

EMPATHIC™

Sourcebook



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GDW

CREDITS

Design: Craig Sheeley, Geoff Pass & Alex Bund, Winston Hamilton, and Lester Smith

Development: Craig Sheeley, Lester Smith, and Phil Tobin

Editing: Loren Wiseman and Dave Nilsen

Art Direction: Steve Bryant

Cover Art: Les Dorscheid

Interior Art: Steve Bryant, Paul Daly, Rick Harris, and Rob Lazzaretti

Graphic Design and Production: LaMont Fullerton, Rob Lazzaretti, Chad McKenzie, and Kirk Wescom

Typesetting and Proofreading: Stephen Olle

Proofreading: Anne Bedard

Empathic Sourcebook™

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P.O. Box 1646
Bloomington, IL 61702-1646

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This sourcebook is intended to give greater depth and more flavor to the study and use of empathy, the most effective tool for fighting the Dark Masters and their spawn. In it, some explanation and guidelines are provided for the mysterious proto-organization known as the empathic underground—what it is, what it does, how it is set up. The other chapters of the book concern the actual “schools” of empathic practice that are known to exist: the neuropathic, the psionic, the sorcerous, and the mystical. Each chapter defines each school and presents how each discipline uses the common empathic skills.

Readers will soon notice that of the four disciplines, only neuropathy requires no training and study, only practice. Because of this, neuropathy has some unique penalties; it is the most mentally dangerous discipline to use. The other disciplines require a great deal of education to practice, let alone master. Characters wishing to be practitioners in one or more of these schools must either generate this study during the character generation process or learn it during play. Neuropathy can be acquired during character generation, as noted in the Neuropathy chapter, or gained during play. Please note that neuropathy is considered the default level of Empathy, and is actually a slight refinement on the empathic skills presented in *Dark Conspiracy*.

Generating knowledge of the more subtle disciplines during character generation requires a term spent in empathic study for each discipline learned. Please note that the psionic discipline is not compatible with mysticism, and vice versa. Psionics and sorcerers, and sorcerers and mystics, have no trouble rationalizing their views with one another's, but a psionic cannot practice mysticism, and a mystic abhors the coldness of psionics.

The more refined empathic pow-

ers covered in this book represent further developments in empathic talents that have taken place in response to the Dark invasion itself. Characters generated under the basic system must acquire these advanced powers as part of play (unless the referee allows a character a specific, retroactive modification). These characters represent people not privy to empathic training earlier in their lives.

New characters can be generated using the empathic study rules detailed below.

Empathic Study

You learned of the world of thought: that the mind and will could do things that you used to think patently impossible. Now, you needed some way to hone the powers locked within you, to train and guide your potential. You found a teacher, someone who could help you on your journey.

Entry: Empathy 3+, and at least one empathic contact.

First Term and Subsequent Term Skills: A combination of 6 levels from empathic skills from one empathic discipline, and Willpower 1.

Contacts: One per term, empathic. On a roll of 6+, the contact is foreign.

Special: One or more foreign contacts may be converted to renegade ET contacts. Training in psionics confers a +1 Initiative bonus at the end of the second term of psionics training. No money is earned during any terms spent in empathic training.

Acquiring New Empathic Disciplines During Play

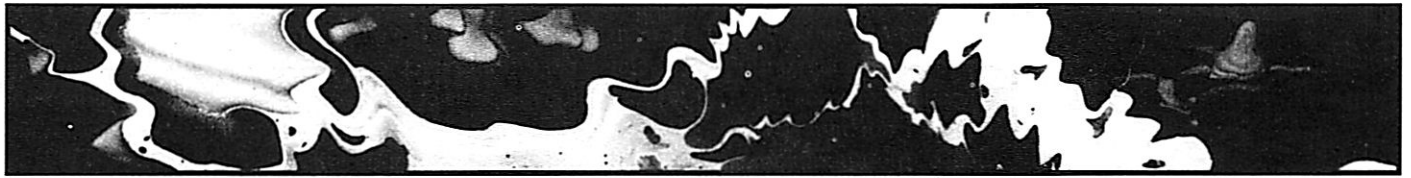
Psionics, sorcery, and mysticism training require that the character find a teacher. This can be an empathic contact converted to a solid contact, or can be a teacher encountered during play.

Once training starts, the character spends time learning the basis of the discipline. This training takes a good eight hours each day, every day, and can last months. Each month of training, make an Average: (INT+Empathy+2) test. Once the pupil character succeeds, he has succeeded in grasping the principles of the discipline, and may move on to study.

For each further month of study, the character gains 3 skill levels that are applied to the skills of the discipline. An empath trained as a mystic cannot train to use psionic powers, and vice versa.

Improving Empathic Discipline Skills

A neuropath can always improve neuropathic skills as



per the normal skill improvement rules. An empath from one of the other disciplines can improve his specialized skills normally only if he has a teacher whom he sees on a regular basis for study (at least 40 hours a week), otherwise skills cost double, as if buying them at a level above the character's Empathy. This doubling is in addition to the doubling that takes place if improving the skill level beyond the character's Empathy score.

Extra Benefit

Once an empath has trained in one of these three advanced disciplines, the mental penalties of using neuropathic powers no longer applies—any mental problems the character already has remain, but no new mental problems can be caused through neuropathy.

Some Definitions

The supplement *Minion Nation* included a number of definitions common to *Dark Conspiracy* for the edification of gamers unfamiliar with the game's background. Some of these definitions cleared up speculation as to the terms in question. In a similar vein, here are some commonly used but heretofore poorly defined terms from *Dark Conspiracy*:

Dark Master, a.k.a. Dark One: A noncorporeal entity from another dimension and realm of existence which seems to gain sustenance from human suffering and similar emotional discharges. While capable of assuming physical form, this state produces a large, weak, and vulnerable corporeal shell, because physical existence is alien and uncomfortable to a Dark Master. Furthermore, Dark Masters are immortal in their native form; physical form makes them vulnerable to destruction. There are no examples of Dark Masters mentioned in *Dark Conspiracy* literature, for none have been or ever will be seen, unless they wish to die.

Dark Lord: A corporeal entity created by one or more Dark Masters or by another Dark Lord. A sort of super-minion, with powers far beyond that of mere mortals, granted immortality, strength and/or great physical defenses, and set to do its master's bidding. These entities can die, too, but are much harder to kill than a Dark Master. Examples include Fiddleback and Pygmalion from the *Gathering Evil* trilogy, the Great Dark One from *Hellsgate*, and the Machine Lords of *Mechaniaca* from *The Proto-Dimensions Sourcebook, Volume I*. Yes, these are all Dark Lords, subservient to Dark Masters. Despite their disparate power levels and sizes, they are in the same category. As can be seen, Dark Lords are not all created equal, but their purpose is the same: agents and generals for the Masters (even though they believe

they act under their own volition).

Dark One: A term used interchangeably for Dark Masters and Dark Lords. Once, it referred only to Dark Masters, but with the introduction of Dark Lords who wield even more earthly power than their masters, the term came to include them both.

Darkling: A creature or entity of otherworldly origin working for or at least siding with the Dark Masters.

Minion, Dark Minion: An intelligent entity, either human or not, working for the Dark Masters.

Minion Hunter: An intelligent entity, usually human but not necessarily so, which has devoted its existence to thwarting the plans of the Dark Masters and their servants. Also a very good and enjoyable boardgame.

Stages of Success

In order to maintain the atmosphere of the game, it is important for all empathic success rolls to be made by the referee and kept secret from the player. Players should be told they have succeeded, but they should not know the exact stage until they attempt to exploit it, or their success is revealed by events.

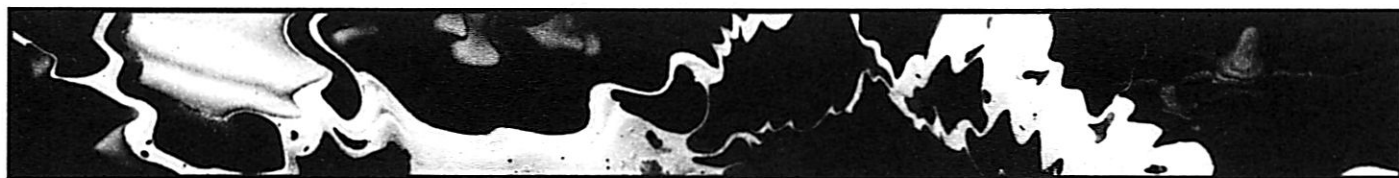
In many specific cases, sensory feedback will reveal the levels of success. If a character tries to levitate an object, and can see the object being levitated, success or failure will be immediately evident by the object becoming airborne (or not, as the case may be). Ideally, the referee should require players to roleplay these actions out. If, for example, a character is using Clairvoyance to search a large warehouse on the other side of a brick wall, the referee should start with the lowest stage of success and work the player through it by describing what the player sees as the radius of vision increases or the range is increased. This makes a much better game than when the referee simply states: "OK...that's a Stage Three...you can see a five-meter radius at 15 meters away."

Dimension Walk

No user of Dimension Walk or any of its cascades can enter, look into, or otherwise observe or manipulate a proto-dimension unless the user is familiar with that proto-dimension. This means that the user must either have been taken to that proto-dimension by someone or something else, or a complete enough psychic impression must have been transferred to the user by means of Project Thought or a similar empathic means. One visit is enough, and the visit can be voluntary (during empathic training) or involuntary (kidnapping by Dark Minions, etc.). The user must remain at least five seconds in the proto-dimension in order to gain a sufficient psychic impression to be able to return.

020 STEAM INTRODUCTION





THE D20 SYSTEM

After extended playtesting, the official system of *Dark Conspiracy* and other games using the *Twilight: 2000* rules system has been changed from a D10-based to a D20-based system. This system, while similar in many ways to the system published in the *PC Booster Kit*, is actually quite different. This new system does not require modification to attribute stats or skill levels in the character generation process, and is fully compatible with all weapons in the *Twilight* system, including recoil stats, which the system in the *PC Booster Kit* was not. This D20 system allows for the same five distinctive task difficulty levels of the other system, but defaulting to controlling attributes is easier and has a higher rate of success than the old system, something that can be very, very important in the dark and deadly world of *Dark Conspiracy*.

D20 CHARACTER GENERATION CHANGES

The rules that follow explain how to create the range of skill levels necessary for the D20 system.

Basic Attributes: Generate these normally, as per the basic game rules.

Skill Levels: Generate all skill levels normally, but in addition record the total of the skill level and its controlling attribute. For example, a character with a STR of 9 and a Melee Combat (Unarmed) skill of 7 would record the skill as "Melee Combat (Unarmed) 7/16," the first number being the skill level and the second number being the total of skill and controlling attribute.

Skill Tests: All skill tests are versus the total of skill and controlling attribute.

Unskilled Tests: Characters may try to use skills for which they have no training, by making a test versus the controlling attribute alone, at one difficulty level higher than normal. For example, Sylvia wants to shoot a morlock with a pistol, but has no Small Arms skill. She has a STR of 6, and is shooting at Medium range, normally a Difficult: Small Arms test. Since she is using a skill she doesn't have, the test defaults to STR and rises one level of difficulty to Formidable. This means that the test is made against half of her STR (rounding down), and she has to roll a 3 or less to hit.

Attribute Tests: Referees should be careful in

assigning difficulties for attribute tests, since these stats normally only range from 1 to 10. Note, for example, that Melee Combat Agility tests have been adjusted for this reason.

Unarmed Combat Damage: Use only the basic skill level, not the total of attribute and skill, when multiplying times STR in the Unarmed Combat Damage formula.

Attribute and Skill Maximums: Attributes are limited to a maximum of 10 (unless changed by super-science or unnatural powers, like cyborging). Skills have no maximum limit; you can improve a skill to as high a level as the players desire and the referee will allow.

D20 SYSTEM COMBAT NOTES

In the original D10 combat system, a roll of 9 or 10 resulted in an automatic miss when using missile weapons. In the new D20 system, a roll of 17-20 results in an automatic miss when using missile weapons.

D20 SYSTEM TASK DIFFICULTY LEVELS

A few comments are worth making concerning the revised task difficulty levels for the new D20 system. Whenever the term "skill" is used in context of a task, it means the total of the attribute and skill combined unless otherwise specified. The ranges for Easy, Average, and Difficult tasks have been effectively made one level lower in difficulty than before; Easy becomes equal or less than 4x skill, rather than merely 2x, and so on. The purpose of this is to bring the task names more in line with what players would expect. Now, a character with a skill level of 10 is virtually assured of success at an Average task, unless an automatic failure roll occurs.

Converting old difficulty levels to new ones is simply a matter of comparing the old and new target numbers. For example, under the old system, climbing a sheer rock face with good handholds was an Average task; that is, the roll was made against the base Climbing skill. Under the D20 system, a roll against the base skill+attribute is a Difficult task, so climbing a sheer rock face with good handholds becomes an Difficult task.

Automatic Success/Failure: Under the D20 system, a natural roll of 1 always succeeds, and a



natural roll of 20 always fails, regardless of skill level. This gives characters a small chance of success even at the absolute worst of times, and of failure even at the absolute best of times. Both of these are intellectually satisfying, and bring an element of tension to the simplest of situations.

Outstanding Success: A roll of 10 points or more below the target number results in an Outstanding Success. The effects of an Outstanding Success are decided by the referee, unless specified by the rules.

Catastrophic Failure: This is the opposite of Outstanding Success. If a character fails in a task by at least 10, roll again. If the character fails again, a Catastrophic Failure has occurred (if the character succeeds on the second roll, then the task is a regular failure). The effects of a Catastrophic Failure are decided by the referee, unless specified by the rules.

Combat Task Levels: While tasks in general have become more easy for characters to accomplish in the D20 system, combat tasks worked very well under the D10 system. To maintain the same percentages of success and failure in this area, the task difficulty names have been increased one level, as summarized on the appropriate task difficulty tables.

D20 SYSTEM: TASK DIFFICULTY LEVELS

Level	Roll (1D20)
Easy	$\leq 4 \times (\text{Skill} + \text{Attribute})$
Average	$\leq 2 \times (\text{Skill} + \text{Attribute})$
Difficult	$\leq (\text{Skill} + \text{Attribute})$
Formidable	$\leq \frac{1}{2} \times (\text{Skill} + \text{Attribute})$
Impossible	$\leq \frac{1}{4} \times (\text{Skill} + \text{Attribute})$

*Round fractions down

ADDITIONAL NOTE CONCERNING NPCs

Remember to add the attribute and skill of NPC skill levels.

WILLPOWER EFFECTS ON EMPATHIC POWER LEVELS

When calculating Willpower effects on empathic

power levels, only subtract the target's combined Willpower+INT if it actually has at least 1 point of Willpower skill. For targets that have no Willpower skill (this includes targets that have had their willpower depleted by Willpower Drain, no subtraction is made.

OTHER RULES CHANGES AND ADDITIONS

These rules are more in the nature of fine-tuning rather than substantive changes.

Fear

Dark Conspiracy is a game set in a time full of fear. This fear is not the panic of shock or surprise, the adrenal reaction to a threat situation profiled under "Panic" (*Dark Conspiracy*, page 77). This is a worse and more terrifying thing, the primal horror that lurks within all humanity. After all, being eaten alive is far more horrible than being shot.

The referee determines the fear situation and difficulty level. For instance, suddenly discovering that the girl (or guy) you're kissing is a bloodkin would be a Difficult test. On the other hand, being accosted by morlocks would only be an Easy test—they're ugly, but more-or-less normal looking. The fear level is largely determined by the fearfulness of the creature. If the fear situation has an appropriate setup, an atmosphere that has the characters half frightened out of their wits before they encounter the creature, increase the level of difficulty by one level. If the characters know what they're going to see or have seen it before, lower the difficulty level by one.

The Fear test is made using Willpower skill. Alternatively, PCs may use Initiative as a total skill level, if their Initiative is higher than their Willpower skill.

Success allows the character to act normally. Failure means that the character is frozen in place with terror, unable to do anything. A terrified character may use his actions to test again, at one level of difficulty lower, hoping to snap out of it and do something. Outstanding Success allows the character to take one free action immediately, even out of phase, to react to the situation. Catastrophic Failure means that the character is panic-stricken and can only flee for his life; if flight is impossible, the



character curls into a fetal position and whimpers/quivers/is otherwise totally useless. A character suffering the effects of Catastrophic Failure can test to remove its effects once the source of the fear is gone (Easy: Willpower or Initiative) or if a friend motivates him—"Snap out of it!" *Slap!* (Difficult: Willpower or Initiative).

This test is made in addition to the normal Panic test, if the situation calls for a Panic test as well.

Explosive Rounds

The following rule was included in the PC Booster Kit, and clears up a minor problem area in the rules.

When a high-explosive round (HE, HEAT, etc., any round with a "C" penetration) hits a living target, roll a number of D6 damage dice equal to the round's penetration or concussion value, whichever is greater, and apply the entire damage rolled to the hit location that received the impact. After this, roll normally for concussion and fragmentation for everyone within the round's burst radius, as per regular rules.

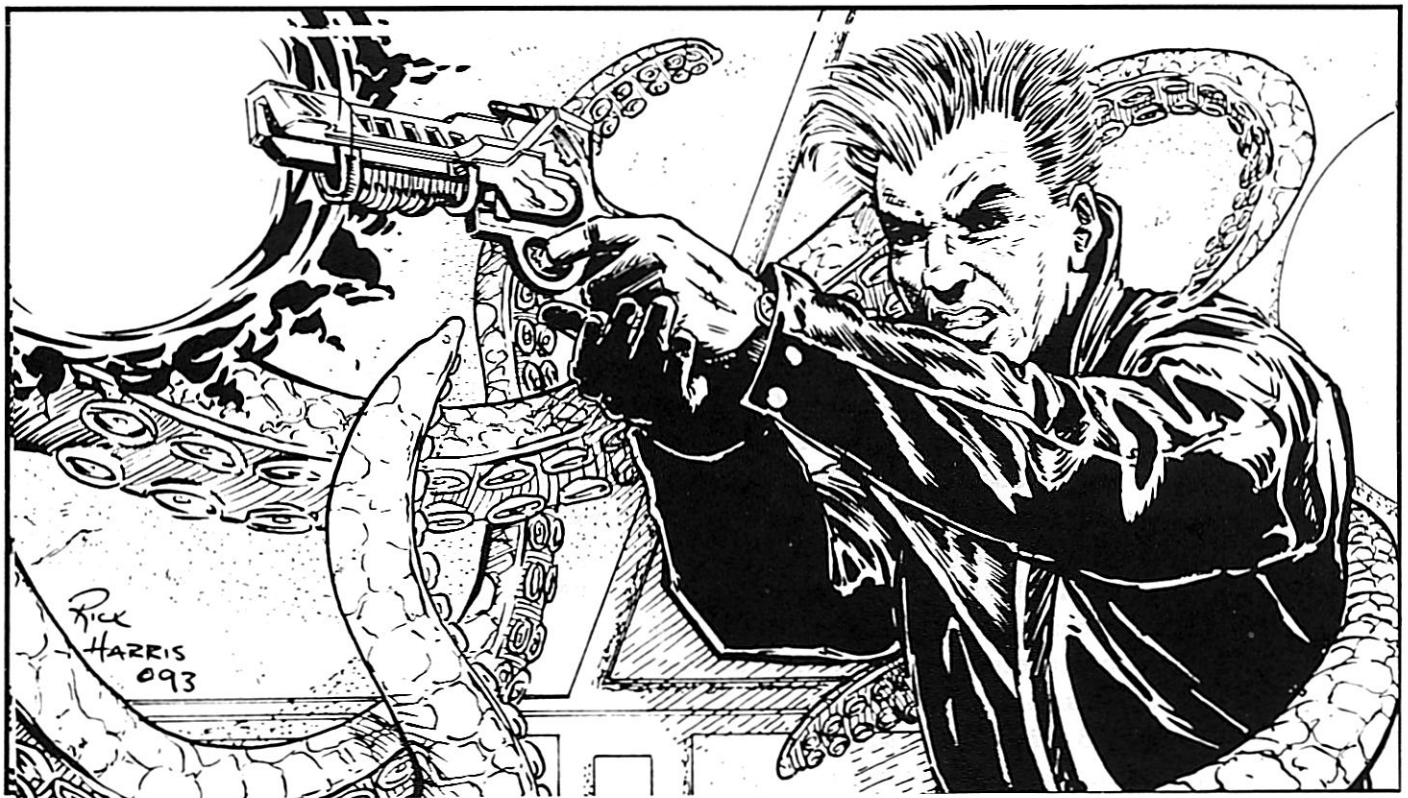
Recoil Changes

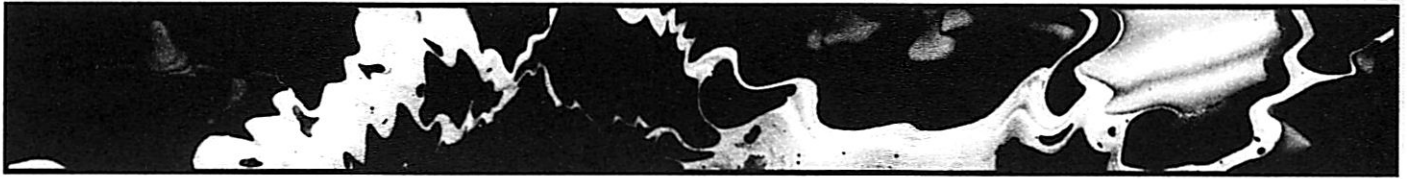
The following changes are made to the recoil numbers of certain weapons:

The recoil calculation formula used in the game did not take into account the fact that certain weapon designs absorb more of a given round's recoil than others. In semiautomatic (SA) and automatic weapons, some of the recoil energy is absorbed into moving the breech block and cocking the action for the next cycle. In other weapons, such as revolvers and bolt-action rifles, the same size cartridge will have a greater felt recoil. This principle has been incorporated into the charts included with this book, and they supersede all other ratings charts. This recoil reduction applies only to semiautomatic and automatic fire weapons with a moving block or slide.

All SA weapons and weapons with a numerical ROF (fully automatic weapons) reduce their recoil ratings by a number equal to 10% of the recoil rating (the 10% is rounded to the nearest whole number).

For example, an automatic weapon with a Burst





recoil of 9 would go down to a Burst recoil of 8 (10% of 9 is 0.9, rounded to 1). An SA weapon with an SS recoil of 4 would remain at 4 (10% of 4 is 0.4, rounded to 0).

Melee Combat Rules Additions

Quick Kill Rule: An Outstanding Success in an Armed or Unarmed Melee Combat roll (or a roll of 1 if the attacker has any appropriate skill at all, but too low to get an Outstanding Success) cripples the body area that is hit by the damage. If hit in the head, torso or abdomen, an NPC is dead or critically wounded. Since surprise attacks automatically hit, roll anyway to see if the hit is an Outstanding Success (Average: Unarmed or Armed Combat).

Nonlethal Melee Combat: Sometimes it's more important to knock someone out than it is to kill them. This can be done with a number of blunt weapons (unarmed combat, axe, club, garrote, hatchet, machete, nunchucks, quarterstaff, sai, spear, sword, tonfa). Nonlethal combat is conducted in the same method as normal lethal combat, but the combatant using it must declare nonlethal blows. These blows cause no real physical damage; any damage they cause is checked off as damage, but goes away after the victim is rendered unconscious (head, torso, or abdomen receives enough damage to be "Critical"). Causing nonlethal damage is a normal Melee Combat task with unarmed combat, club, nunchucks, quarterstaff, or tonfa. With axe, garrote, hatchet, machete, sai, spear, or sword, it is one level of difficulty greater. Example: Joe and Charlie duke it out. Joe has his fists (STR 8 and Unarmed Combat 7/15; 5 points Unarmed Combat Damage); Charlie has a hatchet (STR 5, Armed Combat 4/9). They are trying to knock each other out. Both have Initiative 3; Charlie has the agility advantage and goes first. Their fight is too close for either to try a diving blow. On Phase 4, Charlie tries to hit Joe (Difficult: Armed Melee Combat, because he's trying to do nonlethal damage) and rolls a 4, succeeding and hitting Joe in the left leg for 3 points of damage. Joe strikes back, trying to one-punch Charlie by aiming for the head

(Formidable: Unarmed Combat), rolling a 20 but not achieving Catastrophic Failure. On Phase 5, Charlie strikes again and rolls a 17 (avoiding Catastrophic Failure); Joe punches and misses. On Phase 6, Charlie smacks Joe's left leg again for 7 points—Joe is feeling it now; he's Slightly wounded. Joe gives up trying his one-punch and switches to steady beating, hitting Charlie in the abdomen for 5 points.

On the next turn, Charlie and Joe miss one another in Phase 4. On Phase 5, Joe rolls a 1 and connects with Charlie's left leg, crippling it and forcing Charlie to the ground. The fight is essentially over, and no one is really hurt.

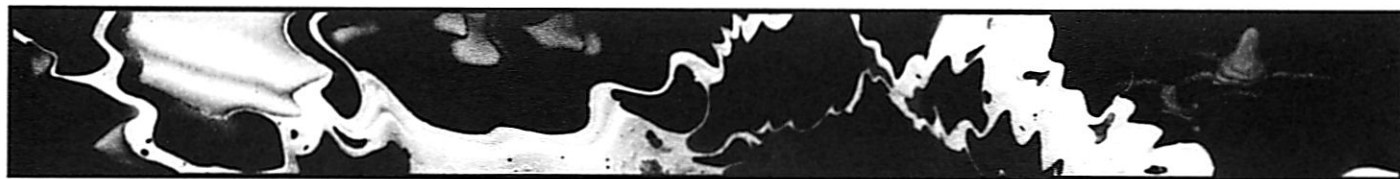
Melee Weapons Specialty: Some characters focus on a particular melee weapon type and become expert at it. Expertise with a particular weapon can be gained through extensive practice. To represent this dedication, players may designate the specialty weapon as a sub-cascade of the Melee Combat (Armed) skill on their character sheet. The detriment to this is that Melee Combat (Armed) skill for other melee weapons will be considered half of the specialty weapon. The benefit is that the character may be able to do extra damage with the specialty weapon. This damage is applied as an additional modifier to the damage roll for the weapon, and it is equal to the skill in the specific weapon, multiplied by the character's Strength and the result divided by 10 (round down). The equation is $\text{Damage Modifier} = [\text{Melee Combat (Armed: Weapon Specialty)} \times \text{STR}] + 10$.

