable GeneTech accelerator. The foci below are suggested samples and may vary according to the pet theories of the Technomancers involved.

## **FACADE Engineers**

Scalpel — Matter/Mind

Clone Tank — Prime

Calculator — Correspondence

Saline fluid — Life/Entropy

Electricity — Forces

Glasses — Spirit

Stopwatch — Time

## **Genengineers**

Vial of bacterial culture — Prime

Fluid with DNA — Life/Spirit

Mini-computer — Correspondence

Electricity — Forces/Entropy

Textbook — Matter/Mind

Stopwatch — Time

## **Pharmacopeists**

Razor blade — Entropy

Chain — Correspondence

Vial — Life/Prime

Drug paraphernalia — Mind/Spirit

Fire — Forces

Scale — Matter

Stopwatch — Time

# General Progenitor Life Effects

These effects are common to each branch of the Convention; many are centuries old. Each Methodology takes a different approach to these effects, but the basic structure remains the same.

## **• Life Sense**

This allows the magick-worker to identify and scan Life Patterns. By reading a being's Pattern, the Progenitor can determine age, sex, race, species, health and "signa-

ture." The signature reveals if the organism occurred naturally or was modified by Progenitors.

## **•• Lower Lifeform Manipulations**

The Progenitor can alter invertebrates: insects, crustaceans, mollusks, worms, plants, fungi, protozoans, etc. Common manipulations include: increasing an organism to phenomenal size; making minor body modifications (nothing that drastically changes the function or shape of the body); restoring and destroying the Pattern; and, in the case of plants, greatly increasing pharmacological potency.

## **••• Limited Grafting and Recombination**

The Progenitor can now alter her own body, for a limited time and in a limited fashion. By studying the intricate workings of animals' Life Patterns, she can adapt herself in limited ways to different environments or situations. Such adaptation includes: sprouting claws or fangs; growing a fish tail; sprouting webbing between fingers for swimming or from the torso to the arms for gliding. Just because a mage can grow the parts does not mean she knows how to use them, however.

This effect allows the Progenitor to disguise herself, changing her face, body shape or gender. She can also place a Life Pattern in stasis, keeping it alive while she performs vivisection, transfers pieces to and from the body, or prepares a clone.

Grafting new parts on lower lifeforms and small animals is likewise possible. In so doing, the mage may alter the Pattern to maintain the new parts, or sizes to fit the bodies. This allows the creation of hybrid creatures through such processes as grafting enlarged bird wings to a horse or bat wings to a Chihuahua. Heads can even be switched between animals. These unwieldy combinations often have very short lifespans, a problem the Progenitors have yet to overcome.

## **•••• Higher Lifeform Grafting and Recombination**

The Technomancer may now perform major grafts and alterations involving humans and lower lifeforms. Thus, creatures like minotaurs, centaurs, harpies, angels, sphinxes and mermaids may be created. These are not the true mythical beasts and have no magickal powers, but they are more enduring and adaptive to their environment (and make damn startling opponents!). It is worth noting that Progenitor higher-ups frown on such vulgar magick. A Technomancer had better have a good reason for making monsters unless she belongs to Damage Control.

## **••••• Cloning/Shapeshifting**

The Progenitor can reproduce a complete human body from a sample of tissue. The Progenitor must also have Rank Five in the Mind Sphere to transfer or provide an intelligence for the clone body, and Rank Four in the Spirit Sphere to provide the clone with a true identity.

At this rank, the Progenitor gains complete control of her own body and can shapechange freely to any form that she can imagine (this is where Paradox can come into play



with the Progenitors). Many Progenitors pick one or two forms that they want to use and then practice moving and interacting in those forms. The new forms are alien at first, and mages may not be able to do things that the animals take for granted, like flying in bird form, swimming as a fish or dolphin, running on all fours, or jumping from branch to branch like a squirrel.

## Methodology Effects

These effects are taught within the separate Methodologies and reflect each Methodology's particular specialty. Members of other Methodologies may learn these effects, of course, but finding a teacher may be difficult.

### FACADE Engineer Life Effects

*We're all clones,*

*One is all and all are one,*

*One is all and all are one.*

— Alice Cooper, "We're All Clones"

#### • Pattern Store

This effect allows the Progenitor to memorize the Patterns of studied lifeforms. Patterns serve as blueprints for future surgeries or alterations; mages can superimpose the memorized Pattern over the section to be altered and make alterations using the stored Pattern as a map or working model.

#### •• Augment Simple Lifeform

The FACADE Engineer can alter an organism's Life Pattern to increase aspects of its form. For example, she could drastically increase its size. Because most of these organisms are very small — insects, spiders, mushrooms, algae — each success attained increases the size multiple by a factor of 10. (Larger simple organisms, such as plants, are limited in their maximum size by Earth's gravity.) Thus, a single success would result in a tiny creature becoming 10 times its normal size; two successes, 20 times; etc. An augmented animal also undergoes physiological alterations necessary to survive (for example, an insect's breathing spicules are enlarged, thereby enabling it to breathe at greater sizes).

For example, a FACADE Engineer on the run from a band of Tradition mages frantically throws his magic at a nearby hornet. He scores three successes and happily disappears into a nearby building as the hornet, now 30 inches long and thoroughly annoyed, attacks the Tradition mages. The hornet's sting is also enhanced, for the size of its stinger and venom glands have likewise increased. The insect now injects 30 times the amount of venom, enough to kill most Sleepers.

#### ••• Graft Alien Bio-Matter Between Animals

This effect allows the transfer of body parts between animals — for example, adding a frog tongue to a cat. The grafted section functions normally, but the animal must still learn how to use its new appendage. (The aforemen-

tioned cat would have an awful time licking its fur in the beginning, and might have to adapt its bathing routine to the new tongue.) Most FACADE Engineers alter fairly young animals, thus allowing them to mature using their new parts and become quite adept with them by the time they reach adulthood.

It is also common practice either to use the Mind Sphere to enhance the creature's intelligence, or to have a Genengineer enhance its potential intelligence by selective gene exchange and manipulation. Example: the otherwise normal cat who has adapted to the use of the tongue might enjoy catching mice from 15 feet away, while a more intelligent cat might try to grab the gun away from a person assaulting his master (for a can of tuna fish later, of course).

All of these effects are temporary unless the Sphere of Prime is used in conjunction with the effect (this restriction also applies to the effects below).

#### •••• Graft Alien Bio-Matter With Humans

The FACADE Engineer can now exchange human or animal parts in a manner similar to that exercised at Rank Three. More obvious alterations include: adding a human torso to the lower sections of an animal; replacing a human's hands with paws or talons; or giving a human a monkey's tail. Exchanges between human bodies are also possible: for example, adding extra sets of arms to a human or transferring a brain from one body to another.

An example of an elegant transfer within the constraints of a short period of time is the removal of the brain of a human enforcer agent (reducing its size slightly in the process) and the subsequent transfer of the brain into the body of a Hermetic mage's pet Great Dane. The resulting spy dog would have all the knowledge and logic of the agent, with the form of the dog. He might not be able to talk, but he could probably thump his tail in Morse Code.

It bears noting that Paradox takes a heavy toll on such creations. The aforementioned Great Dane might live a week per success before the alien organ was rejected. Such alien graftings survive best in Horizon Realms, where reality can be tailored to the Progenitors' pet theories. Even Technomancers are bound by the static reality they have created.

#### ••••• Clone

The FACADE Engineer can replicate an animal or human agent, given a sample of tissue from the individual. Unfortunately in the case of replacement agent clones, and fortunately in the case of replacement bodies for Progenitors, this cloning does not include any injuries, scars or body alterations not made at the genetic level. If the genetic code of the sample is altered prior to cloning by a Genengineer, the altered DNA will determine the form.

A Progenitor, for example, is infected with an incurable disease and dies. His cell samples, taken when he was a Student, are then used to recreate his body without any trace of the disease or the damage it had inflicted.





Clones, unlike the tissue grafts above, are not subject to Paradox if the clone is properly prepared, and may live indefinitely, though they will age.

## FACADE Engineer Mind Effects

### • Empower Self

The Empower Self effect listed in the *Mage* rulebook is used often by Progenitors in emergency situations, allowing them to increase their mnemonic/calculation facilities and to formulate new theories on the spot. Such theories need not be too sound and may be disproved later when the danger has passed ("By my new calculations, that should not have worked...").

### •• Scan Memories

This allows the Progenitor to scan the memory Pattern of a target, discern any breaks or damage to the template, and use it as a blueprint to transfer those memories to another brain.

### ••• Transfer Memories

The Progenitor can transfer the collective memories from one individual to the blank slate of a clone's mind.

### •••• Manipulate Memories

This effect facilitates replacement of an individual with a Progenitor spy clone. It blocks selected memories: for example, being assassinated in a dark alley or being dragged from the wreckage of a car crash and killed. This effect also enables the Progenitor to program the clone for loyalty. These manipulations sometimes damage the memory Pattern, causing loss or gain of personality quirks and habits.

### ••••• Move to Clone

The Progenitor with this ability can transfer his own mind into an already prepared clone body from anywhere on the planet without the aid of underlings, assuming that he has some logical scientific theory to accomplish it.

## Genengineer Life Effects

### • Gene Scan

This effect lets the Progenitor read the genetic code of an individual. She can find damage wrought by disease, age or another Progenitor; detect artificial alterations of the sequences; and perceive race, sex, species, genetic disorders, recessive genes for genetic disorders, and any oddities in the genetic code. The oddities can be identified only if the mage has previously scanned someone with a similar oddity.

Example: Eileen, an RA of Developmental Neogenetics Amalgamated, sneaks a scan of the lycanthrope DNA has managed to capture and vivisect. As a result, she has some idea of what Garou genetic code looks like. She and some of her Students are later confronted by a group of street punks. Eileen performs a Gene Scan while her favorite Student tries to pacify the gang, and realizes that this



"gang" is a pack of werewolves. Completely unprepared for this situation (i.e., no high-caliber weapons), Eileen's party seeks a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

#### •• Alter Small Sequence

The Genegineer can change a single molecule in a specific gene. This can affect a single cell, as in the case of altering a baby at conception, or the entire body of a normal adult organism. The difficulty of the effect rises substantially with the quantity of cells needing change. The desired effect can range from correcting a single gene error in a fetus (difficulty 6) to causing cancer (difficulty 8) to creating a nearly instant illness (difficulty 10).

#### ••• Delete/Insert/Alter Gene

By genetically enhancing the Pattern of her own body, the Progenitor can significantly improve her own form. Each success allows her to increase a Physical, Mental or Appearance Attribute by one (even above 5). The effect lasts for a number of hours equal to the number of successes. This cannot be a permanent effect unless the Sphere of Prime is used in conjunction with the augmentation.

Similar to the "Better Body" effect, the Progenitor will suffer the loss of one Health Level if she attempts to maintain the new Pattern beyond the predetermined time. She will continue to lose one Health Level each day she maintains the form. Stressing the altered form after the expiration of the time limit can lead to further damage. This damage can only be healed by bed rest and normal medical attention.

As a short-term effect, a sample of DNA from a regenerative organism can be temporarily integrated into the DNA of a wounded person; this effect requires one success. Such a procedure enhances the restorative process, healing one Health Level in one turn. If the DNA is integrated into all the cells in the body (four successes), the body will regenerate one Health Level every three turns. (Another reason that the Genegineers are interested in finding more werewolves is to analyze and use their regenerative properties.)

#### •••• Genetic Pattern Matching

The Genegineer can add entire sections of preexisting genetic code to another species. Example: Adding to a human woman's DNA the sequences that permit a certain type of amphibian to reproduce asexually (parthenogenesis). This would allow the woman to give birth to a child that would be an exact genetic duplicate of herself — basically a natural cloning process.

Aside from the mad scientist aspects, this effect also permits a Progenitor to adapt someone to a hostile environment. An agent doing undercover work in a cold climate might be altered to grow fur all over his body, or someone working underwater might have seal, dolphin or whale DNA added to his own, allowing him to dive for longer periods, resist cold water and ignore the crushing pressures of the depths.

This effect also allows the completion of fragmentary sequences using current DNA for templates, or the juxtaposing of fragments with other fragments of the same species. Thus, an extinct species' DNA could be recreated and the samples used to grow specimens in a clone tank (a *la Jurassic Park*).

#### ••••• Genetic Mastery

The Genegineer can now completely rearrange genetic sequences to produce a drastically different organism. This alteration does not require any template, merely the Progenitor's imagination. A botch produces a screaming sac of protoplasmic protein, while five successes create a completely functional new creature. This is almost always a vulgar effect unless the Genegineer takes a long time to research and implement a theory.

## Pharmacopeist Life Effects

#### • Life Sense

The Pharmacopeist can identify and scan Life Patterns. By reading the Pattern, a mage can determine what kinds of drugs, poisons or chemicals are present in an organism's system.

The Pharmacopeists' extensive knowledge of biochemistry allows them to determine the age, sex, race and species of the target and gain hints of the person's emotional state. A Pharmacopeist can, for example, ascertain: if a person is scared or lying by reading the level of adrenaline present; if a person is in pain by scanning for large amounts of endorphins in the system; if a female of any species is fertile or pregnant by reading her hormone levels. A Pharmacopeist can also discern the genetic signature of the Progenitors, which reveals if the organism occurred naturally or was in some way modified by another Progenitor.

#### •• Simple Biochemical Manipulation

This allows the Pharmacopeist to manipulate a substance's effects on a given Life Pattern. Whenever a drug is taken it temporarily changes the Pattern of the user. The Pharmacopeist has the ability to see the variations in the Patterns or the new Patterns the chemicals form in the organism. He can then stretch and reweave the Life Pattern to produce or enhance the desired effects.

At this stage a Pharmacopeist is capable of controlling the effects of chemicals on the body, though this may require Correspondence magick to accomplish over a distance. The uses of this effect are manifold. A person could be made extremely intoxicated with only a small amount of alcohol. The speed with which medication takes effect can be increased or decreased. The short- or long-term side effects of drugs and poisons can be neutralized. It's also possible to induce violent allergic reactions — horrible attacks of sneezing or itching, swelling of the eyes and throat, hives, or even death. Any poison can be made almost instantly fatal as well.



### ••• Biochemical Regulation

The Progenitor can directly affect the biochemistry and metabolism of the body. On the positive side, he can: speed the healing process; enhance someone's strength, endurance, dexterity or speed; refresh someone who is exhausted; and increase the time a person can hold her breath. On the negative side, he can: deoxygenate the blood; inhibit blood clotting; induce an inflammatory reaction in a body part; or destroy cells via general disruption.

### •••• Physiological Rule

This effect has a more defined effect on specific metabolic processes or body parts, permitting the Progenitor to focus on a specific effect. She can destroy cells in a certain area or of a certain type (like destroying an entire muscle or annihilating a cancerous tumor, mostly by enhancing and releasing specific enzymes in the cells), alter cell permeability (resulting in instant dehydration or a sudden influx of water into all cells), or increase the quantity of a certain metabolic product (causing mood swings, insulin shock, or death by increasing the amount of acid in the blood).

This mastery of the metabolism also extends to the Progenitor, thereby rendering her completely immune to the effects of normal drugs and poisons if she so desires.

### ••••• Metabolic Mastery

The Pharmacopeist can create the effect of any drug, poison or metabolic product without the substance actually being present in the body. This is accomplished by directly affecting and controlling the receptors initiating or halting the chemical reactions for the response. This usually requires coincidental magick ("Oops, you forgot about those six beers you had an hour ago!") and possibly Correspondence as well.

Also, it is child's play to produce refined, purified and reconfigured biochemicals, thus creating super-enhanced substances. These chemicals would have extreme effects. For example, enhancing an enzyme called trypsin to new heights of effectiveness would create something that would basically eat holes in anything made of protein — for example, a living body.

## Spells

### Enhance Drugs (•• Life •• Matter • Prime)

This is cast on large quantities of a given drug that the Pharmacopeists wish to enhance in some way. This works on typical street drugs and "drugs for the Masses." Some examples of these drugs and their enhanced effects are given in the *Pharmacopeia* section.

### Create Mage Drugs (•• Life •••• Matter ••• Prime)

The chemicals needed to make the drugs are assembled in a flask and five points of liquid Quintessence are poured over them as this spell is cast. This imbues the chemical with raw Quintessence usable by anyone who consumes the

drug. Examples of mage drugs are given in the *Pharmacopeia* section.

### Create Primessence Drug (••• Life ••• Prime)

Simple saline fluid is used as a medium to transfer a set Life Pattern into a living body. When injected, the fluid carrying the Pattern causes the patient's body to begin producing large quantities of Quintessence. This effect lasts for up to six hours and is very uncomfortable. The patient is usually very queasy and dizzy, complains of headaches or body aches, and cannot sleep well.

Patients' bodies become saturated with raw energy. Their blood, urine, tears and hair are often collected (repeatedly) for "tests" or "study," and The physical matter is then broken down into a liquid form of Tass by a complicated series of centrifuge-like machines. The collected Quintessence is stored for later use in special vials and freezers.

In extreme cases where large quantities of raw Quintessence are needed, whole limbs have been removed and used (the limb "goes bad" quickly, however, and must be used right away). The effects of this spell on mages are slightly different; mages begin sweating Quintessence, leaking it out of every pore of their bodies. To anyone watching them, they seem to be bleeding a glowing golden liquid from their bodies, especially their eyes and mouths. The affected mage can use this Quintessence just as any other, but a Willpower roll (difficulty 6) must be made to perform any action whatsoever.

Generally, three points of Quintessence can be pulled from a Sleeper who is under the influence of Primessence, and only one or two from most animals. Five points can be gathered from a human body if the entire body (or most of it) is used, or three or four from an animal. This, of course, kills the "donor." A mage produces twice her Avatar rating in Quintessence.

### Control Nerves (••• Life ••• Forces)

This spell controls the flow of electricity through the nervous system. A repeating loop can be created to cause a movement over and over, to halt all pain reception, or to make the victim feel constant pain. The first increases by two the difficulties of all physical actions. The second allows the recipient to ignore all wound penalties. The third causes the victim to suffer three Health Levels that cannot and do not have to be healed. A person can be killed by this effect if he botches a Stamina roll when reduced below Incapacitated.