For example, if Chocko, a Strength 8 character, has chosen the spear as a specialty weapon and brought his Melee Combat (Armed: Spear) skill up to 5, he would gain a +4 to damage rolls with the spear ($8 \times 5 + 10 = 4$). Chocko's skill with other melee weapons would be 2 ($5 \times 1/2$, rounded down = 2).

Vehicles and Melee Combat: Vehicles cannot be attacked by melee weapons. Not even an axe is going to do significant damage to a car or AFV.

Ranged Combat

Targeted Shots: Aimed shots can be aimed at specific target areas, at one level of difficulty



Only aimed shots may be targeted; if multiple shots are fired, any shots after the first (or the first three if using a laser scope and within 40 meters) roll randomly to see what locations they hit, if they hit. For instance, a sniper at Medium range aiming at a target's head would have a Difficult: Small Arms task (Difficult for Medium range, modified to Average for aiming, further modified back down to Difficult for targeting a specific location). Subsequent shots in the same action would be counted as unaimed, striking random hit locations.

This option may also be used for antivehicle fire, assuming that the aiming action indicates that the firer is bracing and carefully aiming for a specific point on the target. If successful, the firer may choose the area hit, which determines the armor coverage and the appropriate sub-table—the actual amount of damage done to the vehicle still depends on the AV versus Penetration result on the Vehicle Damage Resolution Chart (Dark Conspiracy, pages 114 and 328). If multiple damage results are indicated, both hit the targeted area.

Full Automatic Fire: To determine hits in a burst of fully automatic fire, roll 1D20 for each round in a given burst (the size of the burst is indicated in the ROF column of the firing charts for a given weapon), treating each round fired as an Impossible (i.e., $\frac{1}{4}$ chance to hit) Small Arms skill test to hit. Range considerations reduce the total number of dice rolled in a burst, according to the existing autofire rule. Characters may fire up to five bursts a turn, as limited by recoil and their own judgment.

Small Arms Expertise: A character can specialize in a specific firearm. This expertise is recorded with the STR skills, in the blank line left open for skills. The benefit to the specialization is less chance to automatically miss and extra "STR bonus" for controlling recoil.

The following table indicates the benefits and experience cost of such specialization. Each specialization must be taken with a specific weapon. The "level" number is merely a convenient way of keeping track of what effects have already been bought. The "XP" column is how many experience

points each "level" costs (levels are bought separately; purchasing Level II specialization would cost a total of $10+12 = 22$ XP). The "Auto Miss" column indicates any change to the automatic miss rule. The "STR bonus" column indicates the effective addition to the firer's Strength for purposes of withstanding the specialty weapon's recoil.

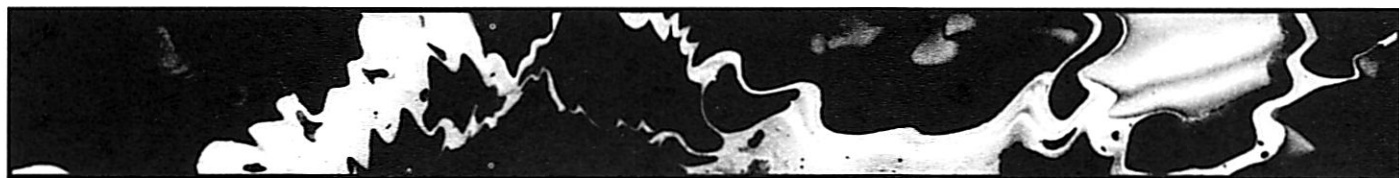
Small Arms Specialization Chart

Level	XP Cost	Auto Miss	STR Bonus
None	—	17-20	—
Level I	10	18-20	+1
Level II	12	19-20	+2
Level III	14	20	+3

Examples: Vanna has STR 5, Small Arms (Rifle) skill of 5/10, and has spent 10 experience points to purchase a Level I expertise with her AK-74. Her skill is listed as "Small Arms (Rifle) 5/10: AK-74 I." Her skill with all rifles, including AK-74s, is 5/10, but she gains two benefits when firing an AK-74. First, if she fires with quick shots at a short-range target and rolls a 17 and a 19, she will hit with the first bullet, despite the auto miss rule, and miss with the second. Second, her adjusted STR of 6 (her own 5 plus expertise bonus of 1) is sufficient for her to handle the recoil of two shots from the AK-74 without fire penalty.

Large-Caliber Penetrators: All API (armor-piercing incendiary), APFSDS (armor-piercing, fin-stabilized, discarding-sabot) and APFSDSDU (armor-piercing, fin-stabilized, discarding-sabot, depleted uranium) rounds are large-caliber penetrators. These weapons each have three or four different Penetration values. If there are three values, the first is for both Close and Medium range, the second for Long, and the third for Extreme. If there are four values, they are for Close, Medium, Long, and Extreme, respectively.

The damage column for these weapons is only for attacks against personnel and animals. Body armor does not reduce this damage rating. For damage against vehicles, roll 2D6 and add the total to the weapon's Penetration rating. The result is the attack's final Penetration value.



Falling Damage

Characters falling or jumping from a height may take damage upon hitting the ground depending on how high they start. This damage is equal to 2D6 per meter fallen, and is distributed according to the hit location chart as follows: Roll three locations. The first location takes half the total damage points, the second location takes one quarter the total, and the last location takes the remainder. If the same location is rolled twice, it takes additional damage accordingly. It is possible for the same location to receive full damage.

Damage from falls can be reduced by Agility: Roll a number of D6 equal to the numerical value of the character's Agility and reduce the damage by that amount (removing damage points from locations at the character's discretion). Unconscious characters may not use their Agility in this manner, and characters who are burdened may only use half their Agility (round down) in this manner.

Referees may adjust the total number of damage dice at their discretion to reflect factors such as soft surfaces (deduct several dice for landing in soft snow or mattresses, double the dice for landing on a metal picket fence or sharp rocks, etc.).

Falling off or out of a moving vehicle can also be damaging. If a character falls off or out of a moving vehicle, the character takes damage as if he fell one meter per 10 meters of combat move/7 kilometers per hour of speed.

Example: Frank bails out of a hovering helicopter at four meters altitude, landing on normal ground. Frank takes 8D6 damage, translating into 33 points to three locations (left leg, head and head). His left leg takes 16 points, and his head

takes 17 points of damage. Frank's Agility of 3 allows him to subtract 3D6 from the damage. Frank rolls a 6. Even subtracting all of this from the head leaves 11 points there. Frank's head isn't that hard (CON 5), and he's unconscious.

The helicopter moves on, and Dave jumps out when it's not quite so high off the ground (hopefully he has a first-aid kit for poor Frank). Unfortunately, the helicopter is moving fairly swiftly (20 meters combat move) and Dave doesn't wait for it to stop. The fall is only three meters, into a big bush (subtracting 1D6 from the fall), so Dave takes 5D6 damage for 7 points to his right leg, 4 points to his chest, and 3 points to his abdomen. Dave's Agility is 4, so he subtracts 4D6 from the damage he took. He rolls 12, and subtracts the damage from his chest and abdomen and takes all but 2 points from his right leg.

Dave then tears his way out of the bush and runs back to see to Frank, who should learn to rappel out of helicopters in the future.

D20 SYSTEM: COMMON TASK SUMMARY

Empathy Tasks

<i>Situation</i>	<i>Task Difficulty</i>
Total Security	Easy
Relaxed Environment	Average
Normal Stress	Difficult
Great Stress, Combat	Formidable
Incredible Stress	Impossible

Revised D20 Empathic Power Level Table

<i>Power Level*</i>	<i>Stage</i>
0 or less	No Effect
1-9	Basic Success
10-17	Stage Two
18-27	Stage Three
28-36	Stage Four
37-45	Stage Five
46 or more	Stage Six

*Empath's EMP Attribute + Skill Level + 1D10 – (Target's Willpower + INT)

COMBAT TASKS

Unarmed Melee

<i>Attack Type</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Effect</i>
Strike	Difficult	Melee Combat (Unarmed)	Damage
Block	Formidable	Melee Combat (Unarmed)	Avoid Strike/Lose Action
Aimed Strike	Formidable	Melee Combat (Unarmed)	Damage Chosen Location
Grapple	Average	Agility	Controlling "Hits"
Strangling	Average	Agility	Controlling "Hits"/Damage
Escape	Average	Agility	Remove Controlling "Hits"
Avoid Diving Blow	Average	Agility	Avoid Diving Blow

Armed Melee

<i>Attack Type</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Effect</i>
Attack	Difficult	Melee Combat (Armed)*	Damage
Block	Formidable	Melee Combat (Armed)**	Avoid Strike/Lose Action
Aimed Attack	Formidable	Melee Combat (Armed)	Damage Chosen Location

*Some weapons have die modifiers.

**Must have object to block with.



Thrown Weapon

<i>Attack Type</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Effect</i>
Throw	Difficult	Thrown Weapon	Damage
Throw, Long Range	Formidable	Thrown Weapon	Damage

Direct Fire Combat

<i>Attack Type</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Effect</i>
Fire, Short Range	Average	Small Arms	Damage
Fire, Medium Range	Difficult	Small Arms	Damage
Fire, Long Range	Formidable	Small Arms	Damage
Fire, Extreme Range	Impossible	Small Arms	Damage
Fire, Quick	+1 Level	Small Arms	Damage
Fire, Target Obscured	+1 Level	Small Arms	Damage
Fire, Automatic	*	*	Damage

*See Automatic Fire rules

Small Arms = Appropriate Small Arms skill

Indirect Fire Combat

<i>Attack Type</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Effect</i>
Conventional	Formidable	Heavy Weapons*	Explosive Damage
Hand-Held	Formidable	Heavy Weapons*	Explosive Damage

* Lower of firer's or forward observer's. Bonuses for repeated fire.

New Melee Weapons

<i>Weapon</i>	<i>Rng</i>	<i>Hit Mod</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Price</i>
Brass Knuckles	S	0	1+MC(U)D*	0.2 kg	\$10(C/C)
Machete	S	-1	1D6+STR	1.5 kg	\$50(C/C)
Nunchucks	S	-1	1D6+MC(U)D*	1.0 kg	\$100(S/C)
Quarterstaff	L	0	1D6+MC(U)D*	2.0 kg	\$10(V/V)
Sai	S	+1	1D6+ ¹ / ₂ MC(U)D*	0.5 kg	\$75(R/S)
Sword	L	0	1D6+STR	1.0 kg	\$350(S/S)
Sword-cane	L	0	1D6+ ¹ / ₂ STR	0.7 kg	\$500(R/S)
Tonfa	S	+1	1D6+ ¹ / ₂ UACD	1.0 kg	\$50(S/S)

*Melee Combat (Unarmed) Damage



REVISED FIREARMS CHART

(incorporating recoil revisions noted above)

Submachineguns

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	—Recoil—		Rng
						SS	Brst	
AKR	5	3	1-Nil	2/3	30	3	7	30
Ingram M10:								
.45 ACP	10	2	Nil	1/3	30	2	9	20
9mmP	10	2	Nil	1/3	32	2	8	20
M177	5	3	1-Nil	3/4	20/30	3	7	40
MP-7	5	2	1-Nil	4	30	2	5	30
Vz-61/62	5	1	Nil	1	10/20	3	6	4
w/stock	5	1	Nil	3	10/20	1	4	12

Rifles

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	—Recoil—		Rng
						SS	Brst	
AK-74	5	3	1-Nil	5	30	3	6	50
AKM	5	3	2-Nil	5	30	3	7	50
AKMR	5	3	1-Nil	5	30	3	6	50
G3	5	4	2-3-Nil	5	20	4	8	65
XM22 AIW	3	6	2-3-Nil	4	50	4	5	55
XM7 Storm Gun	SA	16	1-2-3	5	5	7	—	80
w/bipod	SA	16	1-2-3	5	5	4	—	120

Machineguns

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	—Recoil—		Rng
						SS	Brst	
L86A1 LSW	10	3	1-Nil	5	30/100B	2	10	50
w/bipod	10	3	1-Nil	5	30/100B	1	5	65
MAG	10	4	2-3-Nil	6	100B	1	6	65
w/bipod	10	4	2-3-Nil	6	100B	1	4	90
w/tripod	10	4	2-3-Nil	6	100B	1	2	125
M2HB	5	8	2-2-3**	8	105B	3	13	65
w/tripod	5	8	2-2-3**	8	105B	2	6	150

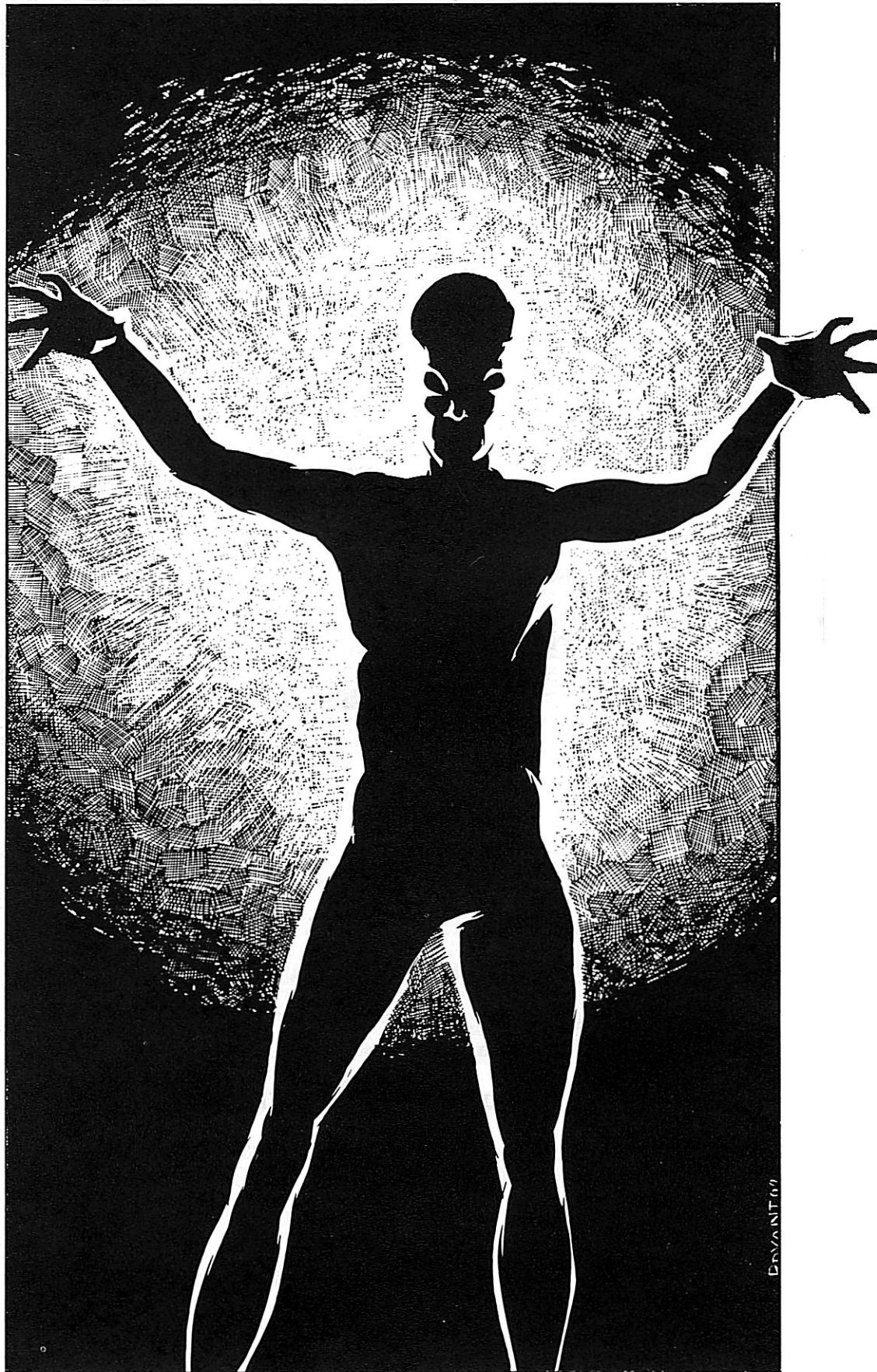
** .50 SLAP ammunition has a Penetration of 1-1-2.

Shotguns (Automatic and SA only)

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	—Recoil—		Rng
						SS	Brst	
AR-12	5	4	3-4-Nil	4	12	3	7	45
Short*	5	9	Nil					
Medium*	5x10 1	Nil						
H&K CAW	5	4	3-4-Nil	4	10	3	7	40
Short*	5	9	Nil					
Medium*	5x10 1	Nil						

*w/buckshot, see Dark Conspiracy, page 91.

EMPATHIC ONDERGROUND



ENVANTON



Most people of the 21st century, if asked, would explain the new Dark Age they live in as the result of decades of global mismanagement by their political leaders. They might not put it in exactly such words, but to their minds, skyrocketing global population and rapidly increasing development of, and dependence upon, advanced technologies during the 20th century brought about escalating competition for unreplaceable natural resources. In response, the "haves" of the world entrenched themselves legally, socially, and literally against the "have-nots"—one result being the rise of global corporations as extranational entities, "above the law" of national governments. As the new global structure rigidified, upward mobility became virtually impossible, and the middle class pretty much fell apart as its member families spiraled into poverty. As a result of it all, the world returned to something like a near-feudal state. The hopes of a few, that humanity could establish a new, enlightened world order based upon shared resources, tolerance of all cultures, and individual dignity, were dashed.

What most people of the 21st century do not realize, however, is the part the Dark Invasion played in humanity's current sad state. Secretly seizing control of a few key positions and key figures, the Minions of the Dark worked to thwart all efforts at a united global solution to humanity's problems. When possible, they played upon the darkest side of powerful people, thereby both bringing about their desired results and further corrupting their agents. When necessary, they assassinated those who could not be brought into line, or used their power to drive such people to financial ruin.

But the Dark Minions' hold on the world is still tenuous. Their numbers are limited, and they know that should their existence become common knowledge, humanity would readily forget all its differences and band together to wipe the invaders from the planet. This is a very real danger for the forces of the Dark. For one thing, many of their number are too savage and thick-witted to maintain a low profile, and they serve as a constant source of risk

that the Dark conspiracy will be unmasked. Worse yet, there is a slowly but steadily growing number of humans who have encountered the Dark and have lived to tell about it—some even who have thwarted a Darkling plan or two. These "minion hunters" are beginning to band together and dog the Dark Minions' heels, threatening to bring the Dark Invasion to ruin. In places, they have even created a sort of "empathic underground" dedicated to the dissemination of knowledge and the eventual eradication of the Dark Minions.

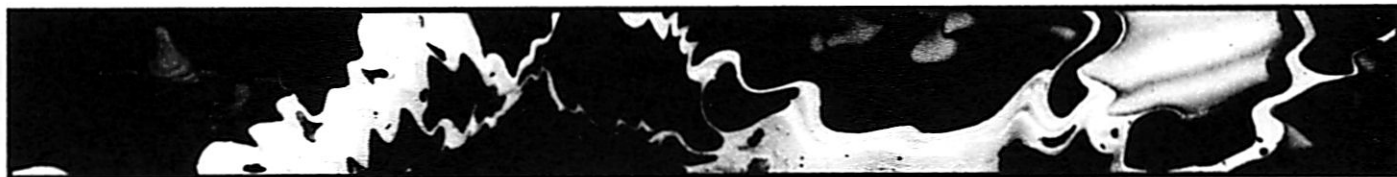
DIVERSITY

Some individuals have the impression that the empathic underground is a large, worldwide, organized group. In actuality, the term is intended to represent all cells of resistance to the Dark Invasion. In other words, anyone who fights the Dark Minions can be considered a part of the empathic underground.

Consequently, the empathic underground as a whole is a sort of nebulous web of separate groups scattered across the world, mostly knowing little or nothing of other cells, and having little contact with one another in any case. There is no unified organization, as there is no central command structure to establish a unified front.

An individual cell can vary in size from two to a couple dozen individuals. In most cases, someone within a cell will know at least one person in at least one other cell. This allows information to be communicated to like-minded and concerned individuals in other parts of the country or even to those in other countries.

While most groups will cooperate with one another when the need arises, the different cells are not alike. In fact, the variety that exists among the cells of the underground is almost as great as the variety among the forces arrayed against them. In general though, most cells can be described by a few categories, based upon their goals, means of obtaining their goals, their empathic philosophy, and the organization of the cell. It should be noted that each of these types has disadvantages. In some



organizations, the members cause one another more difficulty than the enemy, because they are caught up in group politics or petty personal differences.

HISTORY

The second misconception that needs correcting is that the underground is entirely a recent development in reaction to the Darkling invasion. As a matter of fact, many cells have existed in relative secrecy for thousands of years, although their membership, structure, and goals have changed many times. They have evolved as have their goals, but some of the groups have nevertheless been around since before the fall of Rome. There is, for instance, one cell in Tibet that has existed for many centuries. Even the Masons can claim supernatural interests in their origins.

Recently, there has been a profound increase in the number of empathic underground cells because of the Darkling invasion. Few present cells can

claim to have existed for more than a couple of years. Nevertheless, there have been many empathic organizations throughout the centuries. Even though some of these may no longer exist, much of what they learned may still be available, and some of their actions have had far-reaching effects over the centuries. Knowledge of such things can be used for or against humanity (if subverts <see page 22> acquire them).

If the referee includes ancient cells in the campaign and introduces the players to these, it will add a great deal of depth to play, making the players feel themselves to be part of a long tradition.

CLASSIFICATIONS

Empathic underground cells can be generally classified by four different topics: goals, methods, empathic philosophies, and organization.

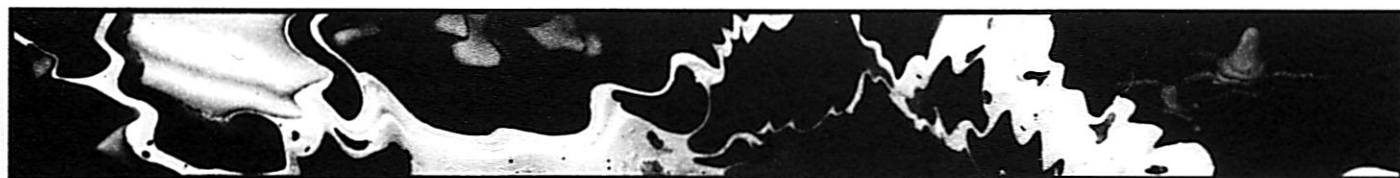
Goals

Hunters: These cells see the role of their group to be the extermination of Dark races and their minions. These individuals often walk a thin line between dedicated watchfulness and paranoia/obsession. They are keenly aware of the threat posed by the Dark races and their minions. They feel they are at war, and seek to root out the enemy strongholds and assets. Their methods vary from group to group.

Information Brokers: The main focus of these people is to acquire as much information about the Dark Ones, their minions, and empathic powers as they possibly can. They see information as the one true weapon to be wielded against the Dark Ones and their minions. They may also play an important role in communication between various cells. As long as the majority of humanity is ignorant of the Dark races and empathic abilities, then the Dark Lords can do as they wish with only a minimum of opposition.

Liberators: To many, the empathic underground is much the same as the underground railroad of the 19th century in the United States: people who free and hide individuals from slavery. Such people are





devoted to obtaining the release of psychic prisoners from the various institutions which have taken advantage of them. They have a deep respect for individual freedom. The prisoners of these institutions are in many cases treated like slaves; as property to be used or treated as their "owners" see fit. These cells seek out institutions which keep individuals captive in order to utilize their empathic gifts. They then free these individuals. They will also hide individuals from suspicious organizations or help individuals to sneak out of town.

Trainers: These people feel that in order to combat an empathic threat, those individuals with empathic abilities must be better skilled in the uses of their powers. They realize that untrained individuals also make tempting targets for unscrupulous or evil individuals or groups.

Methods

Gunslingers: Gunslingers achieve their goals through a direct show of force. They carry lots of weapons and know how to use them. They live by the saying: "The best defense is a strong offense." Gunslingers believe that violent force usually results in a permanent solution to problems.

Pencil Commandos: These people try to use the "system" and other nonviolent means to achieve their goals. Their reasons for avoiding violence vary: They may be a group of individuals untrained in combat, or they may have moral objections to the use of violence. Many of these groups feel that to resort to violence lowers one's self to the level of one's enemies. These groups also tend to draw less attention to themselves and so are less prone to retributive strikes from the Dark races.

Shadows: These groups are often among the most successful, but in some cases they are hardly better than those they wish to defeat. They operate in the shadows, either acting clandestinely, or manipulating others to do their work for them (preferably unknowingly). This helps to keep their identities secret from the Dark Lords. By the use of these methods, they prevent their enemies from identifying a target to strike back at.

Empathic Philosophies

By the term "empathic philosophy," we refer to what a cell perceives to be the nature of empathic powers. (The following chapters of this book explain the most common of such philosophies.) Because there may be conflicts between individuals from the different schools of empathic philosophy, most groups will have empathic individuals of primarily one type, if not entirely of that type. A neuropath, for instance, is likely to be very distrustful of and perhaps condescending to a sorcerer. The members of a group may not all agree however, so mixed groups can occur. This is actually to the benefit of the group if the students of the different empathic philosophies can learn to work together. Their conception of empathic powers will often influence the nature of the organization.

Mystics: These groups tend to be more philosophical and spiritual. They also tend to be the most ethical. The ethics of the group may be based on unusual philosophies or religions, but mysticism is very important to their utilization of empathic powers, and this will in turn influence the image of the group. Mystics believe that true understanding is intuitive. That means that knowledge is realized, not learned; one gradually achieves enlightenment. Those of a more religious bent believe that the source of enlightenment is divine in nature, while those of a more philosophical approach believe that it is the result of becoming more in tune with life and the cosmos.

Psionics: These groups tend to be very analytical. They believe that empathic powers are the result of stimulating neurochemicals in oneself or in a target. The change in neurochemical levels in the target's body results in an actual, physical change. Those of this school of empathy believe that knowledge is achieved through logical, scientific analysis and reason. The members will want quantifiable data. They thrive on factual, measurable, definable details and information.

Sorcerers: Sorcerous philosophy states that the origin of empathic abilities revolves around the ability to move through dimensions, and to tap the energies of these other dimensions. Followers of this



philosophy seem the most arcane. These groups suffer from a large amount of skepticism and distrust. To most outsiders, sorcery is a trick; mere slight of hand. This philosophy reminds many individuals too much of the occult. As a result, sorcerous groups are much more reserved about their abilities and the nature of these abilities. Additionally, in general, sorcerers have much greater offensive capabilities than mystics or psionics, even more than neuropaths. This makes them a greater threat to the Dark Lords. Because of this, sorcerers are constantly being hunted down by the minions of the Dark Ones. And because of this, those groups that are influenced by sorcery tend to be among the most dedicated. They are more likely to choose hunting as the group's goal.