### Simulate Inborn Errors of Metabolism (•••• Life •••• Entropy)

This allows a Genengineer to create a temporary but severe form of a simple genetic disease (one cannot simulate Down's Syndrome with this spell). The duration of these spells is one hour for each success scored. Coincidental magick is almost impossible with these spells, but they are quite effective. Examples include:



— Imitation Lesch-Nyhan Syndrome: the victim of this version of the spell has his Intelligence reduced to 1, very limited muscular control, and compulsively mutilates himself by chewing on his digits and lips, self-inflicting one Health level per five turns of such abuse.

— Albinism: the victim immediately loses all pigment in his skin, hair and eyes. His hair turns white, his eyes turn pale blue or reddish, and his skin becomes extremely sensitive to ultraviolet light (sunlight). Being in the sun inflicts one Health Level per turn. After the duration has ended, pigment slowly returns to the skin and eyes, but any hard-won suntan is gone, and the hair remains white until the natural color grows out.

— Vitamin Deficiencies: the victim becomes weak and ill, and sores break out all over his body. He loses three Health Levels and is unable to concentrate or summon the energy to cast magic.

— Hemophilia: the victim bleeds uncontrollably when wounded (even bruising counts) and loses one additional Health Level in blood every two turns. Even a Pharmacopeist, controlling the clotting of the blood, cannot stop the bleeding, for there are no clotting factors in the blood to manipulate. Only by negating the spell and speeding the production of the appropriate proteins can the bleeding be stopped by anything short of an entirely mechanical approach (tourniquet, pressure, stitching) or placing the Life Pattern in stasis.

— Color Blindness: the victim sees only in shades of gray as all the pigments in the color receptors in his eyes are destroyed. This effect will last about a week after the spell wears off, when the body will have replaced enough of the pigments to permit color vision again.

— Connective Tissue Errors: the victim takes four Health Levels of damage per success attained in casting, as his connective tissue atrophies and his body literally falls apart. Muscles shred, bones fall out of their joints, and arteries explode. Only the bones, blood, and a heap of shapeless protoplasm remain. This spell has a difficulty of 10 and is exceedingly vulgar.

**Nanotech Life Support** (\*\*\*\*\* Matter \*\*\* Forces \*\*\* Mind \*\* Prime \*\*\*\*\* Life)

A joint effort of the Progenitors and Iteration X has produced a means of virtual immortality by using nanotech machines. These tiny machines are produced and mentally attuned to the intended recipient, then introduced into the body. The machines scavenge poisons, drugs and diseases out of the system, destroy abnormal cells, remove the effects of aging, and rapidly regenerate damaged body parts.

Intense trauma, massive loss of blood, asphyxiation and complete bodily destruction can still kill the host. Otherwise, however, the host is more enduring and therefore harder to damage or kill. The machines can temporarily replace damaged organs such as the eyes, eardrums, heart or liver.





The recipient permanently gains a 5 Stamina and regenerates one Health level every two turns. He is immune to normal poisons, diseases and drugs, and does not age. The machines can be destroyed by someone with five ranks in Entropy and at least three ranks in Matter. These devices take considerable time to produce and insert; such an "effect" cannot be produced on demand.

**Quintessence Net (•• Life •• Matter ••••• Prime)**

Many hospitals have a Quintessence Net running through a number of their patients, especially those trapped

in comas or in intensive care. At least one of the "life-support" machines, "IV" bags or "feeding tubes" is in truth the physical focus for the Quintessence Net. The Net is designed to channel a portion of the patients' Quintessence into the physical storage device. When the Quintessence is removed from the body, it takes the form of a thick, viscous liquid that can then be stored or shipped to Progenitors in the area.

## Pharmacopeia



Note: Progenitors can freely use any of the drugs created by the Pharmacopeists without the fear of any side effects, for the Pharmacopeists have secretly perfected the drugs and deliberately distribute the flawed varieties to non-Progenitor users.

### Street Drugs

#### Cocaine, Uppers, Amphetamines

**Administration:** Oral, Inhaled, Ingested

**Effects:** Normal doses of the Pharmacopeist versions of these drugs temporarily boost a character's speed and alertness. Initiative difficulty is considered 3 while under the effects of these drugs, and the difficulties of all Perception-based rolls are decreased by one; this reflects the paranoia the drugs induce. Intelligence and Charisma difficulties, however, are increased by two, reflecting the character's unstable thoughts and behavior.

Extremely potent or extremely high doses of these drugs also bestow two additional Health Levels on the Health Level Chart; these additional Health Levels are considered "OK" for the purpose of assigning wound penalties. This effect allows Progenitor agents to withstand tremendous punishment and not even feel it. Such augmentation is very dangerous; an "Incapacitated" result at this point immediately kills the drug user, as he reaches the limit of his boosted reserves.

**Overdoses:** A character on these drugs loses a certain amount of tactile sensation. He may not notice a minor (one-Health Level) wound until someone points it out. He may not think that the wound is as bad as it really is because it doesn't hurt as much as it should. The Storyteller may opt to have a character take extra damage for ignoring a bleeding wound or walking on a broken leg. The Storyteller may also decide not to tell a character how much damage a particular wound inflicted.

If too much of the drug is taken, shivering and uncontrollable shaking may result. The side effects of higher or more potent doses are evident once the drug wears off. The two illusory Health Levels vanish when the user comes down off the drug-induced high, and if accumulated wounds reduce the character below the level of Incapacitated at that point, he dies.

#### Hallucinogens

**Administration:** Oral, Dropped into eyes, Injected, any way that it could enter the blood

**Effects:** Enhanced versions of these drugs actually expand the mental awareness of the user, allowing even the Masses to perceive the Umbra. In areas where the Gauntlet is relatively weak, Sleepers can actually peer into the Near Umbra and view the spirit world. The drugged Sleepers have a warped view of reality and the way it functions, and any strange things seen will be believed to be side effects of the drug, not reality-threatening acts. Sleepers will chalk it up to a "really wild trip."

Technomancers or mages who use the drug in the Umbra are able to see into other neighboring planes before actually passing into them (Perception + Awareness; difficulty 7).

**Side Effects:** A Stamina roll (difficulty 5) is required when the drug is first taken by a mage; if the roll botches, she will experience vivid hallucinations that could range from being attacked by horrible monsters (which, of course, are actually associates/friends/innocent people/nearby walls) to everything melting into puddles of jelly. These visions need not occur right away. They often manifest during highly emotional or stressful times, like in the middle of a fight. A hallucinating mage may not always think twice about magick, either. Have the player make a check to see if the character remembers not to use vulgar magick.

The drugs are also known to disrupt sleep, and a user can be distracted by the most trivial and insignificant things. To the user these things are of the utmost importance — "Have you ever really looked at your hands before?"



Aren't they the neatest things? The way they kind of bend and move...."

## Mage Drugs

### Cognition

**Administration:** Inhaled

**Effects:** This substance is stored in small, breakable vials. When someone wishes to use the drug, the vial is broken and the vapors are inhaled. The user must then make a Stamina roll (difficulty 6). No successes increases by one the difficulty of magick use. One Quintessence point is temporarily drained for each botch. Successful use of Cognition decreases by one the difficulty of magick use without the expenditure of a Quintessence point. This is a result of the drug's ability to sharpen and focus the mind. The effects last for one hour.

**Side effects:** These vapors are very addictive. A Willpower roll (difficulty 7) must be made after each use. If the roll fails, the mage begins to crave more of the drug. Each day an addict goes without a dose of Cognition increases by one the difficulty of magick use (to a maximum of 10, at which point the mage experiences a day of violent withdrawal symptoms and is no longer addicted).

**Overdose:** Inhalation of two or more vials of Cognition in one day increases the difficulty of the addiction rolls by one for each vial inhaled.

## Smart Drugs

**Administration:** Oral, Intravenous

**Effects:** These drugs temporarily add one to a single Mental Attribute while simultaneously lowering by one the difficulties of Abilities related to the Attribute. A different form of the drug enhances each separate Mental Attribute. Smart drugs go by various names on the street, but the Progenitors lump them under a single category. The effect of one dose lasts for (10 - Stamina) hours.

Some Virtual Adepts believe that smart drugs were developed by the Pharmacopeists, while others see "smart drugs" as a godsend. The Pharmacopeists know the truth.

**Side Effects:** When the drug is administered, the user must make a Stamina roll (difficulty 6). Only if at least one success is gained does the drug take effect. A botched roll results in the temporary loss of one point of the applicable Attribute.

The long-term effect of extended use results in the affected neurons "burning out." After (Stamina x 2) uses, the user must make a Stamina roll (difficulty 10) or permanently lose one point of the appropriate Attribute. It takes twice the amount of experience to restore the Attribute to its previous level.

## Drugs for the Masses

### Steroids

**Administration:** Oral, Intravenous

**Effects:** Pharmacopeist-enhanced steroids allow a character to increase Physical Attributes at half the normal development cost. Many Progenitors feed these drugs to their hired muscle to enhance their usefulness.

**Side Effects:** This drug has only long-term effects. The enhanced steroids cause sterility (this is part of the Progenitor plot to cleanse the gene pool and control the population) and can also cause severe cramping (Stamina roll; difficulty 4) every time the character overexerts himself; this latter effect lasts for a month after the new Attribute score has been gained.

Only one Physical Attribute can be raised at a time, and the user must wait at least one game month between Attribute gains. Steroids can also thin the blood, causing clotting to take longer. Even the bite of a vampire takes longer to seal. The vampire must continue to lick the bite and will drain one more Blood Point than intended.

**Overdose:** Uncontrollable muscle spasms, difficulties of all feats increased by three for 24 hours.

### Nicotine/Caffeine/Alcohol

Some brands of these drugs have been enhanced by the Progenitors to pollute the bodies of the Masses and slowly destroy their Avatars. The Convention controls various companies, using them to produce and distribute these polluted drugs among the Sleepers "for their own good." All varieties are very addictive and dull the mind over time, preventing the affected Masses from having the imagination to believe in anything beyond the Technomancers' vision of reality.

### Birth Control/Pregnancy Drugs

Reputedly created by a mage faction to control human overpopulation, birth control and pregnancy drugs have a checkered history. Opinions differ; some believe that the Cult of Ecstasy created potent contraceptives to allow Sleepers greater access to their sexuality, while others claim that the Progenitors control such drugs, using them to control the Masses. Still other stories credit the Sleepers with creating these drugs on their own, as they have so many times before.

It is believed that the Progenitors also use these compounds to detect and destroy nonhumans born into the human population. This would include, in theory, lycanthrope Kinfolk, people with faerie blood, and demonic offspring, should any such exist.



# Devices: Technomancer Talismans

## • Alley Shades

A (Life •, Correspondence •) effect allows the wearer to detect any lifeforms in the area and know their approximate location and movements. A favorite of street Pharmacopeists.

## ••• Helix Ring

This is a silver ring with a DNA double helix design around the inside. An item of the Genengineers, this item stores genetic Patterns at Life 1, temporarily causes illness via a random genetic alteration at Life 2, and can heal one Health Level for the Progenitor wearing it at Life 3.

## ••• Link Collar

This device allows the wearer to maintain a mental link with "pets" wearing a transceiver collar or ear tag. The Progenitor may see through the animals' eyes, project mental images to them and steer their actions. Frequently used for bodyguard creatures and those in the service of Damage Control.

## ••• Scalpel of Correspondence

The scalpel appears to be of a very old design, with a very solid stainless steel handle and a blade that never needs replacing. When the scalpel (which can cut through bone) is used to sever a body part, the part is co-located with

its former attachment and therefore still maintains blood flow and sensation. This continues until the part is firmly attached to its new location. This item uses Correspondence at 3.

## •••• Syringe Pharmacopeia

Transmutes water or nonpoisonous liquids that are stored in the syringe to poisons or sedative drugs. Ignoring the effects of these magically enhanced drugs requires a Stamina roll (difficulty 9). Uses Matter at 4.

## •••• Q.A.D (Quintessence Absorbing Device)

These machines resemble the respiration or EKG monitors typically found in hospitals. When the Q.A.D is hooked up to a living body (not necessarily a human), the machine slowly siphons Quintessence from the patient. This device is generally used in conjunction with the Pharmacopeist drug Primessence, though Primessence is not necessary for this machine to function.

The Quintessence is drained into a hidden receptacle or vat and stored for later use. When hooked to a Sleeper, the Q.A.D siphons three Quintessence point per week. Each week that a mage is hooked up to the Q.A.D, he loses one point from his Avatar while the Progenitors gather five points of Quintessence.

Use of the Primessence drug allows the Quintessence to be drained at a much higher rate. The machine uses Prime 4, Life 3, Matter 2 and Correspondence 3 (this last Sphere is used to transport the liquid Quintessence to the storage vat).

# Battle Roster

*It is always through not meddling that the empire is won.  
Should you meddle, then you are not equal to the task of winning  
the empire.*

—Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, Book Two (Verse XLVIII)



This section details a range of Progenitor characters, some homemade creatures, and a few beasts from Damage Control.

## Progenitor Characters

### Student

These young Progenitors have low levels of ability in the Life, Prime and Matter Spheres (Ranks One and Two).

Character Creation: Attributes 7/5/3, Abilities 10/6/3, Backgrounds 2, Willpower 4, Spheres 3, Arete 1-2.

### Research Associate

The RAs are seeking three things: their own laboratories, status and more power. They have achieved moderate power in their chosen Spheres.

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

### Primary Investigator

These Progenitors have accumulated personal power (at least Rank Four in one Sphere), their own laboratories, and, if they still have funding, a good relationship with the Research Directors, review boards and Administration. PIs employ underlings to work on new theories, which they can then apply to their magick.

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





## Research Director

An RD has a broad vision of the reality of the Technocracy, which she applies to the laboratory group under her control. The individual laboratories rarely understand the rationale behind any particular assignment, but usually, the data garnered from a lab group fit together like an intricate jigsaw puzzle.

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

## Non-Awakened Support Staff (Consors and Acolytes)

The support staff of the Progenitors varies from Methodology to Methodology, but generally subdivides into three basic groups:

### Technician

These are scientists who have no magical ability, instead performing menial tasks in a laboratory. They maintain the smooth flow of products in and out of the laboratory and stockroom, and perform "normal" research for the sake of non-Progenitors. Some know whom and what they serve, but many do not.

Character Creation: Attributes 7/5/3, Abilities 13/9/5, Backgrounds 5, Willpower 5.

Suggested Attributes: Assume ratings of 2, except for Intelligence, which is generally at least 3.

Suggested Abilities: Alertness 3, Research 4, Technology 2, Computer 1, Medicine 1, Science (usually specified as either Biochemistry, Genetics or Anatomy, depending on the field of expertise) 3.

Equipment: usually carry at least one weapon at all times.

## Street Operative

These are the dealers, distributors, pimps, prostitutes and gang members who work for Pharmacopeist street labs. Few have any ideas about the true nature of their employers. Most of the bruisers are on steroids, with reduced side effects.

Character Creation: Attributes 7/5/3, Abilities 13/9/5, Backgrounds 7, Willpower 4.

Suggested Attributes: Assume ratings of 2 save for Physical Attributes, which can range from 3 to 5 depending on the type of operative.

Suggested Abilities: Alertness 3, Brawl 3, Streetwise 3, Firearms 3, Melee 3, Stealth 2

Equipment: Firearms of all types, knives, machetes, hits of Pharmacopeist-enhanced cocaine and amphetamines, brass knuckles, baseball bats and blackjacks.

## The Recruiter

These non-Awakened agents for the Progenitors know exactly whom they serve. They generally are very perceptive, charismatic and manipulative, able to root out the most promising students and wheedle them into joining a Progenitor program.

Character Creation: Attributes 7/5/3, Abilities 10/8/4, Backgrounds 7, Willpower 5.







## Technician

Suggested Attributes: Assume ratings of 2 save for Social Attributes, which are at least 3.

Suggested Abilities: Alertness 3, Dodge 3, Intuition 2, Subterfuge 4, Etiquette 2, Stealth 2, Culture 2, Occult 1, Science 2

Equipment: Briefcase, cellular phone, supplies of business cards, college propaganda, sky-pager, maps, expensive sedan.

### Replacement Clones

These have exactly the same stats as the original templates. Certain personality quirks may appear or disappear. They carry the equipment they are expected to carry. Iteration X replacement clones will have cybernetic enhancements.

## Examples of Homegrown Nasties

Many Progenitors, particularly FACADE Engineers, create hybrid "sidekicks" for security, companionship or simple whim. The Convention takes a dim view of obviously unnatural creatures on the loose, so these "homegrown beasts" usually appear totally innocuous until it's too late.

### "Pander"

Pander is a sleek, black housecat with fur of medium length. He appears to be completely normal. However, when he was a kitten, a FACADE Engineer Student used him in one of her first experiments with grafting. Through the alteration, he was given the tongue of a frog, adapted for the size of its new host.

Pander escaped from his old mistress and remarkably survived both organ rejection and Paradox. The unsuspecting new tenants of Pander's home have noticed that many small, colorful objects that the cat could not normally reach have vanished or been found on the floor.

Pander's tongue can reach a maximum length of 15 feet. It is covered with a sticky resin on the tip, allowing it to adhere to small objects such as mice, birds and dice. The tongue has an effective Dexterity of 4 and Strength of 2. Pander is a little more intelligent than the average cat, and has been known to snatch objects such as guns, knives or keys from people's hands.

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Dodge 3

Attacks: Claws/1 die

Special Ability: Tongue: Dexterity 4, Strength 2

Willpower: 4

Health Levels: OK, -1, -2, -5, Incapacitated

### "Emmanuel"

Emmanuel is a tiny Chihuahua of the "hairless" kind. He trembles with nervous energy all the time, and heartily dislikes anyone but his current master.

Emmanuel's master grafted some characteristics of the vampire bat onto his beloved pet. Emmanuel now has a set of bat wings allowing him to fly at speeds approaching 20 mph. Extendible fangs within his mouth let him lock his jaws into a target almost as well as a Rottweiler can. Because of Paradox, Emmanuel has been through successive clone bodies, and never leaves his master's house.