Neuropaths: Because of the nature of neuropaths, these groups tend to be less consistent in their philosophies. In general, neuropathic groups are mistrustful of outsiders, sometimes even other empathic groups. Neuropaths often view sorcerers as especially dangerous because sorcerous activity draws the attention of the Darklings.

Mixed: Such cells have no unifying philosophy concerning empathic powers; individual members are allowed to make up their own mind concerning this issue. Because of their mixed empathic resources, they are often among the most successful groups, assuming the members all respect one another's abilities and do not resort to petty squabbling.

Indifferent: To these groups, the nature and origin of empathic abilities is irrelevant. For them it is enough that the powers can use them as a means to achieve their goals. Unfortunately, this can be an irresponsible and potentially dangerous attitude to take.

Organization

In considering the organizational types described below, it is important to keep two things in mind:

First, while most cells have a primary goal, that does not exclude their involvement in other activities generally associated with the underground. For example, most groups will hide individuals from the Dark Lords or their minions. Nor is a group neces-

sarily prevented from using unusual methods to achieve an objective, if the members feel that the situation requires such. For instance, the primary goal of one group may be to free individuals who are being held against their will as psychic test subjects. The members of this cell tend to be law-abiding individuals who protest the use of violence. They prefer to obtain information about the illegal activities of certain institutions and then go through legal channels to force the release of the individuals being held captive. However, this same group of mild mannered individuals, upon learning of the location of a group of cobra people (*Dark Conspiracy*, page 216), may begin to arm themselves with heavy-caliber weapons like a commando unit, and launch an all-out assault on this location—their logic being that they have reason to doubt that members of the local government will take them seriously. They may even fear that they will be institutionalized or that the government has been infiltrated by Igors (*Dark Conspiracy*, page 176). If they have no one else to turn to, they may feel they have no choice but to resort to violence.

Second, while there may be a consensus among the majority of members of any particular cell, it should be remembered that the cell is made up of individuals and that individuals will each have their own personal opinions and personalities.

Anarchic Group: In such groups, there is no real organization, merely an agreement to help one another out. These groups are usually the least effective of all. They are, however, very common. Often, the members of such a cell refuse to trust one another, or no one in the cell wants to take orders from anyone else. On occasion, various such cells may come together to form a larger group, to face a major threat. This larger group is often formed as little more than an agreement of mutual interests. The group may recognize the need to cooperate, but in actuality each cell may feel that its own interests will suffer in the face of the interests of the larger group. Or they feel that they cannot trust a group which includes individuals who are strangers to them.

Anonymous Alliance: The members in an anonymous group keep their identities secret even from



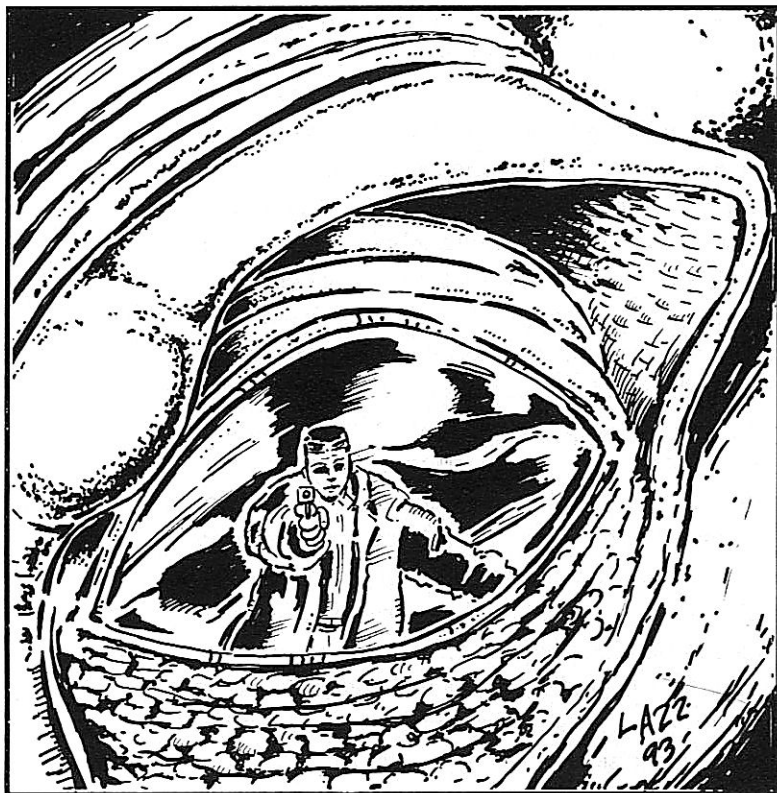
one another. They communicate via middlemen or computers. These groups are comprised of individuals who feel that the best way to ensure the safety of individual members is to organize the group so the individuals do not know one another. This also means that if any one member is identified, captured, or compromised, the group as a whole can still continue. This is a common arrangement for computer hackers and other types of people who commonly use pseudonyms or "handles."

Anonymous groups have certain disadvantages to balance off the obvious safety advantages. It can be a very awkward form of organization: How do such individuals meet, for example? It is obviously difficult to set up the cell in such a way that the identities of all members are protected. These groups may be plagued by poor communication, due to the necessary safety measures built into the lines of communication. This is even a problem for hacker groups; even though communication from computer to computer through a network is fairly quick, it is only effective if all the concerned individuals are

near networked computers. Also, these groups may face difficulties achieving their goals. If the group believes that a direct show of force is necessary, it will have to bring in outside individuals to accomplish the mission, unless one of the members is up to a solo mission. They obviously can't just meet and storm a cobra people stronghold, for example; there is too much of a risk that their identities will be revealed. And, of course, there are a number of risks involved in contracting outside help. So by default these cells tend to be pencil commandos or shadows. They work best as information gatherers. Members of these cells often become so wrapped up in the need for security that they become paranoid.

Council: The council form is common among larger cells. A small group of respected leaders decide upon the activities of the larger whole. Such cells can be highly effective. There is a variety of opinion from the individual council members, but as long as the council size remains small, they can still come to a decision relatively quickly. Also, different members of the council often have different fields of





expertise, yielding a mix which allows the cell to deal with a variety of situations.

Democratic: In some groups, decisions are made by majority vote. Although this form is better than anarchy, it can still be difficult for the group to come to a decision, especially if the cell is large. Factions often form within the cell. When this occurs, petty disputes can prevent the cell from coming to a consensus.

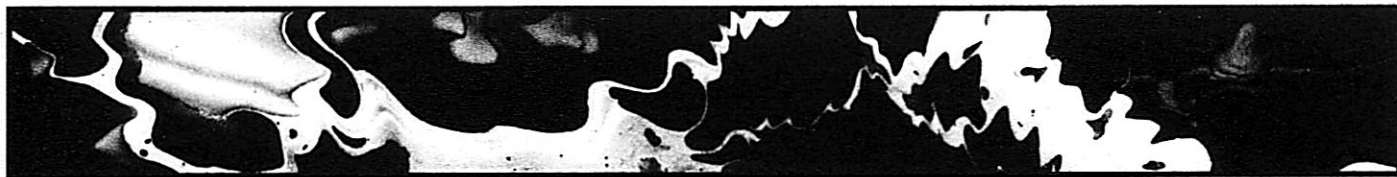
Dictatorial Unit: In such cells, there is one leader for the whole group. This person wields near supreme power over the actions of the group. This is not necessarily a bad form of organization, especially if the leader does a good job, and the amount of power that the cells commander wields can vary from group to group. But there is always the danger of the dictator losing sight of the good of the group or of becoming a megalomaniac. Such leaders may have difficulty taking the advice of others, even when the advisor may know more about the topic in question. They may fear that this shows they cannot make a decision.

Electoral Leader: Such cells choose one individual to make most of the decisions regarding the group. This individual wields varying amounts of power. Again, there can be problems with factions forming, or individuals may become more concerned with acquiring positions than with the goals of the group.

Subverts: This is a special and, unfortunately, all-too common type of empathic group. These are groups whose members have been subverted either by some government or institution or by the Dark races. As with any other underground empathic group, there is no such thing as a typical subvert group. The above classifications must still be considered, but there are other things to keep in mind also.

How deeply has the group been subverted? In some instances, only one member of a group has been subverted. This individual then works to pervert or sabotage the efforts to the rest of the group. In other cases, the entire group may be complete and devoted servants of the Dark Ones. In most cases, subverted groups do not believe that they have been subverted. They usually believe that they have made a temporary deal. Due to the cunning of the Dark Ones, the subverted group will probably not be aware of the depth to which they are being manipulated. Instead, they will probably believe that the Dark Ones are serving their means. The Dark Ones often enjoy the irony of these arrangements, almost as much as they enjoy the moment when they reveal to their arrogant and unsuspecting pawns just who controls whom.

Subverts are perhaps the most dangerous of any group or type of Igor, as their empathic abilities allow them to do things that other Igors may not be able to. Consider that they may have contact with other cells who trust them, not knowing that the cell has been subverted. This allows them to use even non-subverted cells to serve their masters. As stated above, subverts are all too common. Humans are notorious for their willingness to do almost anything for personal gain, and the Dark Ones can be very seductive; remember that their empathic abilities give them added insight into an individual's character.



RELATIONS WITH ETs

While this has little to do with classifying cells of the empathic underground, this is nevertheless an extremely important issue. If a cell has strong relations with ETs, it will have access to special equipment, and perhaps other assets, depending upon the type of ET involved. However, because the majority of ETs have been subjugated by the Dark Ones, most empathic underground cells tend to be suspicious of all ETs. Some groups take this paranoia to an extreme. They feel that any ET could be a Dark Minion trying to infiltrate their organization. In such cases, they deprive themselves of a potentially powerful asset. In the most extreme cases, they feel there are only two kinds of ETs: minions and dead ones.

One point that should not be forgotten is that the ETs have their own impressions of the empathic underground. And their impression of the underground will greatly effect how relations between an ET and an empathic underground cell evolve. This will be discussed in greater detail later.

OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL DETAILS

Besides all of the above, one must consider some things which, while again having little to do with categorizing a cell, have a great impact on how the cell functions. One such thing is the size of the group: How many individuals belong to it? The next thing to consider is what the resources of the group are? Do they have a lot of money, equipment, and influence? What are their relations with other empathic underground groups? The last thing to consider is how active is the group? What is its level of activity?

Small, close-knit groups are most common, as they allow a higher degree of efficiency because of better understanding of the capabilities of individual members. This size also increases the security of the cell. With less members, there is a reduced likelihood of information or members falling into the wrong hands. However, small groups are limited in the types of operations they can carry out, due to a lack of manpower.

The amount of resources available to the group also defines the capabilities of that cell. A group of wealthy individuals, or individuals with access to high-tech equipment, will have an advantage. Their greater resources will often allow them to be better prepared to achieve their goals. There are three types of resources considered here: finances, equipment, and information sources (a resource that is often overlooked, but is truly essential). Finances are often the most sought after by members, because wealth can usually buy equipment and information. This is not always true, however. Just because a cell has enough wealth to buy an armored attack helicopter doesn't mean it has the proper contacts from which to buy it. Similarly, having enough money to grease a lot of palms doesn't mean one knows which palms to grease. Information includes contacts and other informants, access to data bases, and access to well-equipped libraries.

Relations among various cells vary greatly. The empathic underground is by no means a happy, like-thinking fraternity. Individual groups will differ greatly in their opinions on the priority of various goals, or the means that should be taken to achieve those goals. A group of pencil commandos may feel that gunslingers are barbarians who have lowered themselves to the level of the enemy. These gunslingers may feel that the pencil commandos are cowards who lack the conviction to do what is necessary. Finally, as each cell is composed of individuals, and individuals will each have their own personality, it is inevitable that there will be personality conflicts. This is perhaps the greatest factor in the war against the Dark Ones. As long as the empathic underground is divided over petty issues and personality conflicts, it will never be able to bring its full resources to bear against the Dark Ones.

Lastly, all cells are not composed of fanatics dedicated to fighting the Dark Ones and their minions. While some groups are highly dedicated, others lack drive. They may agree that there is a problem and something must be done about, but they would rather they didn't have to get involved, that somebody else would solve the problem.



RANDOM CELL GENERATION

As the PCs conduct their own struggle against the Dark conspiracy, they are likely to encounter a number of other minion hunters. Each such is, in effect, a part of the empathic underground, and every group of two or more is technically a cell. (As a matter of fact, the PCs themselves form a cell!)

By considering carefully the above information, a referee should be able to create many different empathic underground cells, each with their own particular character. To keep the game interesting, the referee should strive to prevent the empathic underground from becoming some collection of colorless generic groups. However, if the referee needs to create a cell quickly, the following random-generation system is included.

Goals

1D6 Roll	Result
1	Hunters
2	Information Brokers
3	Liberators
4	Trainers
5	Subverts
6	Roll twice; ignore any rolls of 5 or 6

Methods

1D6 Roll	Result
1-3	Gunslingers
4-5	Pencil Commandos
6	Shadows

Organization

1D6 Roll	Result
1	Anarchic Group
2	Anonymous Alliance
3	Council
4	Democratic Cell
5	Dictatorial
6	Electoral Leader

Size

1D10 Roll	Result
1	1-6 (1D6) members
2	1-10 (1D10) members
3	2-20 (2D10) members
4	6-15 (1D10+5) members
5	11-20 (1D10+10) members
6	16-25 (1D10+15) members
7	3-30 (3D10) members
8	4-40 (4D10) members
9	10-100 (10D10) members
10	>100 members

Resources

1D6 Roll	Result
1	Minimal resources. The cell has few funds (poverty level) and assets; less than \$15,000 in annual assets. The cell probably has little in the way of information sources (1-5 generic contacts, no foreign).
2	Few resources. The group has access to between \$15,000 and \$20,000 annually in assets and funds. It has access to some information sources, but these are probably not high quality (1-5 solid contacts, no foreign).
3	Adequate resources. The group has access to between \$20,000 and \$50,000 annually in assets and funds. It has multiple reliable information sources giving it access to some classified or hard-to-obtain information (1-10 contacts including one foreign).
4	Average resources. The group has access to between \$50,000 and \$100,000 annually in resources. Its information is of high quality (2-20 contacts—mostly solid—including 1 or 2 foreign).



1D6 Roll Result

5	Quality resources. The group has access to between \$100,000 and \$500,000 annually in resources. It is very well informed (3-30 contacts, including 1-3 foreign).
6	Superior resources. The group has access to over \$500,000 annually. It has many superior information sources concerning a very wide range of topics (5-50 contacts, including 1-5 foreign).

Level of Activity

1D6 Roll Result

1	Low; prefer not to get involved
2-4	Medium; will become involved if the risks are not too great
5-6	High; highly dedicated, and willing to take great risks

Next, the referee decides upon the group's relations with ETs, its relations with other empathic underground cells, and where it is headquartered.

EXAMPLES OF RANDOM CELLS

For the referee's aid, the following random cells are provided. Another example is covered in the appendix.

Dark Pentad

Goals: Advance the aims of the Dark races

Methods: Shadows

Empathic Philosophy: Mixed

Organization: Anonymous alliance

Assets: Superior resources (over \$3,000,000)

Size: Five members

Level of Activity: Highly dedicated

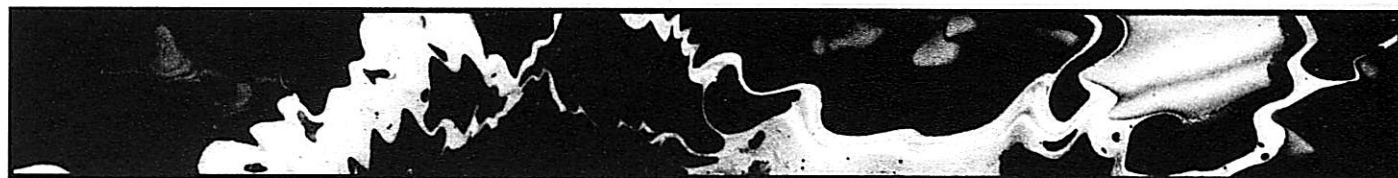
Relations with ETs: Sees ETs as tools to be manipulated.

Relations with Other Cells: Good; it has managed to hide its true nature from others. Others know it as Pentad Alliance.

Headquarters: Seacouver

Description: This is a group of subverts. The members have aligned themselves with a Dark One in exchange for increased financial and political strength. They are extremely cautious and even more cunning. The PCs may feel the influence of the Dark Pentad, but this influence should be extremely difficult to identify.





Champions of Conflict

Goals: Special

Methods: Shadows

Empathic Philosophy: Mystical

Organization: Democracy

Assets: Superior resources (about \$1,000,000 annually)

Size: Seven members

Level of Activity: Highly dedicated.

Relations with ETs: It sees ETs as a tool.

Relations with Other Cells: It is unknown as a group to any other cell. Individual members may be known, however, to members of other cells.

Headquarters: New Boswash

Description: This group believes that a certain level of conflict presents a challenge that brings out the best in individuals, that it stimulates growth and improvement. Its members may help or hinder other groups as they see fit. They seek to maintain a certain level of tension, endeavoring to prevent either side from gaining the upper hand. They believe that a strong outside threat will also act to unify humanity. The group usually uses other groups to achieve its goals. Its members don't believe that they are the "epitome of evolution," however, so they may often be found in the company of a group that they have organized.

HLF (Human Liberation Front)

Goals: Hunters; Liberators

Methods: Gunslingers

Empathic Philosophy: Mostly indifferent, but it strongly distrusts sorcery. "Empathy is a tool."

Organization: Dictatorial Unit

Assets: Average resources (about \$50,000 annually)

Size: 15 dedicated members and 37 associated members

Level of Activity: Highly dedicated.

Relations with ETs: The group is very distrustful of all ETs. Its members may react violently to the sight of an ET.

Relations with Other Cells: Members of this group do not feel that most other groups are dedicated enough, but they are careful to maintain strong ties with as many cells as possible. They see each cell as a weapon that can be wielded against the ETs.

Headquarters: Chiwaukee

Description: This group lives by the axiom: "You can never carry too many weapons."

New Dawn's Warriors

Goals: Hunters

Methods: Pencil Commandos

Empathic Philosophy: Indifferent

Organization: Democratic

Assets: Adequate resources (\$20,000, but they have Quality information sources)

Size: Four members

Level of Activity: Highly dedicated.

Relations with ETs: The group has none; its members are aware that most ETs are controlled, but that there remain some who are free and need help. They see ETs as victims.

Relations with Other Cells: They are willing to share information with almost any other cell, and in turn they are always looking for additional contacts.

Headquarters: Minneapolis

Description: New Dawn's Warriors is comprised



of a group of accountants. These accountants track down suspicious groups by examining the companies' books. They then turn this information over to the proper authorities or hire private detectives to acquire additional information.

Defenders of the Future

Goals: Trainers; Liberators

Methods: Pencil Commandos, Gunslingers

Empathic Philosophy: Psionic

Organization: Council

Assets: Adequate

Size: 17 members

Level of Activity: Highly dedicated

Relations with ETs: Cautious, but it is very interested in understanding ETs.

Relations with Other Cells: It is on good relations with most other cells.

Headquarters: Boston

Description: This group tries to train individuals in the use of their empathic powers so that they can join the conflict against the Dark Ones. They also free empathic individuals being kept captive by various institutions. They prefer to use legal means, but if these fail, they are willing to resort to force.

H.D.A.A. (Human Defense Advancement Association)

Goals: Information brokers

Methods: Pencil Commandos

Empathic Philosophy: Psionic

Organization: Democratic

Assets: Adequate

Size: 23 members

Level of Activity: Medium

Relations with ETs: Distrustful

Relations with Other Cells: Open, but it wants to dominate other groups and force all cells into forming one large network.

Headquarters: LA

Description: This group believes there is a need

for a national organization to allow for better communication between various cells. Many of the members of H.D.A.A. are graduates of Berkely and consider themselves to be somewhat more thoughtful and insightful than other organizations, and therefore best qualified to form this network. To be fair, they are a bright group. They are very willing to share information with groups they meet or who contact them. When this occurs, they always try to set up some more permanent means of communication. They are careful, however, to exchange information in such a way that the exact location of their headquarters and the identities of their members are well protected.

Lords of Commerce

Goals: Hunters

Methods: Any

Empathic Philosophy: Mixed

Organization: Democracy

Assets: Superior (\$15,000,000 annually)

Size: Seven members.

Level of Activity: Highly dedicated

Relations with ETs: Distrustful

Relations with Other Cells: This group tries to dominate other groups it contacts. Otherwise, it tries to establish friendly relations.

Headquarters: Delocalized throughout the US.

Description: This organization is headed by several wealthy corporate leaders. They became involved when they realized that much of the modern chaos was the result of the activities of the Dark Ones. Chaos hurts the economy, so they got involved. All are very patriotic, many with military records, and they see the actions of the Dark Lords as a sort of invasion. Most of the members of this cell are well past their physical prime, but they are experts at organizing and delegating responsibility. Combined with their military experience, this makes them a very effective cell. They use whatever means seem best suited to a particular mission. While cautious in order to protect their own security, they try to be as honest and straightforward as possible with those they employ.





ETS AND THE EMPATHIC UNDERGROUND

Perhaps the strongest example of American fascination with extraterrestrials occurred in 1939, when one radio show re-enacted H. G. Well's invasion of Earth, and caused a minor panic when some listeners thought it was real. ETs first began to appear in earnest in 1946, after the end of the Second World War. During this period and the years that followed, there were numerous claims of UFO sightings. The US government knew the secret behind these claims, and began public investigations of the sightings.

The government knew of the existence of ETs since July of 1947, when an ET scout saucer crashed near Corona, New Mexico, and extraterrestrial corpses were recovered from the wreckage. Government biologists learned much from the bodies, but government engineers could make little sense of the wreckage. The big secret, however, was "We are not alone." Because of the public hysteria created by the "false alarm" radio broadcast of 1939, and a fanatic desire to secure the superior technology for the US alone, the American government chose to publicly deny the existence of ETs. Highly publicized investigations were launched, always with the same conclusions. The findings they published were that the many reported UFO sightings were the result of mass hysteria. They alleged that each UFO had a perfectly natural explanation, such as swamp gas, weather balloons and the like. The conclusion that was made was that while life, perhaps even intelligent life, may exist on other planets, there was no evidence that any such intelligent life had ever visited our planet.

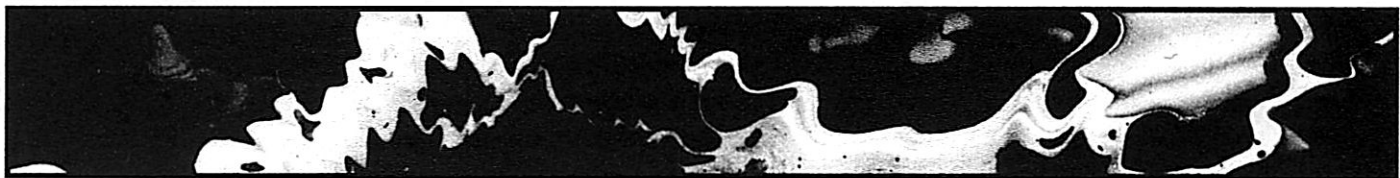
Shortly after the crash in 1947, the American government was contacted by the ETs, and a deal worked out that became known as "the arrangement" in government circles: The ETs would provide technological and scientific information to the American government, in return for the American government's assistance in keeping the existence of ETs secret from the populace as a whole.



Many other private citizens and institutions also began to research the question of extraterrestrial contact. The results of their studies were mixed. Some demonstrated that supposed UFO sightings were the result of overactive imaginations or had perfectly natural explanations. Others became firmly convinced that there was intelligent life out there, and they had serious concerns about the motivations of these creatures in visiting our planet.

There are always rumors that ETs visited our planet long ago. Some say that ETs influenced the Egyptians, or even that the Egyptian gods were actually extraterrestrials. Others claim that ETs were involved in the early stages of human evolution. It is possible, but not absolutely certain, that many of the activities or influences attributed to ETs before the 1940s were actually the work of some Dark One or its minions.

Everything continued in a state of relative stability until 1983, however, when an ET scout party accidentally opened a portal, and unleashed the Dark invasion (as described in **Dark Conspiracy**, in the section entitled "The Doorway to Hell").



Modern Relations

Relations between the empathic underground and ETs can best be described by looking separately at two different categories of ETs. These categories approach human relations from two very different positions, with two very different goals.

Subverted ETs: The subverted ETs serve the whims of one Dark Lord or another, so these particular ETs are usually working toward the eventual subjugation of the human race.

Renegade ETs: These ETs fear for their lives and for their freedom. As escaped members of extraterrestrial races that have been subverted by the Dark Ones, they may have seen friends and loved ones killed or subverted. Now they are hunted. The Dark Ones are not happy controlling only most of the ETs; they want to control them all. Now these renegades must hide not only because capture would mean death or subjugation, but also because they might have to fight a friend or loved one in the process. These renegades know that their only way they will ever be truly free is if the Dark Lords and their minions are defeated. They also know that they are severely outnumbered, and that if they ever wish to see their families and friends free they will need help to destroy the Dark Ones. This means they must seek out allies among the natives of this planet.

They need allies to survive. They will need refuge from enemies, the elements, and from human parasites. They may need assistance in obtaining food and other necessities. The easiest way to get these things is from a human willing to help them. Lastly, it appears that many of them, like humans, need companionship; it is rough enough to be lonely, but to be alone and in terror for your life is a horrible way to exist.

There are those aliens who are scared and in need of help that see all humanity as potential allies. They view both large institutions and the empathic underground as two major potential sources of assistance. Large institutions (including governments) look promising because they have vast resources, manpower and power to be heard. Unfortunately, many of these institutions have agendas which do

not always coincide with the welfare of society. Such institutions may likely try to exploit an ET. Or they may just seek to exterminate the alien, seeing it as a threat. Occasionally, however, an ET gets lucky or is able to research institutions well enough to be able to contact only those which are willing to help. These ETs are extremely lucky, because they may have access to much of such an institution's resources.

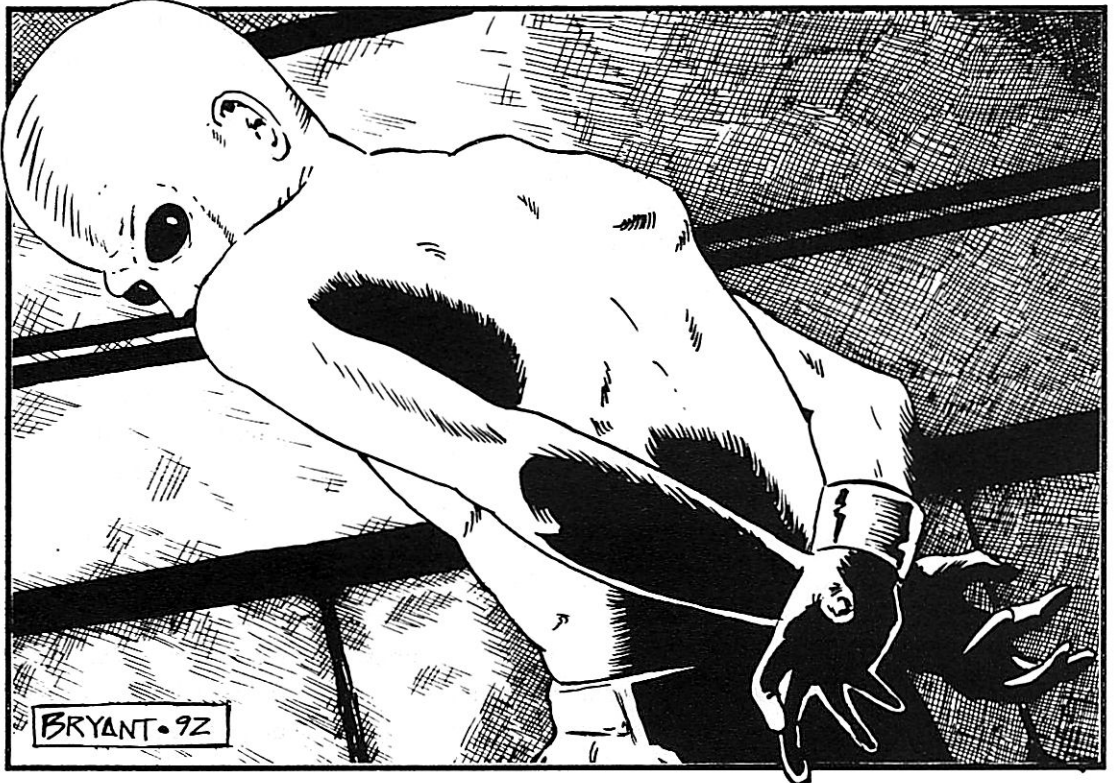
Many ETs are afraid to contact large institutions. There are various reasons for this. They may be aware that some human institutions have exploited and killed ETs in the past. Or they may fear that if the organization is powerful enough to help them against the Dark Ones, then the Dark Ones have probably taken steps to gain some control over the institution, or have at least placed spies in it. Even if there are no spies within the institution, there is danger of exposure simply because of the number of people in the institution. The more people there are, the more that are likely to learn of the ETs' existence, and therefore the more likely that, somehow, word of the ETs' location will get back to their enemies. Others will not be so lucky. They may find themselves dead, captured by Dark Ones, or exploited by their "benefactors" (read: *captors*). Those who manage to escape such a situation will be understandably cautious when next approached by or approaching humans for help.

The next most useful group to contact then would be an empathic underground cell. How these ETs see the empathic underground will depend on what they have heard or learned about it and about humanity, and what interactions (if any) they may have already had with humans. There are certain advantages in contacting an empathic underground cell. Unless the cell has been subverted, the group will already be dedicated to fighting the Dark Ones in some manner. This means that an ET can at least avoid having to demonstrate the existence of the Dark Lords and having to prove that they pose a threat to humanity. Also, because an empathic underground cell is usually a smaller, more closely knit group than a government or corporation, there



is less chance of word of such an ET getting spread outside of the group and somehow reaching the ear of a Dark One. Lastly, a cell may have resources that a large institution lacks. Besides shelter, they will have individuals with empathic powers. They will have contacts. And most importantly, they will have information. The usefulness of the information will vary. If nothing else, because of the group's contacts, it can probably put the ET in touch with someone or some group that can help, and they can warn the ET who not to approach.

But there are certain disadvantages in trying to contact a cell of the empathic underground. The most obvious is, how does one find them? As the name implies, most cells are secretive—underground. An ET's search for such a group may attract unwanted and perhaps dangerous attention. There are also certain risks involved even if one successfully contacts a cell of the empathic underground. The group members may try to exploit the ET to achieve their goals. Even though they may have nobler intentions than some corporation, and their aim may be to thwart the Dark Ones, it is still exploitation. The referee must remember that everyone and everything that was important to such ETs was most likely taken from them by the Dark Ones. Any friends and family that these ETs may have had have likely been killed or subverted. Those that have been subverted are being exploited. It is from such exploitation that a renegade ET is fleeing. So if the ET can help it, it is very unlikely that she, he, or it will



submit to exploitation, no matter how noble the cause.

Also, there is a very real physical danger to contacting the underground. ETs have been given a bad reputation. They have been blamed for almost every imaginable ill: from the death of Elvis to the capture of helpless innocents. So it is not too surprising that their sincere pleas for assistance are sometimes met with disbelief or even violence. Also, as so many of them have been enslaved by the Dark Lords and used to commit very real atrocities, it is likely that any cell will suspect the ET of being an agent of a Dark One. The reaction of underground groups will vary. Its members may refuse assistance and chase such poor hunted creatures away, or they may try to kill them. If an ET is fortunate, the group will be willing to consider the ET's story and give the alien a chance. Those groups that are willing to aid an ET will surely find that they are well rewarded for their open-mindedness.

There is one qualifier which should be considered: Much of the above assumes that such an ET



considers humanity to be more or less its equal, and that all must work together in the struggle against the Dark Ones. But some ETs will believe that humans are below them. Such individuals may still associate with humans, but they will endeavor to make the relationship one in which the humans serve the ET. Such ETs may cooperate with humans to combat the Dark Lords, but will treat the humans as cannon fodder. This does *not* mean that such opinions will be apparent to the humans that associate with such an ET.

EMPATHIC PHILOSOPHIES OF ETs

Like any other group of individuals who use empathic powers, ETs have developed ideas on the nature of empathic powers and theories on how to develop and use them. Their concepts of empathic powers are very similar to ours. It is somewhat surprising, considering our different origins. To those individuals, both ET and human, who are of a more contemplative nature, this is clear evidence that humans and extraterrestrials are less different than many would like to believe. Some of these thoughtful individuals have even proposed that empathy may represent the bridge that will link our societies

into a productive communion, that will lead us all into a much brighter and productive future. That is if we do not destroy each other first.

Mystic ETs

Humans have a much inflated view of themselves. They view themselves as the pinnacle of evolution. The race is often quite irate when faced with evidence of its own limitations. Humans have often embodied their superiority in their religion. In most popular religions, man is the greatest of nature's creatures, master/steward of all the world. Humans then go to great lengths to base this superiority in some divine order. Imagine such people's surprise when they learn that aliens too have religions and philosophies; that they too have deities. After this, it is not too surprising to learn that some ETs have developed mystical philosophies concerning the nature and use of empathic powers.

While ET religions and philosophies are by their very nature alien to us, they share some common themes with ours. Many ETs believe in a divine purpose to creation. They often feel that they have a special function in this purpose. Those alien religions that possess deities usually depict their deities as perfect specimens of themselves.

If their religions seem alien, then many of their philosophies are even more foreign. Philosophy is the product of philosophers, and as philosophers are individual beings with their own unique histories, each will have experienced life differently. Thus, not too surprisingly, they will interpret it differently, and this is reflected in their philosophies. What is surprising is that there are any similarities at all. In fact, there are a great many.

Spiral Centricism: One fairly common philosophy among ETs is spiral centricism, a philosophy developed by a radically symmetrical—as opposed to the bilateral symmetry of the human body—race called the S'faelith. Where our body has two of most parts—two legs, two arms, two eyes, etc., all set to either side of a midline—these creatures had five arms, five legs, and five eyes. Like life on our planet,





life on their home planet (Seris) originally evolved in the sea. Their ancestors, a creature not too dissimilar from a starfish, remained aquatic inhabitants much longer than ours, so that the S'faelith were amphibious. They therefore evolved in a world of constant motion.

Spiral Centrism is based upon the spiral array organization of the Milky Way galaxy. The founder of this race was one Maer'ith. By profession, he was an astronomer, and in the spiral form he saw an analogy for life. This philosophy states that all things are in constant motion, revolving about a single center. He called this center a focus. He saw that where the focus moved, the arms also moved. He also saw that the arms of the spiral originated from the focus. From these observations, he postulated that all things have a common origin and focus, which he called the Great Focus. And he postulated that all things moved to the will of this Great Focus. He then applied this philosophy to everyday life.

Maer'ith said that to be in control of one's life and to take control of those things around one, one must concentrate on peripheries, but grasp the focus. He said that one must focus one's consciousness. Practitioners of this philosophy participate in a great deal of meditation trying to "Grasp the Great Focus." From this philosophical movement, a martial art developed in order to help the students of the movement achieve enlightenment. It was believed that by helping the students to gain greater mastery over their own bodies, this would help them to achieve enlightenment. In its evolution, the philosophical movement is not unlike the evolution of many Eastern philosophies on our planet. And like the masters of these exotic studies on Earth, the masters of spiral centrism are said to be capable of extraordinary feats—feats that others would claim to be impossible. What the students of this philosophy are doing is reaching into the core of their being and into the astral proto-dimension.

The S'faelith are now gone; their entire race disappeared. Some say that the Dark Lords destroyed them. Others say that the entire race moved

itself far away. Their teachings, however, have long since spread to other races.

Psionic ETs

This category includes those who interpret empathic abilities as having some "natural," "real," scientific, and measurable nature. Those ETs who subscribe to this theory tend to look down on the followers of mysticism and sorcery, to scoff at them. They equate such movements with superstition. In general, ETs tend to be more logical than humans. They are not only more advanced than humans technologically, but they are also somewhat more advanced sociologically and psychologically; their minds have little use for superstition. They do not see these other movements as separate abilities from psionics. Rather, they see them as a primitive means of using psionics. If faced with the fact that the followers of these other movements are capable of utilizing empathic powers, they will come up with some very logical rationale. For instance, they might state, "It is well known that the use of psionics requires great concentration. The meditations of mystics teach them to concentrate. All the philosophical mumbo-jumbo is irrelevant, or at best a tool to help them focus. At its worst, it prevents them from realizing their true potential." If questioned about the fact that each of the three empathic philosophies tends to excel at different sorts of abilities, they may begin to quote mathematical statistics and spout about differences in neural biochemistry. Most commonly they will say that just because we haven't found an explanation does not mean that there isn't one, that there is no reason to resort to superstitious nonsense.

There will be certain alien neuropaths that will not only look down upon students of the other two schools, but may consider them a threat. The rationale is that the students of the other two schools are using psionics without proper or complete understanding of what they are actually doing, and it is too dangerous for one to be wielding such power improperly.

Some alien scientists and psionics may find



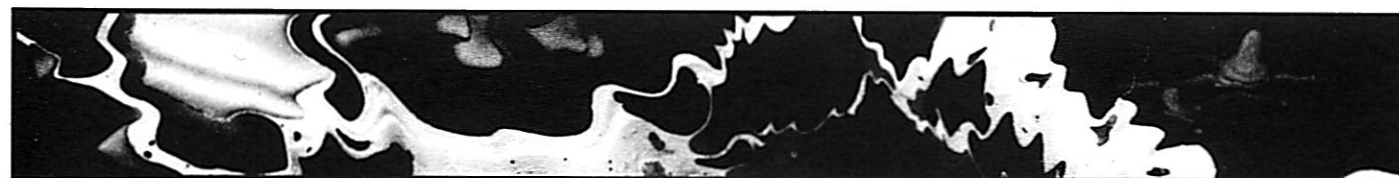
students of the other schools as fascinating as their own. They may want to study them. Some of the tests may be somewhat unpleasant for the test subject. But they would be necessary for the advancement of the science of psionics. They would also study individuals with neuropathic abilities, but they would probably treat such individuals much better. Imagine the pleasure of these scientists when they discovered Earth with its less intelligent life forms. Then they discovered that these humans could also wield empathic powers. To such ETs, there would not be as many ethical qualms about using such individuals as lab animals, as there would be if they were using members of their own races. Many such aliens needed little subversion on the part of the Dark Ones before participating in a conspiracy to enslave humanity.

Sorcery

With the exception of mathematical dimensional transcendentalism (see below), sorcery is

far less common among ETs than either mysticism or psionics. Sorcery revolves around the ability to contact and manipulate other dimensions. Here again is an example of parallel development between humans and ETs. Like early humans, primitive ETs had to come to terms with their environment. They often found themselves at the mercy of an environment they couldn't comprehend. They came to the belief that there were forces in nature and spirits of the elements. Early sorcerers learned to utilize these forces and to make pacts with these "spirits." Then, as in our own history, science began to dominate their culture and magic seemed to disappear. The exact historical details vary from race to race, but in general the result is the same: Sorcery seems to disappear, and sorcerers become secretive individuals who pass on their knowledge to a very select few. Over time, the number of sorcerers dwindled, until the present, when there are very few. Like humans sorcerers, these empaths pose the greatest potential threat to the Dark Lords.





For this reason, a sorcerer ET would be hunted more than any other ET by far. Unfortunately, use of their power also makes them the easiest to find.

It is possible for a society to embrace both science and magic. Many of the new wave of sorcery on Earth have demonstrated that the two need not be mutually exclusive. However, such a society should be very rare. Early on in the evolution, a species will have to decide whether to follow the path of measurable science or the more ambiguous field of magic. These two concepts will often appear to contradict each other. It is for this reason that very few races or societies would use both with any semblance of equality. Because science is quantifiable, it is easier to grasp and, theoretically, would be preferred by most societies.

Mathematical Dimensional Transcendentalism

This movement is unique in that it combines elements of all three of the above movements. Human mathematicians and physicists have theorized the possibility of wormholes in space. These can be seen as tunnels from one place to another that transcend the space in between. ETs also theorized the existence of worm holes. One group of empathically inclined ETs saw this as a possible explanation for sorcery. They believed that these wormholes connected not only different points in time and space in our dimension, but also connected points between different dimensions. Suddenly sorcery had a measurable scientific quantity and became somewhat more respectable. The early



founders of this movement felt that this validated the belief that true understanding of reality revolved around math. So like Pythagoreans of ancient Earth and his followers, math took on philosophical and religious aspects for them. Complicated mathematical equations and formulas became their mantras. They recite these theorems and postulates in order to become more in tune with the empathic activities they are undertaking.

REFeree HINTS FOR ROLEPLAYING ETs

Regardless of an ET's race, there are two characteristics that the referee must consider if he or she wants the ET seem real to the players. The first is the ET's alienness; the second, its situation as a hunted and frightened individual.

ETs are not just humans with funny colored skin and strange eyes. They may behave surprisingly similar to humans, but they are still alien. Alien means foreign, differing in nature or character. The referee should give the alien certain human-like qualities so the characters can relate to it. But the referee should also try to capture the ET's foreign nature. The creature may not understand human social structures. It may not understand our family structure or might be confused by our laws. While the ET comes from a race technologically more advanced than ours, it may not have some of our inventions, or may not use them in the same ways. In literature, for instance, it is fairly common that an alien does not understand that those things which occur during a TV show or movie are fictitious, and therefore are not an accurate account of human life. This will lead such an ET to believe that everyday people are like those on TV.

Another tool that the referee can use to convey the impression that the ET is an alien is language. Either the ET may not speak any human language or it may speak it differently. If the alien cannot speak our language, the PCs must work to establish some means of communication with it. This provides ample opportunities for roleplaying. One variation of this theme that the referee might want to

consider is the alien who pretends not to understand our language. If the PCs do not think the alien understands what they are saying, they are likely to react differently and say things they may not say if they think the alien understands them. This gives the alien an opportunity to judge the character of those it has met. It is also enjoyable when the ET springs upon the PCs that it can speak our language, and just how much of what the players said was understood. These seemingly comic moments may seem inappropriate in such a dark game as *Dark Conspiracy*, but they can also be very tense and challenging to players. And a little humor now and then will accent the terror later.

The other possibility is that the alien may speak a human language, but differently. Here are a couple variations of that theme. The alien may only speak telepathically. This too will be a source of humor and tension, because the alien may "hear" things that the character would rather it didn't. Another is that the alien may speak the language perfectly—meaning, for instance, that the alien speaks textbook English. This will seem strange, as very very few humans speak proper, let alone perfect, English. Such an alien may have great difficulty understanding the vernacular—slang or common speech. Such an alien may also interpret conversations literally. Or on the opposite side, the alien may use slang that is strange to us. It is common in literature that technology and technological jargon supply new slang expressions. One particularly common source of slang in science fiction is computer jargon, a perfect example of something that can be used to play up the ET's alien nature.

The other important aspect to remember is that the ET is hunted. Whatever other things it may be feeling (hate, revulsion, loneliness), it will also (probably first and foremost) feel frightened. Such an individual will always make sure it has an escape route. It will be constantly looking over its shoulder for signs of pursuers. A renegade ET will try to cover its tracks thoroughly whenever it is out and about. It will probably also try to stay in the background. Exactly how much care an ET takes depends on exactly how frightened or threatened it feels.



NEW RENEGADE ET CAREERS

The following renegade ET careers are designed to account for the three primary approaches to empathic powers.

Renegade ET Mystic

You are a creature without a home, or at least without a home that you have ever seen with your own eyes. You were born on the Mother Ship. Your parents told you little of your native world, insisting that your future was in this star system, not a distant planet where at least a millennium had passed since the ship's departure.

What your parents did pass on to you were the teachings that had guided them through their lives. They taught you how to meditate so that you could contemplate the wonders of existence. And they instructed you in martial arts so that you could learn control and concentration. You achieved a deep understanding of your place in the scheme of the cosmos. Through your meditations, you found peace with the universe. And by becoming one with the universe, you began to tap the potential of your abilities. You began to master the mystical skill of your tradition.

Then this peaceful existence of meditation and enlightenment was shattered by tragedy. Like a plague, the evil influence of a Dark One spread through the crew of the ship. Only the incredible minds of your parents protected you from this influence, and they died so that you might escape. You are now hunted by those you once called friends.

You have met the inhabitants of Earth, and have found that many are willing to help you. But you have also found out that the evil taint in the universe that destroyed your parents has also begun to infect human society. You find that you can no longer trust governments or militaries, as these were the first to be infiltrated. Only your own wits and understanding, and occasional help from the empathic underground, has kept you alive this long.

Entry: No prerequisites.

Attributes: -2 STR, -2 CON, +2 EDU, +4 EMP. Note attributes greater than 10 are possible for renegade ETs.

First Term Skills:

Animal Empathy 1

Computer Empathy 1

Disguise 1

Foreboding 1

Human Empathy 1

Melee Combat (Unarmed) 1

Project Thought 2

Psychology 1

Contacts: One extraterrestrial, one military, and one empathic.

Special: This "career" is actually the basic skill lists and attribute modifiers for a humanoid ET character. No secondary activities

are allowed in this term, but this does not count as a normal term in career generation. (That is, no die roll is made at the end of the term to terminate character generation.) All subsequent terms must be taken in other careers.

Because humanoid ETs are very long-lived, they suffer no adverse effects from aging during character generation.

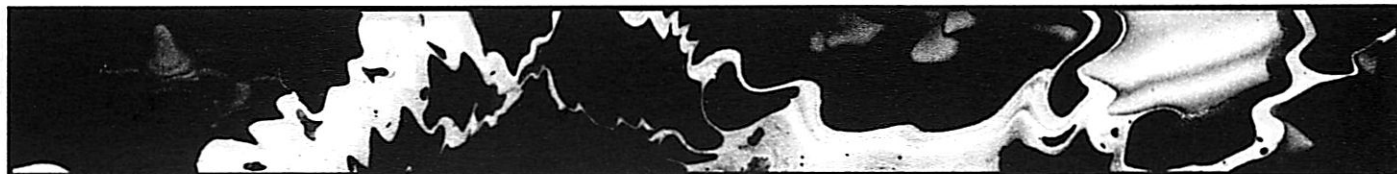
Renegade ETs are hunted by the Dark Ones, and are subject to the same sort of occasional nasty surprises as are cyborg escapees.

No money is earned during this career.



Renegade ET Psionic

You are a creature without a home, or at least without a home that you have ever seen with your own eyes. You were born on the Mother Ship. Your parents told you little of your native world, insisting



that your future was in this star system, not a distant planet where at least a millennium had passed since the ship's departure.

What your parents did pass on to you were the skills that they had learned during their lives. They taught you how to examine a situation critically. They taught you to examine the facets of a problem and then derive a solution through logical analysis and experimental results. They also taught you how to use other skills. They in-

structed you in the skills of a psionic. You learned how, through force of your own will, to stimulate neurochemical changes in yourself and others. By changing this balance, you found you could achieve a great many things: You could project your thoughts to others, or even heal the wounded. You were learning to become a productive and responsible member of your society.

This quiet but challenging existence of intense tutelage was shattered by tragedy. Like a plague, the evil influence of a Dark One spread through the crew of the ship. Only the incredible minds of your parents protected you from this influence, and they died so that you might escape. You are now hunted by those you once called friends.

You have met the inhabitants of this world, and though they are undisciplined and often highly irrational, they have their strong points, and you

have found that many are willing to help you. But you have also found out that the invasive influence that destroyed your parents has also begun to infect human society as well. You find that you can no longer trust governments or militaries, as these were the first to be infiltrated. Only your own wits and skill, and occasional help from the empathic underground, has kept you alive this long.

Entry: No prerequisites.

Attributes: -2 STR, -2 CON, +2 EDU, +4 EMP. Note attributes greater than 10 are possible for renegade ETs.

First Term Skills:

Animal Empathy 1

Computer Empathy 1

Disguise 1

Foreboding 1

Human Empathy 2

Project Thought 3

Contacts: One extraterrestrial, one military, and one empathic.

Special: This "career" is actually the basic skill lists and attribute modifiers for a humanoid ET character. No secondary activities are allowed in this term, but this does not count as a normal term in career generation. (That is, no die roll is made at the end of the term to terminate character generation.) All subsequent terms must be taken in other careers.

Because humanoid ETs are very long-lived, they suffer no adverse effects from aging during character generation.

Renegade ETs are hunted by the Dark Ones, and are subject to the same sort of occasional nasty surprises as are cyborg escapees.

No money is earned during this career.

Renegade Alien Sorcerer

You are a creature without a home, or at least without a home that you have ever seen with your own eyes. You were born on the Mother Ship. Your parents told you little of your native world, insisting



that your future was in this star system, not a distant planet where at least a millennium had passed since the ship's departure.

While your parents were busy seeing to their duties on board the ship, you were left to your own devices. It was lonely, but you had a powerful imagination to keep you company. You found yourself spending more and more time with your eccentric uncle. You learned what very few others knew; your strange old uncle was a powerful sorcerer. You begged and pleaded him to teach you magic. He constantly refused. But in the end he agreed, saying that you had finally demonstrated to him that your dedication and interests were sincere and strong. From that moment on, your life was filled with wonder. The training was very demanding, but you were not bothered, because every day you were astounded by the mysteries that were revealed to you. You learned to tap the forces that bind the dimensions together.

This "magical" tutelage and exploration was shattered by tragedy. Like a plague, the evil influence of a Dark One spread through the crew of the ship. The source of this influence sought out you and your uncle, bent upon your destruction. Only the incredible strength of your uncle protected you from this influence, and he died so that you may escape. You are now hunted by those you once called friends, and by your parents. You now know that creatures called the Dark Ones are the source of the evil, and they want you destroyed, because as a sorcerer you are a potential threat to them. You vow that when you master the skill your uncle taught you, you will be more than a threat.

You have met the inhabitants of this world and have found that many are willing to help you, but you have also found out that the evil taint in the universe that destroyed your uncle and perverted your parents has also begun to infect human society as well. You find that you can no longer trust governments or militaries, as these were the first to be infiltrated. Only your own wits and

sorcery, and occasional help from the empathic underground, has kept you alive this long. You know that the Dark Ones place a high priority on your destruction, but you must survive—vengeance demands it.

Entry: No prerequisites.

Attributes: -2 STR, -2 CON, +2 EDU, +4 EMP. Note attributes greater than 10 are possible for renegade ETs.

First Term Skills:

Act/Bluff 1
Animal Empathy 1
Disguise 1
Foreboding 2
Human Empathy 1
Sorcery 3

Contacts: One extraterrestrial, one military, and one empathic.

Special: This "career" is actually the basic skill lists and attribute modifiers for a humanoid ET character. No secondary activities are allowed in this term, but this does not count as a normal term in career generation. (That is, no die roll is made at the end of the term to terminate character generation.) All subsequent terms must be taken in other careers.