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Brawl 2, Athletics 1, Dodge 3

Attacks: Bite/3 dice

Special Ability: Flight (see above)

Willpower: 3

Health Levels: OK, -1, -2, -5, Incapacitated

### "Lady"

Lady is a normal-looking, but large, black-and-tan Rottweiler. From the time Lady was a puppy, she was dosed on Pharmacopeist steroids to enhance her Physical Attributes. These steroids were of the "pure" variety and therefore did not cause any harmful side effects.

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Brawl 4, Alertness 3, Athletics 4, Dodge 3, Smell 3

Attacks: Bite/7 dice

Willpower: 5

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -3, -4, -5, Incapacitated



# Damage Control Monsters

*Huddled in the cellar  
Fear caught in their eyes  
Daring not to move or breathe  
As the creature cries.  
Fingernails start scratching  
On the outside wall,  
Clawing at the windows  
"Come to me," it calls...  
— Judas Priest, "Nightcrawler"*

## Cephalopoid

This creature is the combination of a cephalopod (a squid, octopus or nautilus) with parts of a human head and brain. From the upper side, it looks like a relatively normal squid or octopus, but those who view the creature from the underside can see a human face in the center of the array of tentacles. The eyes have been altered for underwater use (additionally, the normal cephalopod eyes have been left intact on the side of the mantle), and the creature's beak replaces the human mouth. The cephalopoid has human intelligence and is used as a scout or guard on marine missions. It cannot speak, but can use its tentacles to write if it knows how.

The average cephalopoid is created from a large octopus or Humboldt Current squid, resulting in a creature about 10 feet long. However, giant squids have also been used for this alteration, resulting in creatures as long as 60 feet.

(Or possibly larger; several asphyxiated sperm whales have recently been discovered on the surface. Strips of flesh and blubber have been torn from their bodies, and the wounds bear the characteristic sucker marks of giant squids. The whales were obviously deliberately held underwater, indicating the work of Progenitor cephalopoids. The scars on these whales, however, far exceed the giant squid's normal four-inch marks, instead reaching 18 inches in diameter; this implies the existence of a species of cephalopoid growing as large as 225 feet in length!)

Attributes: Strength 4-12 (+), Dexterity 3, Stamina 2-8 (+), Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 4, Brawl 3, Intimidation 4, Melee 1, Stealth 3 (plus any bonus from chromatophores; see below), Survival 3, Linguistics 1 (allowing them to read or write), Demolitions 2 (some of these creatures are trained in setting explosives on marine structures)

Attacks: Tentacles/Str dice from crushing; Beak/3 dice (or more in the case of giant squids).

Special Abilities: Several, including:

Jet propulsion — the siphon on the cephalopoid's mantle allows it to jet through the water at speeds of up to 40 mph.

Cromatophores — Cephalopoid flesh contains chromatophores — specialized cells giving it chameleonlike powers of camouflage. Unless the chromatophores have been magically neutralized, assume the creature has three additional dice in its Stealth Dice Pool. Alternately, the creature can assume "attack coloration" — flaming crimson. This display adds an additional die to its Intimidation Dice Pool.

Slow regeneration — if a cephalopoid lose tentacles, the limbs will regrow at the rate of one per week (the mollusoid regeneration process has been enhanced by Progenitor science).

Tentacles — the creature may attack multiple foes without dividing its Dice Pool. Alternately, the cephalopoid may target a single creature with more than one tentacle, receiving an additional die to its attack Dice Pools for each extra tentacle employed. Once a creature has been grappled, it is immobilized (no dodge roll versus the tentacles or beak) until it breaks free (Contest of Strength; the cephalopoid receives an extra die for each additional tentacle employed). An octopus-cephalopoid has eight tentacles; a squid, 10; a nautilus, innumerable. Octopi- and squid-cephalopoids may attack with their tentacles without exposing their bodies to injury; the nautilus-cephalopoid's tentacles are short, however, and any attack exposes the body.

Armor — assuming the cephalopoid was created from a squid or nautilus, its mystically strengthened shell gives it two extra soak dice, unless opponents specifically target the creature's vulnerable areas (attack difficulties are raised by one). An octopus-cephalopoid has no such shell, but its soft body enables it to squeeze through cracks as narrow as an inch wide.

Ink cloud — the cephalopoid can emit a blinding, obscuring cloud of ink of a volume approximately equal to that of the cephalopoid itself. This ink cloud has been enhanced by Progenitor science, allowing it to block all senses, including magical ones.

Willpower: 5

Health Levels: OK, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated (larger creatures receive many more Health Levels). Alternately, two successes scored with a sharp weapon (and against difficulty 8) allow one of the creature's tentacles to be severed.

## Sauroids

These creatures were grown from the combined DNA of humans and some of the most fierce and deadly reptiles on the planet. The combination proved to be everything for which the Genengineers had hoped, and more... Because of their obviously "unnatural" nature, these creatures are kept in Horizon Realms or secret pens until needed.





Image: Sauroids appear to be large, vaguely humanoid creatures of a slick green or light brown color. They are most likely to be found in small groups of three to eight members. They have long, sleek bodies and can move and sway like a snake. Their bodies are covered with sleek scales, spines and ridges along the spine and joints. These creatures can slither through openings as small as one foot in diameter. Their heads are long and slender, their eyes large and unblinking, and their toothy jaws capable of vast expansion. These beasts have sharp, retracting fangs that can reach lengths of up to 10 inches. The bite of a sauroid injects a lethal poison.

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 3, Brawl 4, Dodge 3, Stealth 3, Survival 3, Smell 4 (like a snake, they taste the air; therefore, they can "see" heat and detect movement around them)

Attacks: Bite/6 dice, plus poison — one Health Level per success, affecting the victim at a rate of one per turn, unless the victim rolls three or more successes on a Stamina roll (difficulty 8).

Special Abilities: Sauroids are natural climbers and capable of camouflage (use the "chromatophores" special ability under Cephalopods, above, but without the "attack coloration" ability).

Willpower: 5

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, -1 -1, -2, -2, -3, -5, Incapacitated

## Dracosaur

These rare creatures are quite difficult to create. Dracosaur resemble dragons; they are about the size of a medium horse at the shoulders and from 15 to 25 feet in length from snout to tail. Being Paradoxical in nature, they are kept in Horizon Realms save during the gravest emergencies.

These creatures are incredibly strong and deadly. They are trained to function like bloodhounds; once one has been put on someone's scent, only death will stop it. Dracosaur are capable of reaching speeds of up to 80 mph, but can only maintain this pace for about 15 seconds (three turns). Their "cruising speed" is about 30 mph.

Image: Dracosaur have multiple legs (from four to 10 pairs) and multiple sets of eyes placed all around the head, allowing for 360° vision. Their heads are reinforced with solid bone structures that act as battering rams and allow them to inflict massive damage by charging and butting walls or victims. For every two Health Levels of damage sustained, the victim is stunned a turn and knocked back 10 feet. (One of these creatures once charged a bus at full speed and knocked the bus over on its side, sending it sliding a full 10 feet. The witnesses regrettably had to be terminated for the common good.)



Attributes: Strength 8, Dexterity 3, Stamina 8, Perception 4 (specialized in scents), Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 4, Brawl 5, Survival 3, Scent 4