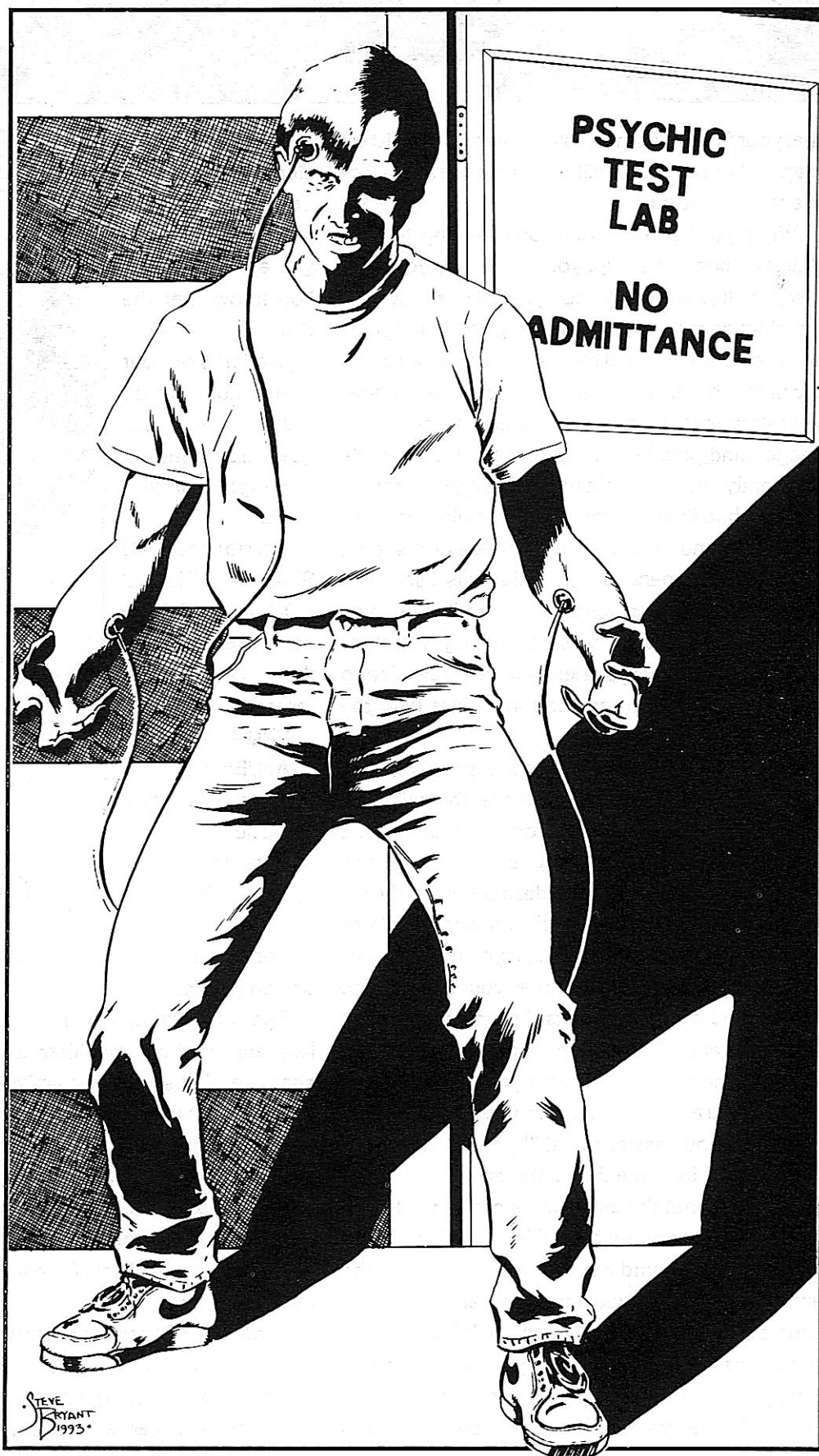
Because humanoid ETs are very long-lived, they suffer no adverse effects from aging during character generation.

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No money is earned during this career.



WEIRD AT A PROXIMITY





NEUROPATHY

Neuro: Of, or relating to, the nervous system.

Empathy: The power of making extrasensory contact with a being or condition outside one's self.

Neuropathy: The ability to affect things, particularly nervous systems, with the power of the mind alone.

Neuropathy is the latent ability to psychically cause a series of effects upon another being or object. Unlike some other forms of empathy, neuropathy is fueled directly by the empathic power of an individual. A great many beings have this ability to a minimal extent, but most remain unaware of it and are never able to develop their "power." Generally, it is barely discernible and almost always remains so, manifesting in such mysterious things as déjà-vu, dream premonitions, and invasive evil thoughts. As a result of this latent level of neuropathy, some people go through their lives believing they are "lucky," and pay no more attention to it. But some few become only too aware of their power and develop it to hazardous and lethal lengths.

Neuropathy is also a tool of the Dark Ones and their minions, who are able to develop this power to dangerous limits. Due to the largely unpredictable nature of individuals with this "gift," they prefer to use unwitting human servants in this field as they are not as difficult to control or terminate, should this be necessary. Dark Minions, especially ETs, can become adept at neuropathy, and the Dark Ones are pure masters of this power.

Neuropathy has many names—telepathy, telekinesis, ESP. Indeed, for the longest time, neuropathy and psionics were believed to be the same thing, but this is not so. Neuropathy can also be misunderstood as a school of magic, which it most decidedly is not. Neuropathy is the power of individuals to exert their will on the world around them, backed by misunderstood empathic powers. These powers can be channeled and harnessed through the other empathic disciplines, as presented in this sourcebook, but purest neuropathy is an instinctive thing;

an individual need not spend years poring over ancient tomes or studying with ancient masters. The neuropath merely needs to be aware of his or her own ability and have the determination to succeed.

Individual neuropaths can master their own abilities, developing specific areas and focusing their will until they become beings of awesome power. For a number of reasons, this is a rare occurrence. Neuropaths invariably suffer from tremendous psycho-related illnesses, take inordinate risks, and become targets of the Dark Ones and Dark Minions, who seek to use or destroy them.

While the latent power of neuropathy exists within almost all beings, even animals, it is only over recent years that it has become more noticeable. Hundreds more neuropaths are "awakening" each year and their ability to "push" their power is becoming greater. This is not coincidence, but is directly related to the presence of the Dark Ones.

The Neuropath and the World

The neuropath has almost become a social sub-class of society in the early 2000s. While the general populace remains largely ignorant to their existence, they exist as a definite presence within the cities across the world. Dormant neuropaths are much like everyone else; they manage their lives as best they can and are capable of living within society without great difficulty. Many latent neuropaths suspect they have some form of "higher power" which can range from just being lucky to the ability to tell if a person is lying to them and having premonitions of future events. Until they are awakened (which often never happens), they continue normal lives, the secret power within their heads remaining concealed even from them.

The difference occurs after the awakening, when they have realized their potential and have begun to experiment. The effects of neuropathy often lead to undesirable mental conditions brought about by unfocused and unharnessed power within the neuropath. As they become stronger, their ability to interact with their environment and fellow human



beings can weaken; they become shunned, feared and isolated. Thus, neuropaths drift away from the ones they once loved, becoming outsiders as those around them cannot understand them. This is the curse of the neuropath, which causes them to suffer and hate the society that spawned them but will not accept them.

It is wrong to think of neuropaths as strong individuals, capable of leading dynamic lives and using their abilities to forward their career and complement their life-styles. The ideas of neuropaths holding down demanding but lucrative corporate jobs are wrong. Neuropaths will not be found there, unless they are latent ones. To find the active neuropath you must know where to look: asleep in the subways or begging for small change, careening out of liquor stores desperately unscrewing the top off a bottle of cheap whiskey, junkies in abandoned buildings in noncontrolled zones hanging around the dealers for any narcotic castoffs which will take their mental pain away—here, among the dregs of society you will find the active neuropath. Unable to take the pain of their “gift,” the loss of friends and others around them who have suffered at the hands of other neuropaths (and perhaps even themselves), they have sunk into an oblivion they are unlikely to recover from. There are some neuropaths who manage to control their powers and shake off the nervous disorders that come with them. They realize the dangers of pushing themselves and walk a fine line, attempting to find the happy medium between power and humanity. However, these are few, for with neuropathy comes ambition. Many awakened neuropaths believe they are part of a new order, a new generation of beings—superior and more capable than those species who have gone before. They forget they are human, ignore their natural human weaknesses, and set off confidently down a path of peril, ignorant to all but their own ambitions and only to become another broken mind incapable of anything but a burning hatred of their own powers. Due to their very nature, neuropaths can be easy targets for Dark Ones, with their promises of untold power and ability to fuel the greed of an individual. Many are easily captured and

controlled only to be abused and destroyed when their power wanes or they become a liability. As always, the Dark Ones rely upon the social misfits and exploit the weaknesses within them to achieve their own ends. Some neuropaths are taken in by those opposing the Dark Ones, and provided with shelter and sympathy. Neuropaths are part of the war against the Dark Ones and are valuable assets.

Awakening

Neuropaths are created, not evolved. A neuropath doesn't just wake up one morning to discover the powers of the mind; these powers must be awakened somehow. This process usually takes place in one of three ways: emotional trauma, physical trauma, or psychic trauma. Emotional trauma consists of a terrible emotional shock: a tragic loss, pushing emotional stress to the breaking point, madness. Physical trauma means a head injury: something gets joggled, and the mind wakes. Psychic trauma is the direct result of a psychic invasion by another mind (via Project Thought), and of the struggle to displace the invader.

If a character is to begin play as a neuropath, the awakening process (described in more detail below) may well have occurred before play begins, as part of taking the Empathy option while Mustering Out. If the character is to become a neuropath during play, the referee can decide this as part of the continuing game, or trust to random chance. Any character with an Empathy of 3 or more, who has fewer than 4 skill points in empathic skills and has not already started studying one of the other empathic disciplines, can become a neuropath. Each time the character suffers a terrific emotional shock (referee's decision) or suffers a Serious wound to the head, there is a chance that the character's neuropathic abilities will awaken. Have the character make an Impossible vs. Willpower test. Success indicates the character's awakening as a neuropath (see below for the details). Characters subjected to psychic invasion via Project Thought who fit the neuropath criteria as defined above have to make an Average vs. Willpower test to determine if they are awakened as neuropaths.



The process of awakening is always a painful one. Would-be neuropaths suffering from physical or emotional trauma usually don't notice the pain of awakening, since they're already suffering from other misfortunes. An awakening through psychic trauma is the process where the pain is most noticed. The pain begins as an intense headache at the center of the mind and floods outward in a ripple effect until the awakening individual's mind becomes a shell of unharnessed empathic power, ready to burst at any moment. The dormant neuropath becomes aware of a pain in the head, which becomes more and more intense with every passing second. This is reflected by a 1-point wound to the head each turn the awakening neuropath is subjected to Project Thought. This damage can kill; if it reaches the Critical level, the neuropath's head can explode. A Difficult versus Constitution test must be passed every turn once the head wound reaches Critical level to prevent this from happening and killing the character.

The novice neuropath can fight back using Willpower. A successful Willpower test versus the op-

posing Project Thought will stop the pain and repair the injury. The Difficulty level is determined by the Success Level of the invading Thought Projection:

<i>Success Level</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Basic, Stage One	Easy
Stage Two, Three	Average
Stage Four	Difficult
Stage Five	Formidable
Stage Six	Impossible

Once this Willpower test is passed, the pain stops and all head wounds caused by the process are negated, as if they never existed. (Of course, referees and players must still deal with the effects of the invading Project Thought that began this process.) Awakened neuropaths will realize their potential and begin to understand the power they possess. From this point on, they will be able to attempt all manner of neuropathic powers, and if they push themselves, will become masters of their powers. They will also subject themselves to the risk of mental instability which is the curse of all neuropaths.





Awakening Bonus

A newly awakened neuropath increases all empathic skills by 1 level. This applies only to skills possessed at the time of the awakening, not to any skills acquired subsequently.

Using Neuropathic Powers

Neuropathy is, in essence, the basic set of empathic abilities listed in *Dark Conspiracy*. These powers are repeated below for completeness, and some of the powers are clarified and enhanced. These powers work in exactly the same way as described in the basic rules, modified by the new D20 system.

Note: In order to maintain the atmosphere of the game, all empathic success rolls are to be made by the referee and kept secret from the player. PCs should know they have succeeded, but they should not know the exact stage until they attempt to exploit it, or when their success is revealed by events.

For example, Maria the neuropath discovers that someone she and her brother, Peter, trust is about to betray them, and decides to warn him by means of Project Thought. Maria knows she will “feel” that she has established a link with her brother, but she also knows she cannot be certain how much information has gotten through to him. The best possible message would be to identify the upcoming betrayal, and instructions to Peter on how to prevent it. She decides to play it safe and send the minimal information necessary: a mental image of the act of betrayal itself, showing the perpetrator “red-handed,” and hope her brother is intelligent enough to figure the rest out for himself.

Pushing

Neuropaths have the ability to “push” their power, and it is this facet of neuropathy which causes the psychological damage to them. Whenever neuropaths fail their Empathy skill test, they are given the option to “push” their power. Basically, this allows the neuropath to attempt a Difficult: Willpower test, and if successful, the character may then re-try the neuropathic skill roll as normal. This chance to “push” can only be given once in a given situation, and

if failed, may not be reattempted against the same target in the same situation. A failed push can often prove disastrous to the neuropath. If the Willpower test is not successful, the character is immediately stunned, and takes 1D6 damage to the head. In addition, the character rolls on the Failed Push Table, shown below. If the push resulted in a Catastrophic Failure, double the die roll.

Failed Push Table

D20 Roll	Effect
1-10	No Effect
11-14	Depression
15-17	Phobia
18	Compulsion
19	Dependence
20-21	Amnesia
22-23	Aggression
24-25	Paranoia
26-27	Hallucination
28-33	Delusion
34-35	Multiple Personalities
36-38	Psychosis
39-40	Catatonia

Each one of these mental maladies is usually capable of being solved with psychiatric assistance. Unless otherwise noted, a character or NPC with Psychology skill can counsel the mentally disturbed character on resolving the problem. At least one hour a week has to be spent doing this to make any progress. After each four hours of counseling, the affected character may test to see if he can shake the problem. This is a Formidable vs. Willpower (+counselor’s actual Psychology skill level) test. Some mental problems have alternate methods of solution. These are listed, with specific problems as appropriate.

The Push die roll should be made by the referee and kept secret from the character. The referee should not reveal the result except during game play, as it becomes appropriate. For example, if a character develops a phobia of rats, this should not be revealed until the character encounters (or thinks of) a rat. Some maladies may become readily apparent, others may take time to be detected—



after all, the word “depressed” doesn’t suddenly appear on the character’s forehead...

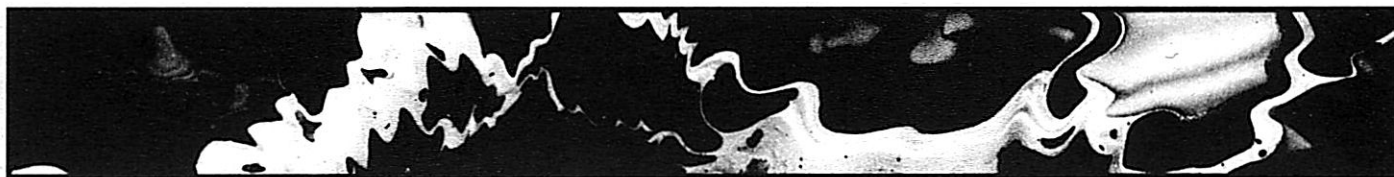
Depression: The neuropath becomes depressed with life and the world around him, often seeing futility in all courses of action. He suffers from regular bouts of hopelessness and fails to see any hope in existence. Characters are likely to lose any interest in doing anything but moping; all tests are one difficulty level higher. Curing this malady may be accomplished by psychiatric counseling, but an important success can restore confidence. Each time the depressed character succeeds at an important skill test of Formidable or Impossible difficulty, the character makes an immediate Difficult: Willpower test. Success means the character has cheered up, realizing that his efforts can do some good after all.

Phobia: The neuropath develops an irrational phobia based upon the situation that caused it (the exact phobia is up to the referee. Examples: darkness, specific types of Dark Minions, spiders, heights, monsters in general, etc.). When confronted with this situation, the character will do anything to avoid it immediately, and if forced to remain in this situation, will panic completely, as per the new Fear rules on page 8. Curing the fear requires psychiatric counseling, or the character can confront the fear. Each time the character is exposed to the source of the phobia, the character makes an immediate Impossible: Willpower test. Success means the character has beaten the fear and broken the hold of the phobia.

Compulsion: The neuropath suffers from an obsessive compulsion related to the situation that caused it. This can range from a compulsion to defeat a certain person or creature, or even protect something. Whatever the compulsion is, it will become an overriding feature of the character’s actions and will always be the most important thing in the character’s life.

Dependence: The neuropath develops a dependence upon a substance of some kind. This can range from alcohol to drug to something as silly as hard candy. The referee and player work together to determine what the dependent substance is, and what the effects will be. Common sense should indicate the most suitable dependence. This can sometimes become a dependence upon a specific person.





Amnesia: The neuropath suffers from instant amnesia whereby memories of past events are forgotten. These might be recent events, events of long ago, or a combination of both. Amnesiacs can even forget their own identity in rare cases. The length of amnesia is up to the referee.

Treating amnesia is trickier than normal psychiatric counseling; usually, each amnesiac has to recover on his own. Recovering from amnesia is an exception to the usual Psychology counseling rule; each time the amnesiac undergoes psychological counseling for a period of a week (at least 14 hours during that week), or is confronted with great psychological stress or trauma, the amnesiac makes an Impossible: Willpower test for recovery.

Aggression: The neuropath becomes far more short-tempered and prone to violent behavior, often resorting to violence even when another course of action is more suitable. This behavior may result in an increased use of neuro-empathic powers, or might translate into physical actions, depending on the character and the situation.

Paranoia: Neuropathic paranoids believe that they are the targets of some heinous (and totally imaginary) plot. The referee should assign a specific group or organization that the character believes is after him, based upon the situation which caused the disorder and the character's history (this can be a real organization, or one made up solely for this purpose). Paranoid characters will develop an unreasoning fear of "them" and will do anything to ensure their own safety, often going to great lengths to achieve this. Paranoid characters will often construct ludicrously complex explanations to fit ordinary events into their world view. Paranoia requires twice as much psychiatric attention (time spent counseling the patient) as normal.

Hallucination: The neuropath suffers from regular hallucinations of a distressing nature and often cannot distinguish between reality and a hallucinatory state. The exact nature of the hallucinations should be assigned by the referee and involve something from the situation which caused the condition. The hallucinations will often cause the character to see things which are not there, even seeing friends as foes.

Delusion: Delusionary neuropaths believe themselves to be something they are not. This can range from being someone else, to the feeling of invincibility or the belief someone else is actually a Dark One, etc. The delusions do not go away and once defeated will shift to another target. This requires twice as much psychiatric attention (time spent counseling the patient) as normal.

Multiple Personalities: The neuropath develops a number of multiple personalities, as determined by the referee. Each personality manifests under certain conditions and will be markedly different from the others. The referee and player should work together to determine the "characters" of each personality, whether they are neuropathic, etc. This state requires nearly constant psychiatric care, and the patient only tests every month for a cure.

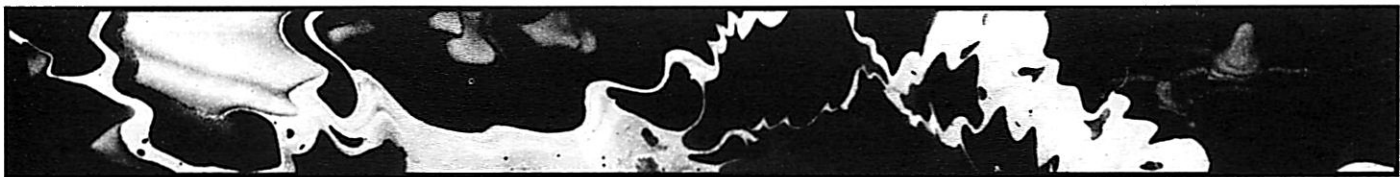
Psychosis: The neuropath becomes very dangerous, losing touch with reality and often violently hostile to all. To a certain extent, such characters will see themselves as invincible and will never believe they are doing anything wrong. Unpredictability is the key word here. This requires twice as much psychiatric attention (time spent counseling the patient) as normal.

Catatonia: Catatonic neuropaths lose touch with the outside world and completely freeze up, becoming trapped in their own mind. This cannot be cured through psychology; only the individual can break the barrier that makes his body immobile. Certain mystic disciplines can assist in breaking this barrier (see *Mysticism*, page 82).

Neuropathic Powers

The following section describes the powers available to neuropaths. They are, for the most part, the same empathic powers profiled in *Dark Conspiracy*, although there are a few changes. These changes are noted in each skill description.

Animal Empathy: Animal Empathy is a sort of sixth sense that allows a neuropath to perceive the mental and emotional state of animals. The exact amount of information perceived depends on the type of creature being scanned and the power level of the perceiving character's success.



Simple success reveals the presence and basic emotional state of one creature within a sphere centered on the sensing character and with a radius, in meters, equal to the power level of the success. Each additional stage of success allows the character to improve that information in one of three ways: (1) Double the sphere's radius for each stage used (i.e., if two stages are used to increase radius, it is doubled twice, or quadrupled), (2) reveal all creatures of one species, or (3) reveal the exact emotions and thoughts of a single target creature.

Combining: Neuropaths can combine their efforts to achieve higher power levels. One neuropath acts as the focus of the effort, and any other neuropaths wishing to assist add their power to the focus neuropath's attempt.

First, assisting neuropaths must make a Human Empathy test at one difficulty level higher than normal to establish an empathic link with the focus neuropath. Once this is successful, the focus neuropath makes the skill test for the empathic skill that the group is assisting. If the skill test is successful, each contributing neuropath adds power equal to his or her appropriate empathic skill level—this level is doubled if the focus empath achieves an Outstanding Success, so the power level can attain great heights indeed. The down side is that if the focus empath fails, each contributing empath suffers a 1-point wound to the head from the psychic feedback. And if the focus empath suffers a Catastrophic Failure, the focus empath and contributing empaths all roll on the Failed Push Table.

Certain Dark Minions are thought to have the ability to combine their empathic powers in this fashion. Among these are the dark elves, humanoid ETs, and nukid empaths. Also, human neuropaths turned to Dark Minions have used this power for centuries, as the power of the "coven" channeled through one skilled focus.

Computer Empathy: With this skill, a character can sense the flow of data within a computer or computer network. This allows the character to react more swiftly to changes in the data flow, making Computer Operation tasks easier. The character must be physically touching the computer (whether keyboard, screen, or processor) in order to initiate the empathy. When the character makes a test of this skill, empathic power level determines

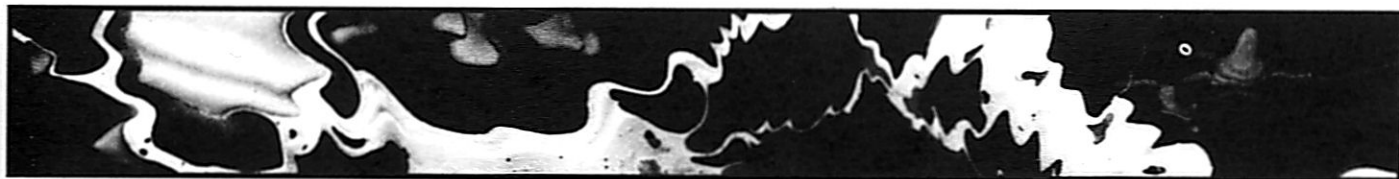
how much Computer Operation is enhanced. Empathic success effects are cumulative; i.e., someone achieving a Stage Four success enjoys the benefits of Basic and Stages One to Three success as well.

Basic Success means the character can sense the interior workings of the single computer that is being touched, revealing any interior damage or problem areas in its electronic flow. Stage Two success allows the character to empathically "read" any data the computer is accessing, which lowers the difficulty rating of all Computer Operation tests that the character is doing by one level (and you could even read the computer's readout without looking at the screen). Stage Three success allows the character to sense the interior workings of any one computer to which his own is connected (by modem or in a network, for instance) or to "read" all the data stored within the computer being touched, even data which is not currently being accessed. Stage Four success means the character can "read" any data being accessed by a computer in contact with the one he is touching. Stage Five success allows the character to "read" data stored in that distant computer. Stage Six means the character can perform Computer Operation tasks at two levels of difficulty lower than normal.

Dimension Walk: Dimension Walk is the same as the skill listed in *Dark Conspiracy* and is rare among neuropaths, but referees may allow characters to acquire it if desired. Using Dimension Walk, a character can open a portal to another proto-dimension. Neuropaths use this skill primarily for "rapid transit," but it is rarely used by them because such use can attract the attention of the Darklings. Users of Dimension Walk must make a task roll to avoid detection (see the Dimension Walk Detection Table in the *Sorcery* chapter, page 70) in addition to the normal task roll to open the portal. Stages of success are as follows:

Stage One allows the creation of a portal just large enough for the creator, who is immediately drawn through. Stage Two allows the portal to be held open for a full combat phase after the initiator passes through. Stage Three holds the portal open for two phases after the initiator passes through. Stage Four allows the portal to remain open for the number of phases equal to the creator's Dimension Walk skill rating





(at least two phases). Stage Five doubles the time allowed in Stage Four. Stage Six allows the creation or destruction of a permanent portal.

Note: No user of Dimension Walk or any of its cascades can enter, look into, or otherwise observe or manipulate a proto-dimension unless the user is familiar with that proto-dimension. This means that the user must either have been taken to that proto-dimension by someone or something else, or a complete enough psychic impression must have been transferred to the user by means of project thought or a similar empathic means. One visit is enough, and the visit can be voluntary (during empathic training) or involuntary (kidnapping by Dark Minions, etc.). The user must remain at least five seconds in the proto-dimension in order to gain a sufficient psychic impression to be able to return.

Dissolution and Plant Empathy: Neuropaths do not ordinarily practice these skills—they are left to the Darklings. Referees who wish to allow characters to acquire these skills should follow the guidelines outlined on page 210 of *Dark Conspiracy* regarding Darkling contact and Darkling empathic skill acquisition.

Empathic Healing: Empathic Healing allows characters to improve the healing rate for wounds they have taken. Basic Success reduces a wound's healing time by one day, and each additional stage of success lowers that time further by one day (with a minimum healing time of one hour).

An empathic healer may also attempt to enhance healing of another creature's wounds. First, the healer must make a successful Human (or Animal, as appropriate) Empathy test to establish contact with the patient. The success of this test then serves as a limitation to the success of Empathic Healing tests to be made for each wound: Any Empathic Healing successes are limited to the level of Human/Animal Empathy success. For example, if an empathic healer establishes Human Empathy contact at Stage Two, no Empathic Healing successes would be allowed to have more effect than Stage Two success.

Note that only one Empathic Healing test can ever be performed for each wound. If an Empathic Healing test on a wound is a failure, then that wound

cannot be empathically healed by that empath. Another empathic healer could try, though.

Foreboding: Characters with the Foreboding skill are prone to receiving impressions of events before those events actually take place. Sometimes this mild precognition happens days before events occur; other times, it is merely a second's worth of warning, a sort of "danger sense." The prescience might manifest itself as a dream, or as a waking hunch—terribly clear with each detail printed on the character's memory, or hauntingly vague, without details. The exact results are up to the referee's discretion, based upon story situation and the quality of the Foreboding success level.

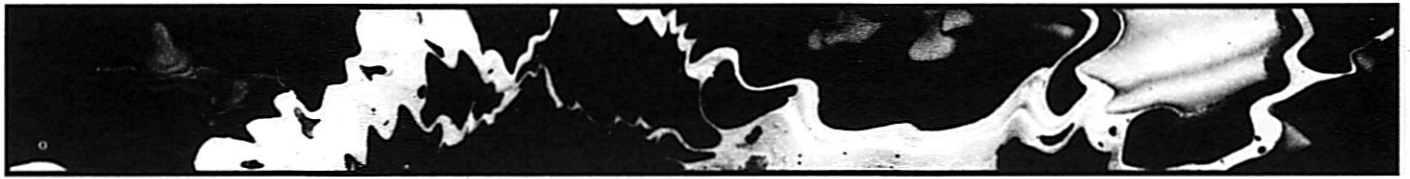
Human Empathy: Human Empathy is similar to Animal Empathy, except that it allows a character to perceive the mental and emotional state of other humans rather than animals. The exact amount of information perceived depends upon the success level of the Empathy skill test.

Basic Success reveals the presence and basic emotional state of one person within a sphere centered on the sensing character with a radius of the character's power level in meters. Also, if the target being sensed is a neuropath, any other empath can detect this immediately from the unconcealed psychic power in the target.

Each additional stage of success allows the empathic character to improve that information in one of three ways: (1) The radius of the sensing sphere can be doubled for each stage used (i.e., if two stages are used to increase radius, it is doubled twice, or quadrupled), (2) an additional person can be sensed, or (3) the level of perceived mental activity can be increased, proceeding from emotional state to surface thoughts, then to deeper thoughts.

Note that a referee may impose additional levels of difficulty based on specific situations.

Project Emotion: The Project Emotion skill allows a character to use an empathic link to instill emotions in other creatures. In order to use this skill, first an empathic link must be established, using Animal Empathy or Human Empathy, as appropriate. The success level of the appropriate Empathy skill limits the success level of Project Emotion attempts. Note that if the target's Willpower causes the attempt to fail (generating a total



power level of 0 or less), the target will feel the emotion but will recognize it as originating outside of itself.

Basic Success with this skill means the target must make an Easy test versus Intelligence to avoid acting the emotion out. Each additional stage of success increases the difficulty of the target's Intelligence test by one level.

Project Thought: Like Project Emotion, Project Thought requires an empathic link to be established, using the appropriate Empathy skill. Only simple thoughts may be communicated to animals (like "climb the tree," or "attack the man to your left," for example). With human targets, the amount and quality of information communicated depends on the success level of the empathic character's success.

Basic Success means that a single, simple sentence may be communicated (like those communicated to animals). A Stage Two success allows the empath to project a ghostly, transparent, two-dimensional vision, or communicate one long, involved sentence/thought. Stage Three success makes the vision opaque and three-dimensional, or permits the communication of two long, complex sentences. Stage Four adds auditory effects to the vision, or allows prolonged mental communication (as if the empath were talking to the target, in the target's mind). Stage Five success makes the illusory vision real to all senses except Empathy, or allows the empath to communicate thoughts to the target. A Stage Six success allows the empath to control

the target like a puppet. Like Project Emotion, if the target's Willpower lowers the empathic power level to 0 or below, the target will recognize the thoughts as coming from an outside source.

Willpower Drain: Sometimes, in order for an empathic link or attack to succeed, the target's high Willpower must be lowered. Willpower Drain allows a character to lower a target's Willpower temporarily. Using the skill requires a Difficult test of the attacker's skill level (Willpower Drain skill+INT), minus the target's Empathy, and each stage of success lowers the target's Willpower by 1 point for the duration of the encounter. Often, several successive successes are needed to "soften up" the target enough to allow other empathic skills to work (but, as mentioned above, the attacker cannot know exactly how many). The target's mental state is affected by this attack; he feels tired, depressed, sad, or just apathetic, as its Willpower is beaten down.

Willpower Drain only drains the defender's Willpower skill points, not the points added by the character's INT attribute. Once the defender's Willpower skill points are nullified, the Willpower skill level drops to 0, since there is an effective skill of 0 and there is no Willpower default for purposes of empathic power levels. Depending on the circumstances, the referee may choose to adjust the Willpower Drain's difficulty upward or downward to account for such things as a wounded defender or attacker, a captive or helpless target, etc.

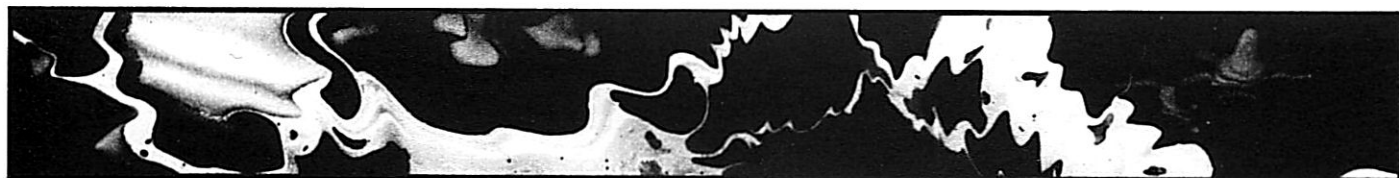
NEUROPATHY SKILLS CHARTS

Animal Empathy

<i>Task Type</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Total Security	Easy	Animal Empathy+EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Animal Empathy+EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Animal Empathy+EMP	—
Great Stress	Formidable	Animal Empathy+EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Animal Empathy+EMP	—

Computer Empathy

<i>Task Type</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Total Security	Easy	Computer Empathy+EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Computer Empathy+EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Computer Empathy+EMP	—
Great Stress	Formidable	Computer Empathy+EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Computer Empathy+EMP	—



Dimension Walk

Task Type	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Total Security	Easy	Dimension Walk+EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Dimension Walk+EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Dimension Walk+EMP	—
Great Stress	Formidable	Dimension Walk+EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Dimension Walk+EMP	—

Empathic Healing

Task Type	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Total Security	Easy	Empathic Healing+EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Empathic Healing+EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Empathic Healing+EMP	—
Great Stress	Formidable	Empathic Healing+EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Empathic Healing+EMP	—

Foreboding

Task Type	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Total Security	Easy	Foreboding+EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Foreboding+EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Foreboding+EMP	—
Great Stress	Formidable	Foreboding+EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Foreboding+EMP	—

Human Empathy

Task Type	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Total Security	Easy	Human Empathy+EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Human Empathy+EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Human Empathy+EMP	—
Great Stress	Formidable	Human Empathy+EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Human Empathy+EMP	—

Project Emotion

Task Type	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Total Security	Easy	Project Emotion+EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Project Emotion+EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Project Emotion+EMP	—
Great Stress	Formidable	Project Emotion+EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Project Emotion+EMP	—

Project Thought

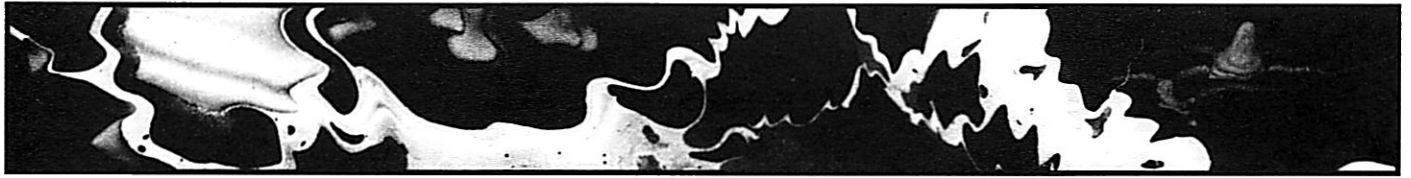
Task Type	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Total Security	Easy	Project Thought+EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Project Thought+EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Project Thought+EMP	—
Great Stress	Formidable	Project Thought+EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Project Thought+EMP	—

Willpower Drain

Task Type	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Willpower Drain	Difficult	Willpower Drain skill – target's EMP	—

SCIENCE FICTION





PSIONICS

Humanity has long known that it possesses powers of the mind, powers that can accomplish amazing feats. These powers can be channeled and mastered, but not fully understood. They cannot even be effectively measured and metered, but they can be used with no more effort than the strength of mind over matter.

In the late 20th century, these powers became the subject of intense study. At first, neuropaths were the test examples, but their powers proved to be too wild, too unpredictable for the consistent, steady results that scientific research demanded for a database. Gradually, this research moved into the area of psionics: pure, controlled powers of the mind.

This research has resulted in learning, through trial and error, the correct ways to train a person in using mental powers to affect the outside world. As could be expected from rules arising from scientific research, the methods are very precise, constant, dry formulas, learned by rote until they become reflex. Because of the utterly clinical philosophy of their discipline, psionics are logical, analytical, practically emotionless people (at least while practicing their science), who think quickly and rationally.

Psionic practitioners once used the Greek letter Psi (Ψ) as a recognition symbol, and often refer to their powers as psi powers.

An Unsolved Mystery

The one question which dogs every psionic is the fundamental question of the entire realm of study. Why does it work? How does it work? Science does not know. Based on research and the available evidence, the best theory is that, in certain people, specific and seemingly unrelated parts of the brain generate extra activity when stimulated correctly. This activity has external manifestations in psionic phenomena. The effects of the manifestations seem to be more pronounced if the subject has a better working knowledge of the functions and properties of the target. Based on this principle, psionics are trained about the workings of the mind, psychology, and current theories of specific psionic phenomena.

It seems to work, since an educated psionic can do things an uneducated one cannot. Informed psionics appear to be able to reach out to the root of the target's being and function, concentrating on the basics of the target and the effect desired.

The neuropath, the mystic, and the sorcerer marvel at the ease with which the psionic does his empathic feats. There is no feedback, no backlash, and there are no lengthy rituals to perform. A psionic's powers are as swift as thought itself, and psionics think fast. They cannot do some of the specialized things available to the other empathic disciplines, of course, but what they can do, they do faster and better.

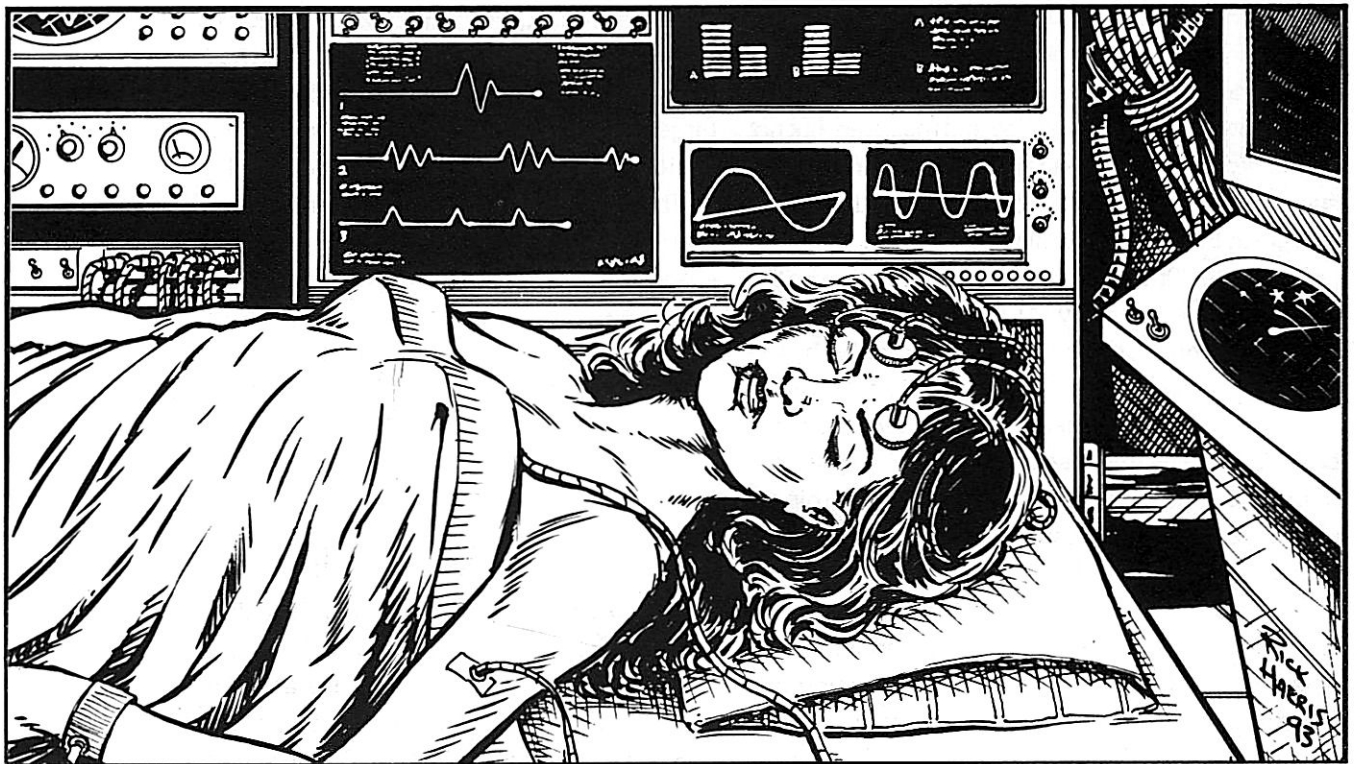
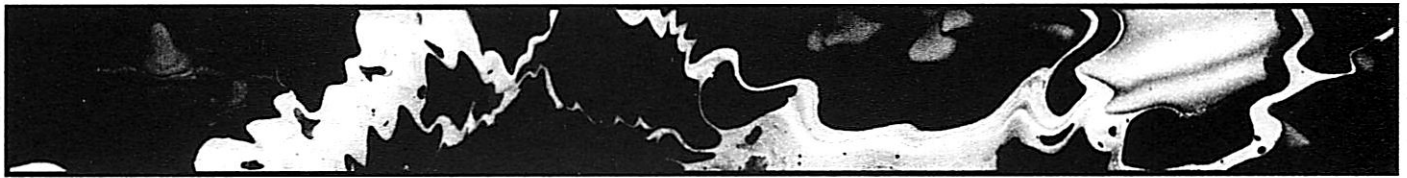
Different Strokes

Due to the exhaustive intellectual training necessary for psionics, practitioners of this discipline cannot be trained for the mystic arts and vice versa, as that philosophy runs directly counter to psionic training. The mystic dismisses details, seeking to abandon rationality until reaching the core of existence, becoming one with the universe by forgetting the self. A psionic is keenly aware of every aspect of his physical self, and of the realities of the things he wants to affect. The mystic sees the essence of the target, while the psionic sees the inner workings; the trees rather than the forest. Mystics view psionics as emotionless, anal-retentive thinking machines. Psionics view mystics as freaked-out dreamers who can't think straight.

As noted in the Sorcery chapter, psionics can learn sorcerous disciplines, as long as they are couched in mechanical terms and accompanied by the same methodical patterns. A mystical sorcerer makes a great scout and information-gatherer; a psionic sorcerer is a highly mobile weapon.

The Psionic Community

Psionic research is a strong part of the empathic underground, although much of it is actually "above-ground," so to speak, in private government and corporate labs. Psionics who are aware of the Dark Invasion are always ready to aid empathes in their fight against the Darklings, and are sometimes



willing to pay them for their troubles if they capture Darklings for experimentation. Darkling humanoid ETs are particularly sought after, for their powers and knowledge are closer to psionics than most of the other Dark races' powers.

Psionic training often begins by wiring a promising test subject to meters and sensors to determine psionic potential and aptitude. It is easier to find psionic training than it is to find mystical and particularly sorcerous training, for there are several times as many psionic labs as there are temples of mysticism and schools of sorcery.

Using Psionic Powers

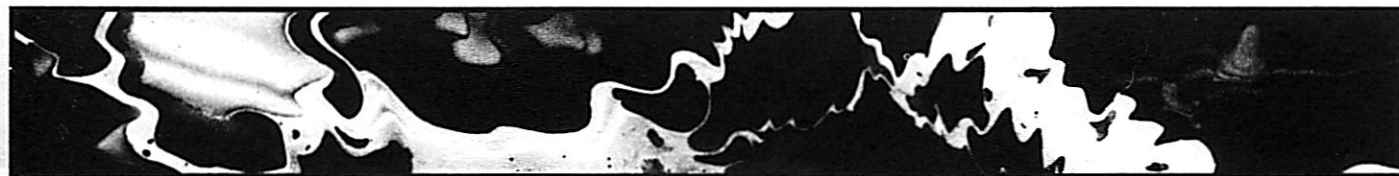
The key to using the powers of the mind is not the power inherent in the mind, but the will to focus and extend those powers. This is the basis of the psionic discipline. A psionic without willpower is not a useful psionic, for his powers will remain useless until the will and education are attained to control and channel them.

In order to use psionic powers, the psionic must pass a successful Willpower test. The difficulty of this test is based on the Empathy Task Difficulties—

e.g., a psionic wanting to use a power in the middle of combat would have to pass a Formidable: Willpower test to do so. Once this test is passed, the psionic may use the desired power, testing according to the difficulty listed with the power.

An Outstanding Success on the Willpower roll makes the subsequent psionic skill test two levels of difficulty easier, while a Catastrophic Failure means that the psionic has lost his train of thought, and must spend his next entire action confused and actionless, recovering. Outstanding Successes on the actual psionic skill tests double the power level, as usual. Catastrophic Failures merely mean that the psionic fails to perform the desired action; there is no other penalty.

For example, Mycroft wants to freeze an opponent with Cryokinesis. It's during combat (making it a Formidable task), and Mycroft's Willpower is 11, so he has to roll a 5 or less. Later, out of combat, he has a chance to freeze a Darkling in a sneak attack. He's not stressed, so the Willpower test is Average. He rolls an Outstanding Success, which makes the Average out-of-combat Cryokinesis task Easy—4 times the skill+attribute.



Note: In order to maintain the atmosphere of the game, it is important for all empathic success rolls to be made by the referee and kept secret from the player. Players should be told they have succeeded, but they should not know the exact stage until they attempt to exploit it, or their success is revealed by events.

If, for example, Conrad the psionic wishes to set off a case of hand grenades using Pyrokinesis, he will know he is warning them, but will not be 100% certain he has achieved sufficient stages of success until the grenades explode or more than five combat phases of psi concentration pass without detonation.

Likewise, if Conrad attempts a Project Thought, he will know that he has accomplished a telepathic link and was able to send his thoughts, but will not know exactly how much of his projected message got through.

PSIONIC POWERS

Each one of these powers is a separate skill, with its own effects and difficulties. Some of these skills may default to other empathic skills.

Clairaudience: This is the ability to hear things beyond normal hearing distances, even through sound-deadening obstacles. The psionic must concentrate and do nothing else while using this power (Note: He can use Clairvoyance <see next entry> in tandem with this power.), and must know the location of the target point he wants to hear. The task is always Average difficulty. The amount of area seen and the range depends on the success. The psionic hears a basic radius of his Clairaudience level in meters, at a distance of his power level in meters.

For each stage of success above Basic, the psionic may (1) use the stage to increase the radius of Clairaudience by adding it to 1 and using that sum as a multiplier of his basic radius—i.e., using one stage for increased radius would double the base radius, two stages would triple the base radius, etc., (2) use the stage to increase the range of Clairaudience by adding it to 1 and using that sum as a power to the base range—i.e., using one stage for increased range would square the base range, two stages would cube the base range, etc., or (3) use a combination of options 1 and 2—e.g., with a

Stage Six success (5 stages above Basic), the psionic can use 2 stages + 1 (3) as a multiplier of radius, then using the remaining 3 stages + 1 (4) as an exponent of range. This can make the range quite impressive indeed. For example, a psionic with a Clairaudience of 15, applying every success from a Stage Six success to range, could hear something ($5 \text{ stages} + 1 = 6$; $15^6 = 11,390,625$ meters; $11,390,625 \times 1000 = 11,390$ kilometers away, in a spherical radius of 15 meters. Or, if he wanted to use these in combination, he could take 2 stages, add 1 for a sum of 3, and hear a radius of ($2 \text{ stages} + 1 = 3$; $15 \times 3 = 45$ meters at a distance of ($3 \text{ stages} + 1 = 4$; $15^4 = 50,625$ meters; $50,625 \times 1000 = 50$ kilometers. The Clairaudience remains in operation at that target point unless the psionic breaks concentration.

Clairvoyance: The psionic “sees” with his mind’s eye a vision of distance occurrences. Nothing can block this power, except being in another dimension—psionic clairvoyance cannot see past space-time barriers. The psionic must concentrate and do nothing else while using this power (although Clairaudience <see above> can be used in tandem with this power), and must know the location of the target point he wants to see. The task is always Average: Clairvoyance. The amount of area seen and the range depend on the success, using the same procedure as described for Clairaudience, above.

Clairvoyance remains in operation at that target point unless the psionic breaks concentration. Clairaudience and Clairvoyance can be used as one combined operation. If this is done, use the lower of the two skills to test and determine power levels.

Computer Empathy: Psionics can use the standard Computer Empathy skill (see *Dark Conspiracy*, page 58). A psionic requires a successful Willpower test before he can use this skill, as per normal psionic power use rules.

Cryokinesis: A psionic can lower the temperature of an object or life form by causing entropic heat-exchange processes to accelerate. The effects are not immediate, but progress through stages, each stage of success taking five seconds (one combat phase), beginning on the phase after the Cryokinesis skill roll is made. Thus,



it takes six phases (30 seconds) to reach Stage Six and kill someone. Concentration has to be maintained during the process—if the psionic suffers a Slight wound during the process, he has to pass an Average Willpower test to continue. If he suffers a Serious wound, the Willpower check to continue is Difficult. A Critical wound automatically makes the psionic stop the process. Furthermore, the target must be kept in range and in sight the entire time, or the process stops. Note that by maintaining concentration, a psionic may prolong whatever stage is achieved, thereby causing the target to suffer repeated damage, for instance.

If a Cryokinesis procedure is interrupted or stopped, it takes five minutes for a warm-blooded target to recover from one stage of Cryokinesis cooling. For instance, a target that has progressed through three stages of Cryokinesis would take 15 minutes to warm up again.

The range is equal to the psionic's power level in meters (see **Dark Conspiracy**, page 55). The stages of Cryokinesis are as follows:

- Basic Success allows basic chilling of objects and people; you can make a hot drink cold and give living creatures chills.
- Stage Two success allows hard freezing of up to 20 liters of liquid, or severe cooling of living creatures, making them shiver uncontrollably. This reduces a creature's movement rate by half, and adds one level of difficulty to all physical tasks.
- Stage Three success allows the solid freezing of 60 liters of liquid, or further freezing of creatures (which lose 75% of their movement and have one level of difficulty added to all physical tasks). Hypothermia sets in.
- Stage Four success will freeze up to 120 liters of liquid, and living creatures will fall unconscious, beset by hypothermia, unless passing an Average vs. Constitution test. Those who fail must pass an Easy vs. Constitution test or fall into a coma. Those who succeed have their movement penalized by 90% loss and have two levels of difficulty added to all physical tasks.
- Stage Five success allows the freezing of 240 liters of liquid, or inflicts automatic 1-point damage wounds to every hit location each round in the form of frostbite. Heavy clothing and other heating gear

won't stop this, or even help it. Creatures affected must still make Constitution rolls, as in Stage Four.

- Stage Six success freezes up to 440 liters of liquid, or causes the death of any living creature unless it's naturally frozen anyway. Death is not instantaneous; the victim slowly lapses into a coma and dies within five minutes unless emergency medical attention is given between the time the coma begins and death arrives.

Anyone with the Pyrokinesis skill can combat the effects of Cryokinesis, by achieving an equivalent stage of Pyrokinesis success, matching the effects of the Cryokinesis.

Darkling Empathy: A psionic can manage to read Darkling minds by using Telepathy (see below). This is not as effective as true Darkling Empathy, but it allows some contact.

Dimension Walk: Dimension Walk is the same as the skill listed in **Dark Conspiracy** and is used by psionics to enable them to acquire teleportation and other Dimension Walk cascades described in this chapter. All users of Dimension Walk and its cascades must make a task roll to avoid detection (see the Dimension Walk Detection Table in the Sorcery chapter, page 70) in addition to the normal task roll to open the portal. Stages of success are as follows:

Stage One allows the creation of a portal just large enough for the creator, who is immediately drawn through. Stage Two allows the portal to be held open for a full combat phase after the initiator passes through. Stage Three holds the portal open for two phases after the initiator passes through. Stage Four allows the portal to remain open for the number of phases equal to the creator's Dimension Walk skill rating (but at least two phases). Stage Five doubles the time allowed in Stage Four. Stage Six allows the creation or destruction of a permanent portal.

Note: No user of Dimension Walk or any of its cascades can enter, look into, or otherwise observe or manipulate a proto-dimension unless the user is familiar with that proto-dimension. This means that the user must either have been taken to that proto-dimension by someone or something else, or a complete enough psychic impression must have



been transferred to the user by means of Project Thought or a similar empathic means. One visit is enough, and the visit can be voluntary (during empathic training) or involuntary (kidnapping by Dark Minions, etc.). The user must remain at least five seconds in the proto-dimension in order to gain a sufficient psychic impression to be able to return.

Dissolution and Plant Empathy: Psionics are unable to acquire these skills, for reasons unknown.

ESP: This is the psionic equivalent of the Foreboding skill, and works the same way (same skill, different name).

Mental Attack: The most powerful attack of a psionic, this power allows the psionic to reach into a creature's mind and cause it to malfunction. The range of the attack is equal to the psionic's final power level, and as usual it requires a Willpower test at the situation-appropriate difficulty level. Furthermore, in order to make a Mental Attack, the psionic must first obtain a telepathic link (see Telepathy, below) with the target.

The difficulty level of the Mental Attack depends on the type of creature and the workings of its brain. Attacking a terrestrial animal, or something made from a terrestrial animal, is Easy. Attacking a human or a terrestrial insect is Average (the complexity of the human mind and the utter simplicity of the insect mind make them equally tough). Attacking an extraterrestrial creature/physical Darkling is Difficult. Attacking a noncorporeal "spirit," such as a poltergeist or a bleak, is Formidable. Attacking a Dark Lord, or an ET biocomputer, is Impossible.

Should the attack succeed, the target receives 1 point of damage to the head (doubled on NPCs, as usual) and is stunned, writhing with the ultimate headache, unable to do anything for one combat phase, per stage of success.

If the psionic rolls a Catastrophic Failure, the attack fails, the psionic suffers 1 point of damage to the head, and is stunned for one combat phase.

Mind Shield: This is the power of the psionic's will, intensified by the power of the mind. It is the psionic defense that makes them so fearsome to other empaths. In order to use it, the psionic has to







pass a Willpower test, with the difficulty level lowered by two levels. (For instance, a psionic under severe stress would test at Difficult: Willpower instead of the appropriate Impossible difficulty.) This is the first skill most psionics learn, and is ingrained as a conditioned reflex to attack.