Attacks: Claw or Bite/10 dice, two attacks per turn at full Dice Pool

Tail/8 dice, free against any rear attackers

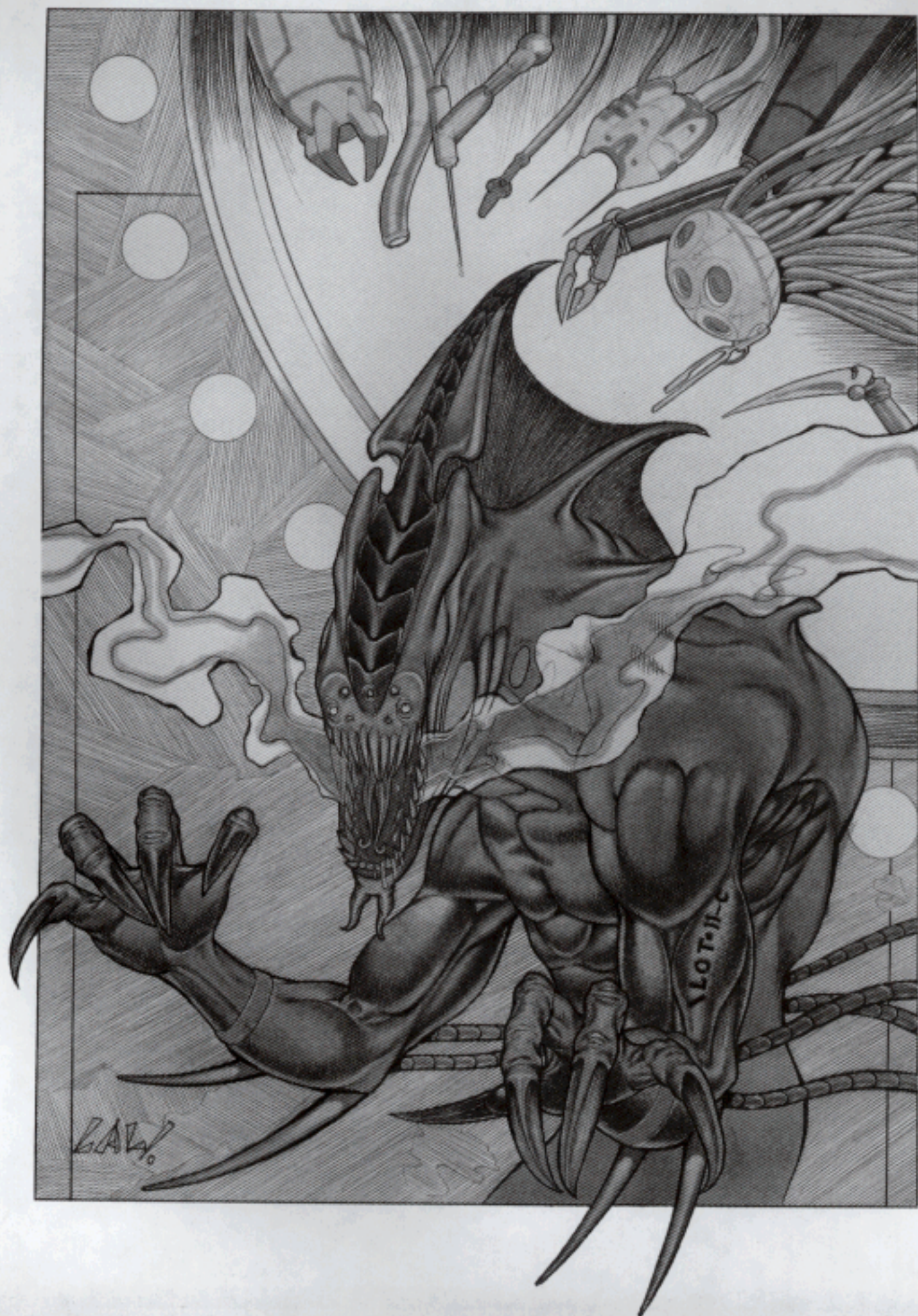
Charge/12 dice, but this uses the entire Dice Pool

Special Abilities: Speed bursts up to 80 mph, 360° vision; they can also follow scents with their keen senses (difficulty 6).

Willpower: 8

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -3, -3, -5, -5, -6, -6, Incapacitated







# Chapter Four: Progenitor Construct

## Commonwealth Trio Laboratory: Research Construct of Richmond

*Saving our planet doesn't lie in new tools but in who gets  
their hands on them and for what.*

— Letter Page, Issue 9 of Mondo 2000



This cluster of three labs is part of EcoR, a Progenitor Horizon Realm, and is located in central Virginia. The three Primary Investigators have banded together through collaboration and funding conglomeration. The three main laboratories are on the third floor of the biology building at a small university near Richmond.

The labs connect to EcoR but conduct a good deal of business outside the Realm. Little of the Lab's magick is vulgar in nature; most of the research here involves chemical manufacture and animal research. This second facet has caused the lab some degree of trouble, as rumors of inhumane experiments have circulated into the

Sleeper community. Oddly enough, many of the rumors are worse than the actual procedures. The Progenitors have little need for the cruel practices of some non-Progenitor labs.

### Dr. Charles Reid

Methodology: FACADE Engineer

Charles Reid is only one of a number of names and aliases this man has taken over the centuries. No one knows exactly how old he truly is, except, perhaps, himself. He evidently came to the United States sometime in the 20th century, quickly establishing himself in a position of control over most of the scientists in North America. As the years went by and bioscience grew, he ceded most of his





**Dr. Charles Reid**

control over the country to some of his carefully groomed former students. He did, however, maintain his control over his most promising labs, and labs based in government agencies. His lab group is known as EcoR.

Reid now coordinates the tobacco industry, many major food manufacturers, and a large number of pharmaceutical companies. Because he has very little time for his own research and only rarely takes on students, he often gives projects to his labs to satisfy his own scientific curiosity. One such project is the werewolf research at Developmental Neogenetics Amalgamated.

His overall goal has always been and is to destroy the Traditions. To this end, he makes sure that his laboratories maintain constant combat readiness. He also harbors a special bitterness for the Virtual Adepts; no one knows exactly why.

Charles Reid is Caucasian, with an unidentifiable accent; his current body is square, muscular, and just beginning to show the telling signs of middle age.

## **Amalgam: The Trinity Fellowship**

### **Dr. Yurikazi Ishida**

Essence: Pattern

Nature: Fanatic

Demeanor: Critic

Methodology: Genengineer

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 5, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 1, Awareness 2, Biochemistry 4, Brawl 1, Computer 2, Etiquette 3, Genetics 5, Intimidation 2, Linguistics 2, Meditation 2, Progenitor History 2, Research 2, Science 5, Technology 2

Spheres: Life 3, Matter 2, Prime 3

Backgrounds: Avatar 1, Influence 3, Library 3

Willpower: 8

Arete: 4

Quintessence: 10

Paradox: 1

Background: Ishida came to America in the mid-1950s seeking an education. His brilliance and single-minded research quickly attracted the attention of one of the early Genengineers, and he was recruited as a Technician. Ishida, always eager to learn more, proved enthusiastic and pursued opportunities above and beyond the norm. Hard work and single-minded organizational skill have compensated for Ishida's weak Avatar and incomplete understanding of magick.

Image: The years have been kind to Ishida. Not only is he well respected, if not well known, but he has an excellent relationship with the RD and Administration; he is able to pull off miracles of funding. His manner is quiet and intense; working with him is a joy for many Students who are used to the usual high-strung, fast-paced Genengineers. He is a small, trim, well-dressed Oriental man with a touch of gray at the temples and a habit of practicing Tai Chi in his office every morning.

Roleplaying Hints: Speak cleanly and precisely, with little slang or profanity. Ishida is spare with his movements and centered in his activity. Remember that flattery and



**Dr. Yurikazi Ishida**





**Dr. Sara Burns**

manners can accomplish more than stubbornness or intimidation.

### Dr. Sara Burns

Essence: Dynamic

Nature: Survivor

Demeanor: Director

Methodology: Pharmacopeist

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 4, Athletics 1, Biochemistry 3, Brawl 3, Computer 1, Dodge 3, Firearms 4, Intimidation 4, Intuition 4, Investigation 2, Leadership 2, Medicine 2, Melee 3, Science 4, Stealth 3, Streetwise 5, Subterfuge 3, Technology 2

Spheres: Life 4, Matter 3, Prime 3

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Avatar 2, Influence 2

Willpower: 6

Arete: 6

Quintessence: 14

Paradox: 4

Background: Burns was a street kid in Washington D.C., tough as nails and ready to deal with anything. She was picked up in 1977 by a Pharmacopeist RA to work out of a street lab, where she quickly saw her fortunes change. Though not as brilliant as, say, Ishida, Burns' quick wit and street smarts advanced her in leaps and bounds through the ranks of the street lab. Finally, the Convention gave in and brought her on as a Student.

Burns did rotations in a bunch of different labs after she graduated from Johns Hopkins University. She saved the RD when he was ambushed by a well-prepared group of Tradition mages (neither Burns nor the RD discusses the particulars of that battle). In gratitude, the RD gave her a lab in EcoR. She hooked up with Smith-Nevans and Ishida because they mind their own business and because Ishida's a whiz with the Administration. She singlehandedly carved a territory out of Richmond for the Pharmacopeists; she runs her demesne with deadly precision.

Image: Burns is a husky, attractive black woman, about 5'4" tall, in her early 30s. She is made of, if you believe her Students and RAs, solid steel and attitude. Her clothing is usually baggy and casual (the better to run, fight, or hide a .357 in).

Equipment: She carries a dizzying array of Pharmacopeist drugs, including amphetamines, cocaine, Cognition and smart drugs, which she will freely administer to herself and her operatives if necessary.

Roleplaying Hints: No one gives Burns shit. No one dares to. She locks eyes and stares down everyone but her closest friends. Her upbringing has left her with a rather coarse vocabulary that belies her able mind.

### Dr. Linda Smith-Nevans

Essence: Pattern

Nature: Conformist

Demeanor: Architect

Methodology: FACADE Engineer

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2, Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 2



**Dr. Linda Smith-Nevans**



Abilities: Alertness 4, Anatomy 5, Biochemistry 3, Computer 3, Etiquette 2, Firearms 2, Genetics 4, Medicine 3, Research 4, Stealth 1, Subterfuge 4, Technology 2, Zoology 3

Spheres: Life 5, Matter 2, Mind 4, Prime 4

Backgrounds: Avatar 2, Influence 3, Library 3

Willpower: 6

Arete: 6

Quintessence: 12

Paradox: 6

Background: Smith-Nevans began her career in England in 1894. She was one of the first women to gain entry into the ranks of the Progenitors as a full-fledged scientist. She has neither the fire of Burns nor the sheer brilliance of Ishida, but she has a slow patience that allows her to surpass both her peers over the long haul. She is a long-time friend of Charles Reid; he is happy to have someone of her age and experience in his lab group and someone of her quiet dedication as his supporter.