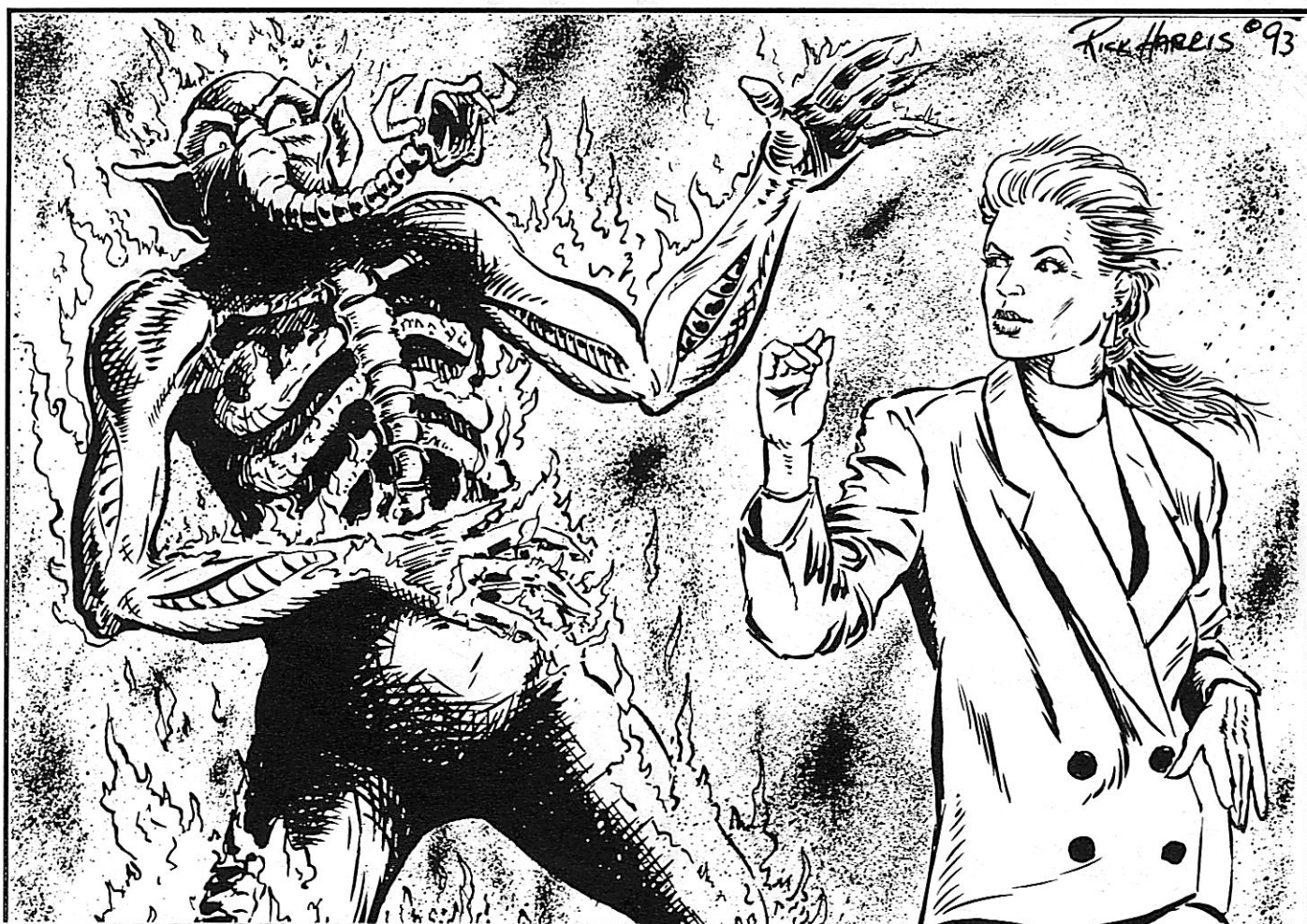
While using Mind Shield, the psionic cannot use any other psionic or empathic skill. The exception is that the psionic can "transfer" the shield to another person with whom the psionic has established a telepathic link (see Telepathy, below), protecting that person. Once the link is in place, the Mind Shield can be erected in the next combat phase, and then transferred in the following phase.

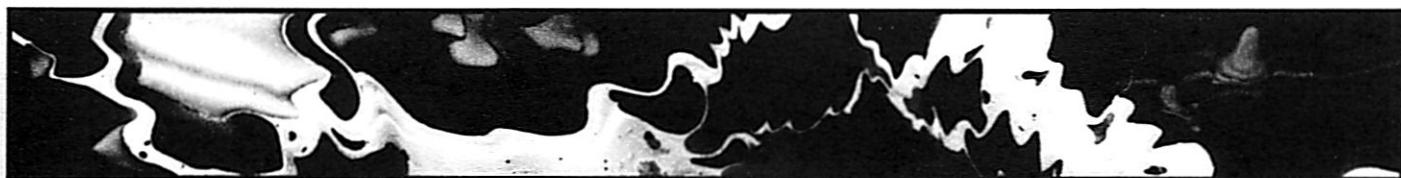
The effect of the Mind Shield skill is added to the subject's Willpower for the purposes of resisting empathic attacks and probes. The skill cannot be

used unless the psionic has at least 1 point of actual skill in Mind Shield; there is no default.

Example: Psionic Steve has Willpower 8 and Mind Shield 4. Expecting trouble, he activates his Mind Shield, so any empathic attacks that succeed against him have their power levels lowered by $(8+4=)$ 12 points. Later, Steve having established a telepathic link with his brother Dave, transfers the shield to Dave to help him withstand an empathic attack. Dave has no Willpower skill, so he would not normally subtract anything from an attacking power level, but Steve's Mind Shield is protecting him, subtracting 4 points from empathic assault power levels.

Project Emotion: This is the same as the normal Empathy skill (see page 49). A psionic must have a telepathic link established with the subject to use it (see Telepathy, below). A failed Project Emotion (i.e., the





target's Willpower lowers the power level to 0 or below) cannot be detected as coming from outside the target.

Project Thought: This is the same as the normal Empathy skill of the same name (see *Neuropathy*, page 50). A psionic must have a telepathic link established with the subject to use it (see *Telepathy*, below). A failed Project Thought (i.e., the target's Willpower lowering the power level to 0 or below) can be detected as coming from outside the target.

Psionic Scan: Psionics are sensitive to the mental emanations of other empaths. These "empathic waves" are as visible to a psionic's trained mind as heat waves rippling over a highway are to the naked eye. The skill test is Average, and a successful psionic can then sense all practicing empaths (anyone or anything with an Empathy or empathic skill of 4 or more) within a radius equal to the Psionic Scan skill in meters, centered on the psionic. Also, the psionic can tell if each empath is using empathic abilities at the time. Additional stages of success past Basic double this radius, so a psionic with Psionic Scan 10 would have a radius of 10 meters at Basic Success, 20 meters at Stage Two, 40 meters at Stage Three, 80 meters at Stage Four, and so on.

An empath being scanned can hide from it. Mystics have their own method of hiding psychically (*Psychic Invisibility*, page 102). Other empaths have to rely on their Willpower. If a target empath's Willpower reduces the power level of a psionic scan to 0 or lower, the scan will not detect the empath. Please note that this doesn't stop the scan from discovering other empaths, it just keeps the scan from locating the one with the high Willpower. So this tool is less useful in detecting many high-Willpower Darklings than it might seem.

Pyrokinesis: A psionic can raise the temperature of an object or life-form by accelerating molecular friction inside the subject. The effects are not immediate, but progress through stages, each stage of success taking five seconds (one combat phase), beginning on the phase after the Pyrokinesis skill roll is made. Thus, it takes six phases (30 seconds) to reach Stage Six and kill someone. Concentration

has to be maintained during the process—if the psionic suffers a Slight wound during the process, he has to pass an Average vs. Willpower test to continue. If he suffers a Serious wound, the Willpower check to continue is Difficult. A Critical wound automatically makes the psionic stop the process. Furthermore, the target must be kept in range and in sight the entire time, or the process stops. Note that by maintaining concentration, a psionic may prolong whatever stage is achieved, thereby causing the target to suffer repeated damage, for instance.

If a Pyrokinesis procedure is interrupted or stopped, the heat decreases at one level per combat phase (entropy does away with heat more swiftly than heat can do away with cold).

The stages of Pyrokinesis are as follows:

- Basic Success allows the boiling of a liter of water, or making a human-sized creature feel feverish (strangely, this may make the creature feel chilled instead).
- Stage Two success allows the boiling of up to 20 liters of water. If the psionic has targeted a small object (such as a steering wheel, glass window pane, or pistol) the object will become hot enough to inflict painful blisters on any creature touching it.
- Stage Three success allows the boiling of up to 50 liters of water. Gasoline and other highly flammable substances may be ignited. Human-sized creatures suffer heat exhaustion—nausea, profuse perspiration, weakness—making the creature's task rolls one level of difficulty higher.
- Stage Four success boils 100 liters of water, ignites paper, cotton cloth, and other readily flammable materials, and human-sized creatures suffer heat prostration—headaches, dry skin, delirium, and possible loss of consciousness (pass an Average: Constitution test or pass out). Unconscious targets may die, if they fail an Easy: Constitution test; conscious targets perform all tasks at two levels of difficulty greater than normal.
- Stage Five success boils 200 liters of water, ignites wood, synthetic cloth, and other flammable materials, or "cooks off" explosives like



small arms ammunition, grenades, and dynamite. It also causes an automatic Slight wound to every damage location on living creatures (half wounds to NPCs and animals), and gives the effects of heat prostration, but all Constitution checks and skill tests are at one level higher than those noted for Stage Four.

- Stage Six success boils 400 liters of water, ignites anything flammable and scorches nonflammables, and causes instant death to human-sized creatures ("spontaneous combustion").

Anyone with the Cryokinesis skill can combat the effects of Pyrokinesis by achieving an equivalent stage of Cryokinesis success, matching the effects of the Pyrokinesis. Pyrokinesis has a range in meters equal to the psionic's final power level.

Self-Healing: Psionics lack the close emotional empathic skills to perform empathic healing on others. However, they are masters of their own biofunctions, via their "mind over matter" talents.

This skill works two ways. The first is to heal bodily wounds or illnesses by accelerating the natural healing process (but this cannot cure cancer and

similar illnesses which draw strength from the healing process in the first place). After the mandatory Willpower check, Self-Healing is an Average test (if the mandatory Willpower check results in an Outstanding Success, the difficulty for Self-Healing drops to Easy). Each level of success lowers the healing time of a wound by half (to a minimum time of one hour; see *Dark Conspiracy*, page 105, for normal healing rates). Self-Healing may only be used one time for each wound.

The second use for Self-Healing is to accelerate the body to heights of physical performance. For each stage of success, the psionic may (1) increase his STR, AGL, or CON by 1 point, or (2) increase his foot movement by 25%. This effect lasts for one five-second combat phase. A Catastrophic Failure when using Self-Healing indicates that the psionic has overdone it. If Self-Healing a wound, that wound accumulates enough damage points to move it to the next wound level; if accelerating the body, the psionic receives damage points equal to a Slight wound in one random body location. He can only hope that body section isn't already injured...

Telekinesis: A psionic finds moving objects with the mind to be child's play. It's one of the easiest psionic skills, and embodies the central philosophy of the psionic: mind over matter.

After the Willpower test, Telekinesis is an Easy task. Each level of success achieved allows the psionic to move 10 kilogram/meters per combat phase. For instance, with a Basic Success, a psionic could move one kilogram 10 meters in a combat phase, five kilograms two meters, or 10 kilograms one meter. Psionics with this skill can cooperate to lift and move massive objects with precision.

Weapons can be used with Telekinesis, and moving parts manipulated, provided that the psionic can see them (either visually or clairvoyantly). Performing a nonmelee combat skill telekinetically is one level of difficulty higher than it would be if the psionic was doing it with his body. Performing a Melee Combat (Armed) skill requires that the psionic achieve a minimum speed of 10 meters per phase with the weapon, and all Melee Combat (Armed)





skills are at one level of difficulty higher than normal. Thrown weapons may be used at normal skill difficulty, but must have a speed of 20 meters per combat phase to be effective.

Telepathy: This is the psionic equivalent of Human/Animal/Darkling Empathy, but works somewhat differently. The psionic doesn't really probe into the target's psyche, as the Empathy skills do; instead, he monitors brain activity and "listens" for the vibrations of subvocalized thoughts—almost everyone "talks" in their heads when they think. This is what the psionic "listens" to, so Telepathy can only probe as deep as surface thoughts. Thought and Project Emotion rely on this skill, as usual, but work somewhat differently—Project Emotion uses manipulation of the brain's reflexes and emotion centers to stimulate the brain into the desired state, and Project Thought adds mental speech subvocalized in on the subject's consciousness to this process.

After the mandatory Willpower test, the difficulty level of Telepathy is determined by the familiarity of the subject mind to the psionic:

If the psionic is only trying to establish a telepathic contact with one person, use the difficulty above. If establishing contact with multiple minds, use the highest difficulty that applies (conducting Telepathy in an area with two friends and a Darkling would be Difficult).

Basic Success reveals the presence and nature of all minds within a sphere (radius equals power level in meters). Each additional stage of success allows the psionic to (1) double the radius of the sphere, (2) sense the brain activity of one particular mind one level deeper, or (3) form a telepathic link with one mind for other psionic purposes. A psionic can sense activity in several persons at a time, but can only link with one mind at a time.

One additional stage of success applied to sensing brain activity allows the psionic to read the basic emotional state of the subject. At two additional stages of success applied to sensing brain activity, the psionic can read surface thoughts. This is as deep as Telepathy goes.

For purposes of using Mental Attack, a telepathic

link is required. To use Project Emotion, the psionic must both establish a telepathic link *and* sense emotional state. To use Project Thought, the psionic must both establish a telepathic link *and* sense surface thoughts.

Teleportation: This skill is a cascade of the Dimension Walk skill. It allows the psionic to shift into another probability reality and then shift back again, hopefully somewhere else, and where the psionic wants to be. In the blink of an eye, a psionic can cover hundreds of meters of distance. Once again, the scientists don't know how this is accomplished, and even psionics are unable to explain where the teleporters go to pass the distance without traversing it. It works, and that's enough for most.

It has been theorized that sorcerers would be able to do this trick more precisely and more safely, but their mental rituals and calculations take far too long to be considered instantaneous teleportation.

Teleportation is a very hard skill to practice. After the usual Willpower test is passed, the psionic must pass a Difficult: Teleportation test to teleport. The psionic must be able to see the destination. (Clairvoyance can be used to supply a vision of a teleporting psionic's destination, but then the difficulty of teleportation goes up to Formidable.) If the teleport is successful, then the psionic teleports a number of meters in the direction of the destination equal to the power level. If the distance/power level is short, then the teleporting psionic reappears at that distance, along a line drawn between starting position and destination. If the distance/power level goes over the distance to the destination, the extra distance is lost and the psionic reappears at the destination. Teleportation is fraught with dangers. If a teleporter reappears short, inside another object, whatever body part(s) is inside the object sustains a Critical injury. If a teleporting psionic suffers a Catastrophic Failure, roll 1D6:

- 1-4, the psionic transports (Teleportation skill + 1D20 meters) in a random direction.
- 5-6, the teleporting psionic disappears, and doesn't reappear. Where did he go? No one knows...

PSIONIC SKILLS CHARTS

Psionic Willpower Test

<i>Situation</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Total Security	Easy	Willpower+INT	—
Relaxed Environment	Average	Willpower+INT	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Willpower+INT	—
Great Stress, Combat	Formidable	Willpower+INT	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Willpower+INT	—

PSIONIC POWERS

<i>Task</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Clairaudience	Average	Clairaudience + EMP	—
Clairvoyance	Average	Clairaudience + EMP	—

Computer Empathy

<i>Task</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Total Security	Easy	Computer Empathy + EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Computer Empathy + EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Computer Empathy + EMP	—
Great Stress/Combat	Formidable	Computer Empathy + EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Computer Empathy + EMP	—

Cryokinesis

<i>Task</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Total Security	Easy	Cryokinesis + EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Cryokinesis + EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Cryokinesis + EMP	—
Great Stress/Combat	Formidable	Cryokinesis + EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Cryokinesis + EMP	—

Darkling Empathy—See Telepathy

Dimension Walk

<i>Task</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Total Security	Easy	Dimension Walk+EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Dimension Walk+EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Dimension Walk+EMP	—
Great Stress	Formidable	Dimension Walk+EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Dimension Walk+EMP	—

ESP

<i>Task</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Total Security	Easy	ESP + EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	ESP + EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	ESP + EMP	—
Great Stress/Combat	Formidable	ESP + EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	ESP + EMP	—

Mental Attack vs

<i>Task</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Animal	Easy	Mental Attack + EMP	—
Human/Insect	Average	Mental Attack + EMP	—
ET/Corporeal Being	Difficult	Mental Attack + EMP	—
Noncorporeal Being	Formidable	Mental Attack + EMP	—
Dark Lord/ET biocomputer	Impossible	Mental Attack + EMP	—

Mind Shield

Task Type:	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Mind Shield	+2 levels	Willpower + INT	—

Project Emotion

Task Type:	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Total Security	Easy	Project Emotion+EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Project Emotion+EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Project Emotion+EMP	—
Great Stress	Formidable	Project Emotion+EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Project Emotion+EMP	—

Project Thought

Task Type:	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Total Security	Easy	Project Thought+EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Project Thought+EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Project Thought+EMP	—
Great Stress	Formidable	Project Thought+EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Project Thought+EMP	—

Psionic Scan

Task	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Psionic Scan	Average	Psionic Scan + EMP	—

Pyrokinesis

Task	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Total Security	Easy	Pyrokinesis + EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Pyrokinesis + EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Pyrokinesis + EMP	—
Great Stress/Combat	Formidable	Pyrokinesis + EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Pyrokinesis + EMP	—

Self-Healing

Task	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Self-Healing	Average	Self-Healing + EMP	—

Telekinesis

Task	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Telekinesis	Easy	Telekinesis + EMP	—

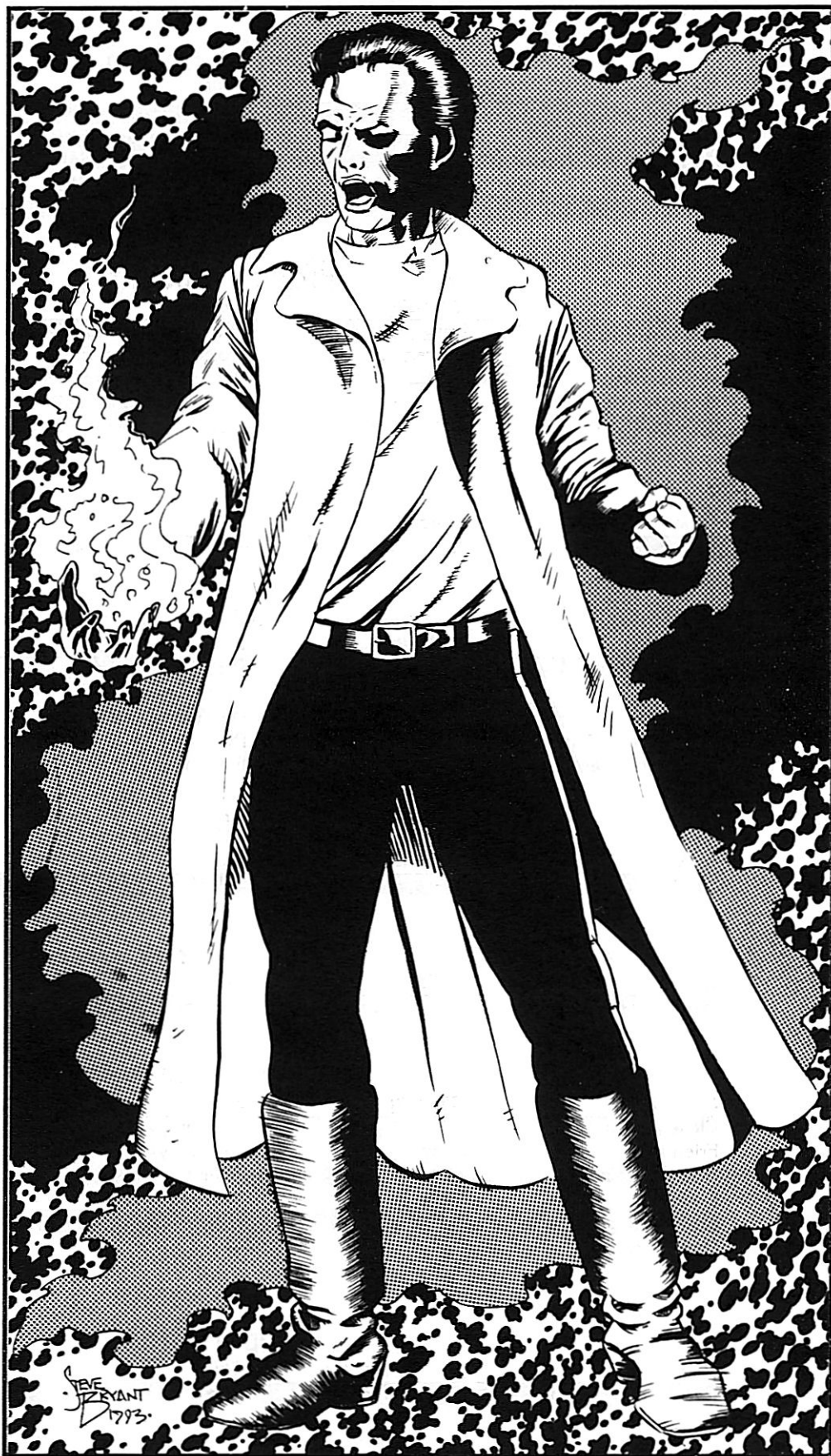
Telepathy

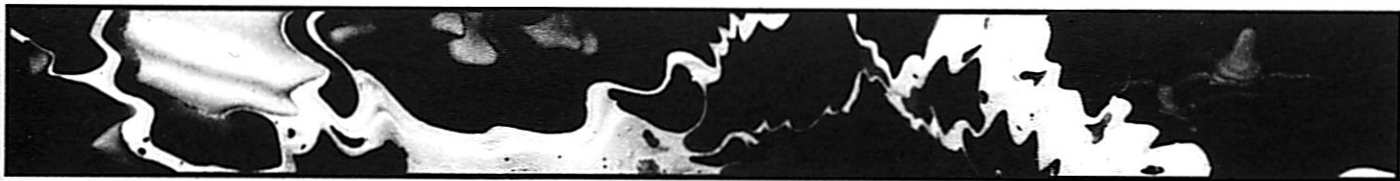
Subject	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Close Friend	—	Telepathy+ EMP	Automatic
Friend	Easy	Telepathy+ EMP	—
Human, Animal	Average	Telepathy+ EMP	—
Darkling	Difficult	Telepathy+ EMP	—
Dark Lord, ghost/spirit	Formidable	Telepathy+ EMP	—
Dark Master	—	—	Not Possible (no brain to read)

Teleportation

Task	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
DimWalk (Teleportation)	Difficult	DimWalk(Teleportation) + EMP	—

FOREWORD





SORCERY

Sorcery is perhaps the one empathic school most shrouded in mystery. Images of sorcery are full of strange symbols and bizarre paraphernalia, of obscure and fearful rites and ceremonies to unleash titanic powers. Essentially, sorcery is nothing more than the masterful manipulation of the empathic power Dimension Walk. The skill revolves around the sorcerer's ability to open portals between Earth and one or more proto-dimensions. By doing this, he can travel between proto-dimensions, and bring things from one proto-dimension into another.

Note: No user of Dimension Walk or any of its cascades can enter, look into, or otherwise observe or manipulate a proto-dimension unless the user is familiar with that proto-dimension. This means that the user must either have been taken to that proto-dimension by someone or something else, or a complete enough psychic impression must have been transferred to the user by means of project thought or a similar empathic means. One visit is enough, and the visit can be voluntary (during empathic training) or involuntary (kidnapping by Dark Minions, etc.). The user must remain at least five seconds in the proto-dimension in order to gain a sufficient psychic impression to be able to return.

The Origins of Sorcery

The origin of sorcery dates back to the earliest appearance of humanity. At this time, humans were primitive hunters and gatherers, using tools of wood and chipped stone. To these people, the entire world was a place of magic. Not understanding their environment, they revered the elements as gods and paid tribute to them in the hope of appeasing their anger. Through this worship of the world in its raw and natural state, the first sorcerers were born. These men and women, who worshiped the spirits of the land, learned to communicate with the spirits, and these spirits began to teach the early sorcerers. These first sorcerers were pleased and felt honored. Their peers, viewing this new force, realized the power which these first sorcerers held and obeyed

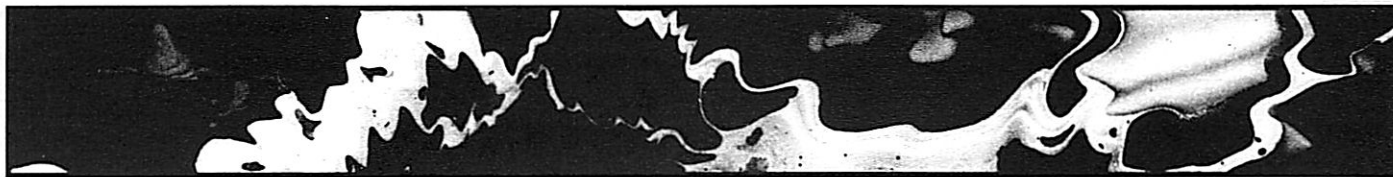
their words out of fear and respect. Thus the order of the new world was established, with the sorcerers taking the positions of shamans and soothsayers within their primitive tribes. What the sorcerers did not know was that these "spirits of the land" whose attention they had gained were far from benevolent creatures. In actuality these spirits were Darklings, rare ones who slipped in from another proto-dimension (dealt with in more detail in the *Proto-Dimensions Sourcebook: Volume I*). These beings were few, relatively weak (for Darklings), and rarely (if ever) cooperated with each other, often fighting among themselves for the rich prize that the Earth represented.

These beings saw in humanity a great potential for evil and suffering, the food of the Dark Masters. A few sorcerers succumbed to the allure of power and became Dark Minions. But most sorcerers came to realize that the spirits could be treacherous, and should be dealt with cautiously.

In time, sorcerers began to see how they had been used by the spirits in order to manipulate humanity. With this realization, two groups evolved among sorcerers: the Free Sorcerers and the Charons (both of these labels are later appellations). The Free Sorcerers chose to reject the Dark Ones (although they sometimes still dealt with other beings from other proto-dimensions), while the Charons choose to subjugate themselves to the Dark Ones in return for that power, knowing there would be a terrible price to pay, but hoping to avoid it. (Note that there is no formal organization to either group.)