With her magical abilities, Dr. Smith-Nevans could become an RD if she so desired. She does not, instead being perfectly content where she is. Reid keeps in mind, however, that she is extremely vindictive when crossed.

Image: Dr. Smith-Nevans looks and acts like a mild English housewife. Her third body is now in the throes of middle age, and she will be moving into her fourth body sometime in the next couple of years. She wears wire-rim glasses, and her petite frame is already starting to look a little stooped in the cardigan sweaters she always wears. She dresses in tasteful and conservative clothing and has short salt-and-pepper hair. Her constant companion, Hadji, follows her wherever she goes.

Hadji is a brown miniature poodle that Dr. Smith-Nevans has had cloned at least 10 times since she became a Progenitor. He has a few alterations that make him an excellent companion. Hadji is highly intelligent for a dog; he is able to count, add, and tell time, as well as activate the Talisman collar around his neck. This device allows him to quadruple his size, mass and strength. His empathic link with his mistress lets him know if she is in distress. Who wants to stop a five-foot poodle, especially one that has razor-sharp, retractable cat claws affixed underneath his normal claws?

Roleplaying Hints: Dr. Smith-Nevans insists upon her proper name and title at all times. She is never "Linda" or "Smith-Nevans." She has worked hard to gain her position and demands respect. Her upper-class English accent is clipped and precise, and stands as an odd contrast to Burns' vulgar Americanisms. Strangely enough, the two women are close friends, and anyone who crosses one must also deal with the other.



Chain

## The Students and Research Associates

Each PI has one Student. Mary Beth Talley majors in FACADE Engineering, Tim Hughes in Pharmacopeia, and Andrew Greene in Genengineering. There is one RA for each lab: Stephen Thundran, the Genengineer; Chain, the Pharmacopeist; and Gina Milano, the FACADE Engineer. The Students' statistics are fairly typical for Student Progenitors.

### Chain

Essence: Pattern

Nature: Director

Demeanor: Rebel

Methodology: Pharmacopeist

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3, Perception 2, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 4, Athletics 3, Biochemistry 3, Brawl 4, Computer 3, Drive 3, Firearms 3, Genetics 1, Intimidation 3, Law 1, Leadership 2, Melee 4, Science 3, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 2, Stealth 3

Spheres: Life 3, Matter 2, Prime 2

Backgrounds: Avatar 5

Willpower: 7

Arete: 3

Quintessence: 8

Paradox: 6



**Background:** Chain reminds Sara Burns of herself. That's probably why she grabbed the kid as he was snatching her purse. There was something impressive there, just waiting under the surface, and she couldn't bear to watch it wasted. Sure, he's been a pain in the ass to teach, but then it's always more rewarding to teach to someone when you have to beat the knowledge into him.

Chain has proved himself a responsible leader, though he'd never let any of his old gang know that. He is bright, eager to learn and full of ideas. He helped Sara build up the Richmond lab and keeps the streets under her control. She plans eventually to turn the entire thing over to him when she feels he's ready (if the RD will ever let her).

**Image:** Chain is a tall, muscular white man who dresses his part. If he's at the academic lab, he wears a T-shirt and tight, stonewashed jeans. If he's on the street, he wears appropriate leather, chains, and ripped clothing. He changes his facial hair on a whim, one month growing a goatee, the next going clean-shaven, the following growing a full beard. He changes his hair almost as frequently, though he usually keeps it long. He changes the color of his skin when dealing with ethnic inner-city gangs, and keeps appropriate Hispanic, African-American, and Oriental aliases.

**Equipment:** No matter where he is, Chain is always armed. At the university, he carries a Heckler & Koch P7M13 pistol in a holster at the small of his back, and a knife in an ankle sheath. On the street, his weapons of choice are a Heckler & Koch MP-5 SMG, a variety of hidden knives and a long section of chain with a nasty meathook at the end; he wears this last weapon around his waist.

**Roleplaying Hints:** Chain shifts his demeanor to suit the occasion. On the street, he adjusts to the expectations of his "clients." In the lab, he is friendly and open, with just a hint of menace. His anger is cold, jagged, and cuts like a rusty blade.

## Stephen Thundran

**Essence:** Questing

**Nature:** Jester

**Demeanor:** Curmudgeon

**Methodology:** Genegineer

**Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Perception 2, Intelligence 4, Wits 2

**Abilities:** Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Biochemistry 4, Brawl 3, Computer 5, Dodge 2, Drive 2, Firearms 3, Genetics 3, Melee 3, Medicine 3, Meditation 3, Occult 3, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 1, Technology 3

**Spheres:** Life 3, Matter 2, Mind 2, Prime 3

**Backgrounds:** Avatar 4, Allies 1, Dream (memory) 4

**Willpower:** 7

**Arete:** 3

**Quintessence:** 8

**Paradox:** 4



**Stephen Thundran**

**Background:** Stephen was a bitter "child prodigy" whose photographic memory led his parents and teachers to overestimate his intelligence. After being pushed too far one semester, he suffered a nervous breakdown. His Avatar, a flaming clown who juggled screaming rubber balls, tormented him for nearly a month, goading him into Awakening. This nightmarish vision haunts him still, though he tells no one. Stephen embraced the Technomancers' vision of controlled reality, seeking to banish this specter, but it hasn't worked.

Stephen is bright, with a twisted, sarcastic sense of humor that often puts people off. Dr. Ishida, fortunately, has no sense of humor and therefore does not notice the sarcasm. Stephen's best points, as far as Ishida is concerned, are his amazing spatial perception and eidetic memory, which allow him to assemble gene sequences in his head and thereby derive the proteins which they produce, complete with the protein configurations. This precise calculation keeps Stephen's Avatar occupied. Sometimes.

He has some skill in martial arts, melee combat with swords, and firearms. Previous experience has led him to carry a 9mm pistol to and from the lab.

Sadly, Stephen is unaware that his girlfriend Marcie is a Disciple of the Verbena. Though he has never told her about the juggling clown, Marcie knows of Stephen's Avatar and can chase it away while he sleeps. The RD is aware of Marcie's true affiliation and has plans to eliminate her in the near future. Her clone is already in progress.

**Image:** Stephen is of average height and trim build, with short brown hair and glasses.

**Roleplaying Hints:** Stephen is often sarcastic and rude, though he really doesn't mean many of the things that he





says. It is possible that his Avatar sometimes speaks through him. He is more dependent upon his friends at the lab than he would like to admit, and would react poorly to any threat to them.

### Gina Milano

Essence: Dynamic

Nature: Deviant

Demeanor: Avant-Garde

Methodology: FACADE Engineer

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5, Charisma 1, Manipulation 4, Appearance 5, Perception 2, Intelligence 4, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 3, Anatomy 5, Biochemistry 2, Brawl 3, Computer 2, Drive 1, Firearms 1, Genetics 2, Medicine 3, Stealth 4, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 4, Technology 3

Spheres: Life 3, Matter 2, Mind 1, Prime 3

Special Abilities: Gina regenerates nonaggravated damage at a rate of one Health Level per turn and one aggravated level per day. Regenerating aggravated damage, however, causes her such intense pain that her Dice Pools are halved until the damage is healed.

Backgrounds: Avatar 3, Dream 2, Mentor (Dr. Smith-Nevans) 3

Willpower: 5

Arete: 3

Quintessence: 8

Paradox: 5

Background: Gina is actually rather a tragic case if you hear her story before meeting her. She was one of the early

test subjects for the Nanotech Life Support spell. The little machines were introduced into her body; as a result, she is difficult to injure, regenerates, etc. However, the nanotech was not attuned to her mind or Pattern, and the payoff is constant pain. This pain varies from a dull ache to searing agony, but it never goes away.

This has had several negative psychological effects. Gina is unpleasant to be around, often makes cruel comments, and displays extreme sociopathic tendencies. She is tolerated only because her PI constantly defends her.

Gina is quite talented in her chosen field, and has one of the best eyes for combinations and grafts that Smith-Nevans has ever encountered. Still, the sheer pleasure the woman seems to derive from decapitation makes the PI shudder at times.

Image: Gina is a beautiful woman with long, black hair, black eyes, and bronze skin. She has permanently fixed herself in a shapely 20-year-old body, and is the object of much desire and jealousy. Because of the amount of fuel the nanotech requires to keep running at peak efficiency, Gina can eat up to six large meals per day and never gain a pound, although the stress the pain puts on her body quickly burns the energy away.

Roleplaying Hints: Briskly efficient, Gina exhibits many of her Mentor's personality quirks around the lab. She presents a cold, businesslike manner to cover her pain and perversity. Off duty, she engages her taste for others' suffering by keeping a stable of men, whom she mistreats mercilessly.

## Node for the Trio Laboratory

Dr. Ishida has set up a number of Quintessence-Absorbing Devices (see Chapter Three) throughout a nearby hospital affiliated with the lab. These machines, "donated" by a Progenitor front company, actually leech Prime life force from critically injured and terminally ill patients. After all, why let perfectly good resources go to waste?

The Tass from this Quintessence is channeled through a network patched into the labs through Correspondence magick. Another net connects the lab to the nearby medical school. The Tass flows into a still in Ishida's darkroom (see below).

## EcoR (pronounced "echo ar") Lab Group

This is one of the oldest and most sizable Progenitor lab groups in North America. The central laboratories, where the Research Director is located, are based in northern Virginia. All the associated Progenitors in the Mid-Atlantic and Southern region are under this RD's control, as are three laboratories in California, three in Colorado, two in



Minnesota, one in Indiana, one in England, one in Australia and two in Japan.

These groups all collaborate on research whenever possible. EcoR supplies HIT Mark organisms to Iteration X through EcoR Japan, spikes tobacco products with Pharmacopeist products at labs based in the major tobacco companies in Georgia, Virginia, North Carolina and Kentucky, and provides clone bodies for most Progenitors in North America, since the American DNA library is in Bethesda, Maryland, well within the boundaries of control for EcoR.

The RD, Dr. Charles Reid, frequently travels among the different laboratories under his control. He also enjoys teaching at several of the universities where he holds appointments.

## The EcoR Horizon Realm

This appears as a huge, white, multistoried building. The hallways are white, like a hospital. The deathly silence, which hangs like a pall, is occasionally punctuated by a scream or inhuman roar in the distance. The entire building reeks of disinfectant. The Progenitors here wear white uniforms. The Students all wear jackets with red trim, the RAs have blue trim, the PIs have black trim, and the RDs wear pure white. A strange acoustic effect mutes all sounds in the hallways; voices always sound like whispers, even if the speakers shout.

Inside the laboratories, the machines raise a racket never heard in the hallways beyond: the people working here must raise their voices above the roar of the freezers, incubators, clone tanks and other high-tech machinery. The offices, by contrast, are quite pleasant, with deep carpeting and spotless surfaces cleaned every night by Progenitor creations. Desks for Students and RAs are provided in the labs, while the PIs and RDs have offices on the upper floors of the building. Each lab on Earth has a counterpart in the Horizon Realm.

The lower levels have containment facilities for creatures, conversion labs for manipulating and combining spirits with living flesh (certain experiments involve turning humans into net-spiders), Quintessence receptacles, and Quintessence furnaces to reclaim the energy spent on failed experiments.

The EcoR Lab Group Realm may be considered a Summer Construct (see The Book of Chantries), at the height of its power and running smoothly. Few Technicians have realized that the machines run a little louder and the accidents grow more frequent each year. Resonance, if such a thing could be said to exist, is not very strong here, but no one knows exactly what the future may hold.

## The Portal to the EcoR Horizon Realm

This is one of many EcoR Portals on the Tellurian. It is concealed in a floor-to-ceiling closet in the darkroom of Ishida's laboratory. Several sliding drawers block most of the view into the rear of the closet, which appears to be nothing more than a very dark cubby. These drawers can be swung out of the closet to allow entrance or egress through the Portal, but only when both doors to the darkroom and the drape across the inner door are shut and firmly in place. The drawers are spring-loaded to snap back into place and shut the door when someone enters.

Also in this room, sprouting arcane pipes and wires running behind the benches into the closet, is a Quintessence Still, which collects the energy from the medical school's Quintessence Net. This provides the Progenitors with extra Quintessence and also feeds a requisite quantity to the EcoR Horizon Realm.

The living guardian of the Portal resides within the area under the benches in the darkroom. It has a nasty tendency to sneak through the ventilator shafts of the building, snitching and consuming random sodas, sandwiches and candy bars — and, once in a while, an underclassman. It usually lives on the animals scheduled for euthanization in the animal wing, but enjoys supplementing its diet with invaders or freshmen.

### "Fred," The Portal Guardian

Strength 6, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 4





Abilities: Alertness 3, Brawl 5, Dodge 4, Intimidation 3, Stealth 4, Survival 4

Attacks: Claws/6 dice, Bite/8 dice

Special Abilities: Its saliva reduces blood clotting; this induces excessive bleeding once introduced into someone's body.

Background: "Fred," as the Guardian has come to be nicknamed, is a long, slender, serpentine creature resembling a five-foot-long ferret with scales and fur. The whiskers extend approximately three feet to either side of its face, and its eyes are extremely sensitive to light. The whiskers provide almost as much information as its eyes do, which is a good thing if it has a halogen flashlight shone in its eyes.

It is extremely friendly to anyone it recognizes as a member of the lab. Stephen has reported that "Fred" has spoken to him on occasion, but no one else believes him.

## The Construct

### Description

The floor plan of each lab is virtually identical. Black-topped lab benches line two walls and protrude into the center of the room in a peninsula. Two freezers roar loudly in the corner opposite the benches, and an incubator and centrifuge are placed anywhere they might fit. Two cubicles for use by Students are placed in the laboratory proper. Two small offices adjoin each lab. One is for the use of the Technicians and Research Associates, the other is for the PI of the lab. The Genengineer, Dr. Yurikazi Ishida, has the lab on one end, the Pharmacopeist, Dr. Sara Burns, has the other end lab, and the FACADE Engineer, Dr. Linda Smith-Nevans, has the center lab.

Ishida's lab also contains another small room, which he has converted to a darkroom for developing photographs. Conveniently, this room also houses the Portal to the EcoR Horizon Realm.

### Purpose

Each of the three Methodologies is represented in the Trio Lab group. The Construct works mostly on marine agents. There are two motivations for this: 1) word has recently spread that a large Tradition Chantry is located off the shore of Virginia, perhaps on Assateague, Chincoteague or an associated island, or underwater, and 2) the RD has decided that performing some checks on the periodic Barrier breach in the so-called Bermuda Triangle is within the duties of EcoR and its local allies.

More immediate concerns involve a young, mobile Chantry of Tradition mages that has been nosing around near the Pharmacopeist street lab in Richmond, and some mysterious harassing phone calls the lab answering machines have been receiving after hours. The PIs try to defend themselves and their labs while churning out sufficient data and products to keep the RD happy.

## The Laboratory Staff

There is one Technician in each lab: Angela Morten works for Dr. Ishida, Sanjay Koustubhan for Dr. Burns, and Sharon Bailey for Dr. Smith-Nevans. The Technicians match their employers' temperaments relatively well. Angela has just graduated from college and is anxiously seeking to become a Progenitor. Sanjay was a party dude in college, and so has a grip on the culture in which Burns' people mix. Sharon is a housewife and mother of four, quite happy working for Dr. Smith-Nevans. None of them ever questions the orders of the PIs, and all try to the best of their ability to meet any demands of the RAs.

Each Technician has three dots in a combat Ability; Angela carries a cane sword that she has acquired and Sanjay uses the balisong butterfly knives he always carries, while Sharon keeps a Colt Python in her (large) handbag. They otherwise have the standard stats for Technicians.

Dr. Burns has a variable number of street operatives (between 10 and 15) working out of her Richmond lab. They have the average Pharmacopeist street operative stats, and are well armed.

## External Relations

The Trio Lab Group maintains cordial relations with many of the other EcoR facilities, though the RD of the English lab carries some old grudge against Dr. Smith-Nevans. Many other Progenitors are scared witless by Dr. Burns, but any objections they have are kept under the table. A Cult of Ecstasy cabal working out of Richmond's bohemian Fan district is aware of the Trio Lab Group, but is afraid to move against it at this point. An earlier assault left two of its members dead and a third in prison.

A large Richmond street gang is preparing for a war against Dr. Burns' Acolytes. The gang members might think twice if they knew the truth about their rivals—then again, they might not.

Other enemies include a vampire reputed to live in nearby Hollywood Cemetery, a local animal-rights group, and Marcie's (girlfriend of Stephen Thundran) three-member coven. The animal-rights activists keep a vigilant eye on the lab (although they are unaware of its true nature), while the coven bides its time until Marcie can persuade Stephen to leave his "job."

### Status and Reputation

The Commonwealth Trio Laboratory is a small local operation, with little real clout in the grand scheme of things. Given time, the three partners may carve a place for themselves in the EcoR lab group, but for now the lab maintains a low profile and a shady reputation, thanks to Dr. Burns, Gina and Chain.

Status: 1

Reputation: 2 (respected with reservations)



### THIRD FLOOR





## Suggested Reading

### Notes for the Storyteller

For fiction in the realms of biology and genetics, the authors suggest such books as Michael Crichton's *Jurassic Park* and *The Andromeda Strain*, and Frank Herbert's *The White Plague*. Also excellent are Patricia Cornwell's mystery novels, such as *Post-Mortem*.

If you are interested in easy-to-read background material on the current state of genetics and biology, the authors suggest any essays or books by Stephen Jay Gould, an extremely talented and readable scientist, and strongly recommend *The Cartoon Guide to Genetics* by Larry Gonick and Mark Wheelis. This last book offers jargon, concepts

and history in a humorous setting, though some of the actual information is somewhat obsolete; it is 10 years old.

If you want to use current genetic research to give your chronicle an authentic background, your best bet is to find a biology/genetics student or professor who is willing to talk to you about it. Genetics is a science that evolves faster and faster every day; discoveries constantly leap out of the DNA. The possibilities at this point seem endless, and, with the popularity of *Jurassic Park*, articles on genetic speculation are easy to find.

One might almost suspect a conspiracy of some kind....





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