During the Middle Ages, the secrets and methods of true sorcery were nearly lost. The faithful managed to preserve the truth of sorcery, waiting for a time when it could be practiced openly. In the meantime, garbled and fanciful accounts of sorcery were generally accepted as the truth, and the world came to scorn it as myth and nonsense.

Today, with the encroachment of the Dark Ones into the world, the sorcerers have opened their books and tomes to the light again to combat the otherworldly beings that threaten the total enslavement of humanity. Although greatly diminished in



terms of influence and magical aptitude, the modern sorcerers still preserve the ancient rituals and incantations laid down centuries ago.

The Source of Power

Among those who know of the existence of sorcerers, it is a common misconception that these individuals create their magic from their own minds, in a similar process to those who exhibit empathic abilities. No human being has the capability to create such displays of raw energy from within. A sorcerer opens a portal to another proto-dimension, and can bring parts of that proto-dimension to Earth, altering the environment at will. Each time this is done, the boundaries between proto-dimensions weaken slightly, and it becomes easier to work sorcery at that particular spot.

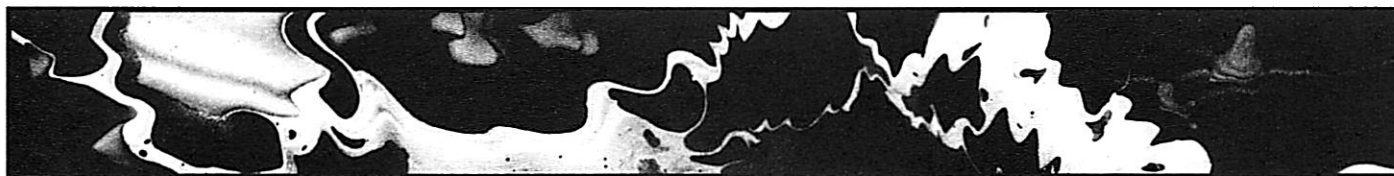
There are sites on the planet where the boundaries between proto-dimensions are weakened by centuries of sorcerous practice. These sites were marked long ago by the sorcerers who used them,

sometimes by megaliths (such as those at Stonehenge or Carnac in Europe), sometimes by other means (such as the petroglyphs of the American southwest, or the rock paintings of the Australian aborigines). At these sites it is much easier to do sorcery because sorcery has been done there for so long (creating a "which-came-first-the-chicken-or-the-egg" tautology). If care is not taken, such sites will become Demonground, where the boundaries between proto-dimensions are very porous. Demonground is the preferred venue for sorcery by Charons, but the power of Demonground is wild and uncontrolled, endangering sorcerers by its unpredictability, and Free Sorcerers avoid it whenever possible.

The Sorcerer's Life

Sorcerers are a secretive and mysterious group, never staying in one location for any length of time. They cannot, for to remain in one place is to risk the possibility of detection by the Dark Ones.





Also, sorcerous powers weaken the "walls" between proto-dimensions, as noted above, and careless use of their talents can create Demonground.

For these reasons, sorcerers lead their lives on the road, moving from town to town in constant flight from the minions of their enemies. However miserable this existence may seem to the normal folk who strive to settle down, this life suits the needs and desires of the sorcerers. They thrive upon the discovery of new sights and possible sources of learning to feed their sorcerous habits. In addition, they are more likely to encounter people of their own kind while travelling, and learn of the latest developments in both the magical and mundane world. In years past, sorcerers could be found among Gypsies, carnies (carnival performers), and other itinerants. Nowadays, they are as likely to be found among bikers or interstate truck drivers.

In many cases, these sorcerers will join forces with others fighting the invasion of the Dark Ones. They will often act as messengers from enclave to enclave or, in more extreme cases, as active hunters of Dark Minions. While this may seem an almost suicidal move, considering their value to the Dark Ones, the sorcerers are among the few members of humanity capable of combating the unseen enemy. Ultimately, the sorcerer may be the most powerful empath, but the dangers of being a sorcerer are just as great as the power.

Sorcery and the Dark Masters

Sorcerers practice their art by breaking the barriers between proto-dimensional reality. This act creates a disruption pattern throughout space/time, like the ripples of a rock thrown into still water. The longer the period of time spent piercing the proto-dimensional barrier, the larger the rock, so to speak, and the larger and more widely spread the ripples. Sorcerers who spend too much time at their craft will eventually attract the attention of the Dark Masters.

Many of the Dark Masters see sorcerers as possible tools, if corrupted, and as enemies to be destroyed if they cannot be corrupted. Some Dark Masters see them as complete foes, and a few see

them as abominations, upstarts intruding on their self-proclaimed territory of proto-dimensional shifting. These Dark Masters seek to consume sorcerers' essence, thus gaining power and sustenance. No Dark Master wants sorcerers to remain free. In the past, some sorcerers have succeeded in defeating and imprisoning Dark Masters; numerous creation myths hint at these titanic struggles and the defeat of primordial chaos (a good description of Dark Masters). These are the Masters who despise and fear sorcerers, and all Dark Masters have a healthy respect for their powers.

What makes the situation worse is that the Dark Masters and humanity appear to be the only two species (using the term loosely) capable of sorcerous feats. No Dark Minion race can use sorcery. Only humans turned to Dark Ones can wield this power for the Masters. Human sorcery experts have hazarded that the reason stems from Earth's unique position as a crossroads of proto-dimensional probability, coexisting as it does with an unknown number of other realities and partial realities. Humanity, the children of Earth, seem to share the odd power that comes with this proximity, representing one of the few natural powers capable of defeating the Dark Masters. With this knowledge, the Darkling invasion of Earth takes on a slightly more hopeful tone, for some day humanity could incarcerate the Masters once and for all.

Because of this, Dark Minions actively hunt sorcerers, more than any other kind of empath. They will respond to the empathic disturbance caused by the sorcerer's art, and attempt to capture or slay the sorcerer. Sorcerers must be wary, lest they linger too long and fall prey to these alarmed servants.

The Dangers of Sorcery

The first lesson a sorcerer is taught is the danger that accompanies the study and utilization of sorcery. This is considered to be an essential part of sorcerers' training, for only when they have learned to respect the power that sorcerers can wield, can they truly master its use. As sorcery is an empathic skill which operates by manipulating the bound-



aries between proto-dimensions, it is obviously a skill inherently fraught with great danger. There is always the possibility that the tension created when a sorcerer opens a portal will be too much for the sorcerer and the stress will backlash. (The threat of backlash is also one of the hazards of sorcery; it is dealt with in the "Sorcerous Powers" section, below.) When small portals are opened or a portal remains open for a short period of time, then it is a relatively easy task for sorcerers to work their craft. But when they try more ambitious tasks, the risk of backlash increases quickly. This occurrence usually involves a great deal of physical pain (and often death) on behalf of the sorcerer and possibly to those in the immediate vicinity.

Another danger that the use of sorcery incurs is the threat of the Dark Ones. The Dark Ones have no means of identifying or locating sorcerers, until they use sorcery. At this point sorcery (or, rather, the use of the Dimension Walk skill) becomes a beacon. As was mentioned earlier, manipulating the boundaries between proto-dimensions causes a stress

which results in "ripples" among the proto-dimensions. These ripples can be detected and their source pinpointed by the Dark Ones, allowing them to dispatch their minions to deal with the sorcerous threat. Minor sorceries result in only small ripples that are virtually impossible for the Dark Ones to detect, but a greater sorcery will be like a lighthouse on a moonless night or a fire siren in a library. Many sorcerers refuse to perform feats that require excessive proto-dimensional stress, for fear of being discovered.

Other empathths need to be circumspect in their use of Dimension Walk, as they too can be detected. Sorcerers, however, are particularly at risk, as all of their abilities are related to Dimension Walk in some form or another.

For campaign purposes, the referee should not worry about empathic players attracting attention every time they attempt to use Dimension Walk, but the referee should occasionally have minions show up unless the empath is very cautious. These minor incidents will keep the danger in the mind of the player without greatly slowing down play. However,

should empathths carelessly flaunt their abilities, or attempt to wield them when a powerful minion is close by, then the referee should check on the Dimension Walk Detection Table to see if the empath has attracted undesirable attention. The player must make a Dimension Walk skill test to avoid detection. Nonsorcerers will only use the last four entries of the table.

Note: In order to maintain the atmosphere of the game, all empathic success rolls are to be made by the referee and kept secret from the player. PCs should know they have succeeded, but they should not know the exact stage until they attempt to exploit it, or their success is revealed by events.

Dimension Walk Detection Table

<i>Situation</i>	<i>Task Difficulty</i>
Sorcerous Combat (atmosphere, gravity, temperature)	Easy
Sorcerous Combat (special)	Difficult
Sorcerous Flight for less than 15 minutes	Easy
Sorcerous Flight for more than 15 minutes	Average
Sorcerous Telekinesis	Average
Dimension Walk in same proto-dimension	Average
Extended Dimension Walk in same proto-dimension	Difficult
Dimension Walk to another proto-dimension	Difficult
Extended Dimension Walk to another proto-dimension	Formidable

Sorcerous Combat: Using sorcerous powers affecting atmosphere, gravity, or temperature in a combat situation.

Sorcerous Combat (Special): Using fire or lightning in combat. This manipulation is much finer and much more powerful, and is easily noticed.

Sorcerous Flight and Telekinesis: These are very fine manipulations of dimensional interfaces, and have a distinct pattern that alerts those cognizant of sorcery to their use.

Dimension Walk: The farther and longer you go, the more impact it has on the proto-dimensional fabric, and the more noticeable it is. The term "same proto-dimension" indicates portals opened on the same dimension for the purposes of speeding travel or avoiding obstacles. The term "another proto-dimension" involves opening a portal to another proto-dimension to observe or interact with it.



For example, Kathy the sorcerer intends a short journey to a proto-dimension she knows to contain no breathable gases. In order for her to survive for very long, she must successfully alter her immediate environment using Change Environment (Atmosphere). Kathy will know she has replaced at least 10% of the atmosphere with something breathable, but she will not know exactly how much until she gets there and starts breathing.

Sorcery and Other Empathic Disciplines

Sorcery is the most flexible of empathic disciplines, in that it agrees with the positions of both scientific psionics and inexplicable mysticism. Sorcery has long had a mystical background, based on ritual, religion, and superstition. This allows a sorcerer to perfectly understand the heart of mysticism, for like a mystic, a sorcerer acts as a part of the infinite universe within and without. Put simply, a mystic realizes the power inherent in creation, and a sorcerer harnesses a bit of it and uses it like a tool.

Sorcery and psionics have common ground, too. To a psionic, a sorcerer merely uses a latent human power to connect different probabilities together. Likewise, sorcerers trained to the rote functions of dimension walking manipulations find the willpower training and routine patterns of psionics familiar.

A character with the psionic discipline may not learn mysticism. A character with the mystic discipline may not learn psionics. Either character can learn sorcery. A sorcerer can learn either psionics or mysticism, not both.

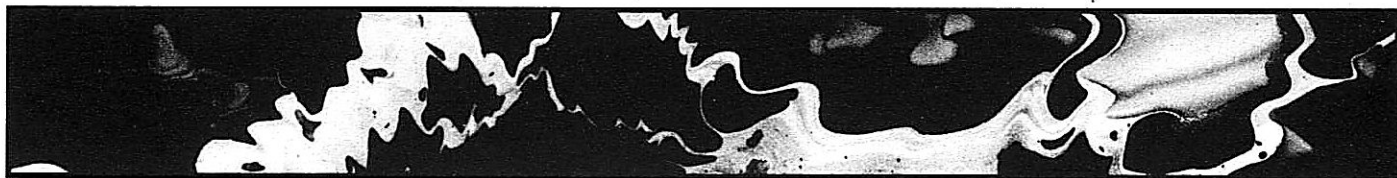
Charons

These are individuals who make a bargain with the Dark Ones in return for learning sorcery. They are described in greater detail in the *Dark Races Compendium, Volume 1*. One important addition to their skills is that they usually have skill level 4-8 in mystic and sorcerous disciplines, which makes them very dangerous indeed.

The price that all Charons pay for their knowledge







is steep. An individual becomes a Charon by mentally contacting a Dark Master and pledging oneself to the Dark One. Many would-be Charons die during the attempt to contact a Dark One. Many of those who do manage to make contact are overwhelmed by the experience. The minds of these individuals are destroyed by the insanity and alien nature of the Dark Ones. Even those "fortunate" enough to survive contact without having their minds destroyed suffer from at least some minor insanity. The more powerful the Charon, the less sane they are.

SORCEROUS POWERS

All sorcerous powers derive from the empathic skill Dimension Walk. However, while any empath may have and use the Dimension Walk skill, only sorcerers may learn and use the cascade skills listed below. Most of them have a backlash included, a penalty for failure which is often less forgiving than normal Catastrophic Failure penalties.

Change Environment (Atmosphere, Gravity, Temperature): This is largely a combat skill, where the sorcerer weakens the barriers between proto-dimensions and "borrows" some of the conditions there, bringing them to the proto-dimension he currently occupies. With this skill, a sorcerer can alter the content of the air, the atmospheric temperature, and the gravity in a confined area. The skill can also be used as a sort of emergency life-support, in essence bringing one's environment along on a trip.

This skill requires a great deal of controlled, focused power which sends a clear signal to the Dark Ones. It is treated as "Sorcerous Combat" for purposes of Darkling detection. Change Environment effects a spherical area, with a radius equal to the sorcerer's Change Environment skill level in meters.

Using the skill in combat or for other brief bursts of time requires skill tests at normal empathic skill difficulty levels. Using the skill for extended periods of time is easier, starting at Easy for the first environment change and becoming one difficulty level harder for each additional environment change. Furthermore, the sorcerer must make a successful Change Environment skill test every 15 minutes or

lose the dimensional merging—conditions revert to original environment. The sorcerer may not use any other empathic power while maintaining this changed environment (also see the **Proto-Dimensions Sourcebook**, Vol. I for further discussion of the use of this skill).

For instance, if Roman is venturing through a proto-dimension of fire, and doesn't want to burn, he lowers the temperature by reaching into a proto-dimension of extreme cold. He also brings along some of Earth's atmosphere so he can breathe. This is two environments, so every 15 minutes he has to succeed at an Average: Change Environment test to retain his more hospitable pocket environment.

Changing environments for extended lengths of time can achieve the following effects:

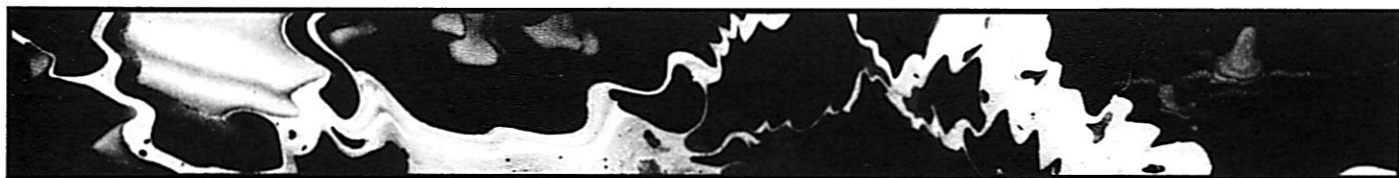
Atmosphere: Merge the normal atmosphere with another, up to a 90% mix. In short, Roman's trek through Hades isn't that pleasant; 10% of the air he breathes is the natural sulfuric smoke of the proto-dimension. Of course, it's better than smothering.

Gravity: A change of up to 5 Gs is possible when lessening the gravity, or up to 20 Gs when making it heavier. Some places just have too high a gravity for humans. A G is an Earth standard gravity, representing an acceleration of 9.8 meters (32 feet) per second².

Temperature: As the ranges of temperature among the proto-dimensions approaches the infinite, temperature can always be altered to fit the sorcerer's wishes.

Catastrophic Failure while trying to change environments for an extended period causes a backlash upon the sorcerer and anyone else within a radius in meters equal to the sorcerer's Change Environment skill. The exact effects are up to the referee, but they only last for one combat phase. Treat the backlash as a Change Environment attack of the appropriate type, below. This means that a backlash on an extreme Change Environment use can be lethal.

Change Environment can be used in combat, with the following effects. These effects can be sustained, as the sorcerer concentrates on keeping the dimensional mix. However, the sorcerer may not make any other attacks or use any other empathic powers while using Change Environment, although



a sorcerer may increase the effects of an attack (for instance, continuing to raise gravity and/or alter temperature in the same area).

Atmosphere: Each stage of success replaces 10% of the atmosphere within the effective radius with an equal quantity from another proto-dimension (note that this 10% could also be vacuum). By changing the atmosphere, a sorcerer can blind his foes (smoky, hazy, or otherwise opaque atmosphere) or choke his victims (depending on the toxicity of the changed atmosphere, the victims could be poisoned, choke, or even drown). The referee decides the exact effects.

Gravity: Each stage of success raises or lowers the gravity by 1 G within the effective radius. By raising the gravity, a sorcerer can slow and even crush his enemies. At 2 Gs, movement is halved and physical tasks are two levels more difficult. At 3 Gs, movement is quartered and physical tasks are three levels more difficult. At 4 Gs, only crawling movement is possible, and physical tasks are four levels more difficult. At 5+ Gs, movement and physical tasks are impossible. At 7-10 Gs, anyone inside the enhanced gravity field must pass a Difficult: Constitution test each combat turn or pass out. In addition to this test, victims at 10+ Gs take 1D6 damage per G over 10 to their chest location each turn. For example, a person trapped at 14 Gs takes 4D6 damage to the chest location each turn. These conditions may be altered for creatures adapted to higher gravities. By lowering the gravity, a sorcerer can suspend a target, slowing movement to a crawl (it is hard to move fast when each step hurls you several feet into the air) and making all physical tasks two difficulty levels higher.

Temperature: Each stage of success raises or lowers the temperature 5° Celsius (9° Fahrenheit) within the effective radius. At greater than 40° or less than 10° Celsius (from 50° to 104° Fahrenheit), humans find all physical tasks to be one level of difficulty higher. At greater than 60° or less than -20° Celsius (140° to -4° Fahrenheit), humans find all physical tasks to be two levels of difficulty higher, and must make a Difficult: Con-

stitution test each combat turn to avoid passing out from either heat or cold. Temperature changes can be compensated for with appropriate clothing and/or equipment (such as good winter gear, or an "ice-box").

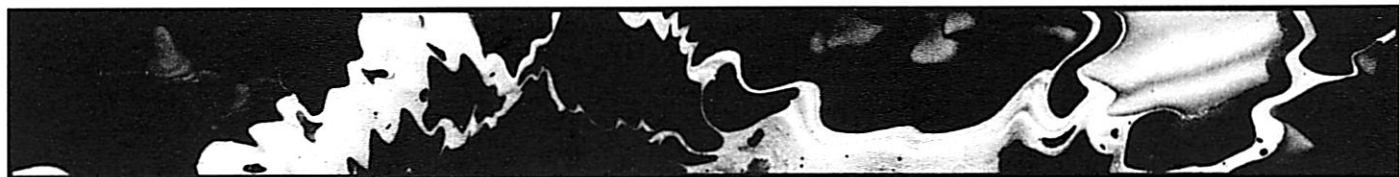
Should a sorcerer roll a Catastrophic Failure while using this skill to attack, only the sorcerer suffers the effects projected.

Change Environment (Special): This is a separate cascade from Dimension Walk. It involves reaching into the appropriate proto-dimension and "pulling out" radiant energy to hurl at one's foes. It is tricky, and since it's usually done during combat, where the best difficulty level the sorcerer is likely to find is Difficult, it can be fatal to the user. To make matters worse, it is so unique a form of dimensional exchange that it is easily noticed by the Darklings, and has its own separate listing when checking for Darkling detection.

Sorcerers can hurl pure fire or lightning at their foes, out to a range of their power level. Each stage of success can be used to do one of the following: (1) Attack the given target with a 1D6 damage attack, or (2) increase the volume of a given attack by the sorcerer's Change Environment (special) skill level in meters. For instance, Roman the sorcerer has Change Environment (special) skill at 10. He hurls a fireball at his foes, and rolls a power level of 12, for a 12-meter range and Stage Two success. He can either damage one foe for 2D6 damage, or damage all foes within a 10-meter radius for 1D6 damage.

No armor except for vehicle armor and other highly sealed suits (like a vacuum or undersea hardsuit) reduces damage from these attacks. Treat fire and lightning attacks as having a Penetration of 1.

Fire and lightning have their own special effects. Targets hit by fire may burn, at the referee's discretion. If they start burning, they suffer fire effects as per Dark Conspiracy, pages 97-98. Electrical devices hit by lightning will be destroyed (their circuitry burnt out), unless they are grounded, on a D10 roll of 9 or less. Flammable objects hit by lightning will ignite on a D10 roll of 1. In addition,

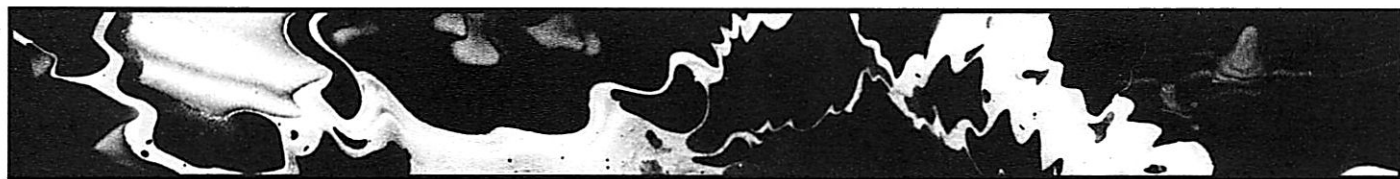


living beings hit by lightning are automatically knocked down and must pass an Average: Constitution test to remain conscious. At the referee's discretion, a panic test may be required of all targets of fire or lightning.

Backlash from this skill occurs with a Catastrophic Failure or a natural die roll of 19-20. This inflicts (10 minus skill level) D6s of damage of the appropriate type on the sorcerer. Example: Roman has a Change Environment (special) skill of 6 and rolls a 20. He suffers (10-6=) 4D6 damage when his lightning rebounds back upon him.

Close Portal: This is when one sorcerer wishes to close the portal of another. The sorcerer must obtain a success stage equal to or greater than that of the agency opening the portal (treat ET mechanically opened portals as Stage Six) to close the portal.

(Closing a permanent portal requires a Stage Six success, plus the destruction of the physical portal—see *Proto-Dimensions Sourcebook*, Vol. I for details.) This skill allows the sorcerer to close portals opened by enemies, thus preventing their escape or entry. It also allows the sorcerer to end Change Environment attacks (page 74) by rolling a stage of success equal to or greater than the Change Environment success stage of the attacker. This stops the atmosphere, gravity, or temperature effects of the attack immediately upon success, and conditions revert to normal. Close Portal cannot counteract the Change Environment (Special) ability (page 75). Using this skill is very picturesque; radiant lines of force connect the sorcerer and portal as he tries to overpower it. This power counts as "Sorcerous Combat (special)" when testing for Darkling detection.



Backlash from this power occurs when the sorcerer closing the portal fails to succeed in overpowering the portal. The difference between success stages is applied in D6 damage to the sorcerer as overall body damage. For instance, Roman is attempting to close a Stage Five portal. Unfortunately, he only manages a Stage Two success, so he takes 3D6 damage divided equally between his seven body locations as he is wrapped in fierce energy. Had he failed to attain even Basic Success with his Close Portal test, he would have taken 5D6 damage (Stage Five minus "Stage Zero" in D6 damage).

This is a degraded form of that power the Dark Masters most fear, the ability to wall off a portal.

Dimension Walk: This skill is as described in *Dark Conspiracy*, page 210. The individual with this power or skill can open a portal to another proto-dimension. The term "portal" is a loose definition. The nature of a portal varies with the desires of the sorcerer. Sometimes it is a clearly visible gate, with the proto-dimension destination visible through the gate. Other times the portal is an area visible only to the sorcerer—an area where the dimensional boundaries are weak, allowing him to step through. In such cases, it will appear as if the sorcerer disappeared into thin air. The duration that the portal remains open varies with the power level of the successful task. Stage One successes result in portals open just long enough for the creator to be instantly drawn through. Stage Two successes result in portals which can be held open for one phase. A portal can be held open for two phases on a Stage Three success. If a Stage Four success is obtained, the portal will remain open for a number of phases equal to the skill level. Stage Five doubles this time. Permanent portals can be made with a Stage Six success (see *Proto-Dimensions Sourcebook*, Vol. I for details on how this is accomplished).

The most common use for dimension walking is to speed up transit from one place on Earth to another. There are many undeveloped proto-dimensions where time and distance are different from Earth, but can connect with Earth. These places allow swift travel, some as much as a 10-1

speed (one hour's travel takes you 10 times as much distance at the exit point). There is usually no other use for these time-enhancing voids. (Warning: These places are not safe. Darklings use them for the same purpose, and are usually better at it.)

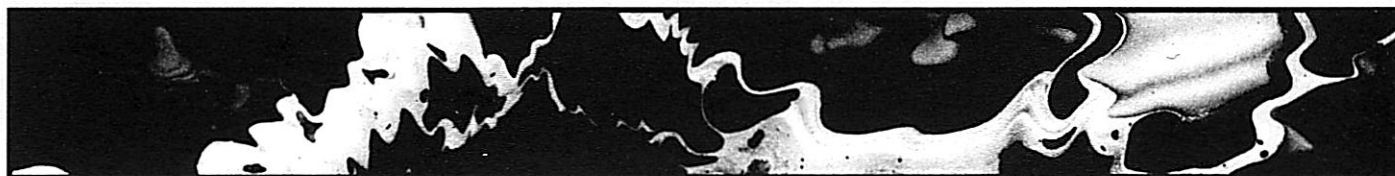
The second use for Dimension Walk is to travel to fully developed proto-dimensions for the purpose of accomplishing something other than just travelling through them. A normal dimension walker can do this, but a sorcerer is much more proficient.

A sorcerer can open a visual portal, a virtual peephole, and scan the nearby proto-dimensions. This is treated as "Dimension Walk to another dimension" for purposes of Darkling detection, and allows the sorcerer to see what's in the proto-dimensional neighborhood, in order to go to the right place.

A sorcerer can open a normal travelling portal to one of the undeveloped travelling proto-dimensions at one level of difficulty less than normal; if the Difficulty was already Easy, it becomes Automatic. This makes a sorcerer a handy travelling companion when you want to save time or fuel.

Likewise, a sorcerer can travel in short hops, staging from one proto-dimension to another, since some proto-dimensions can't be reached without passing through others. The referee decides how many proto-dimensions the sorcerer has to travel through, and the sorcerer makes a separate Dimension Walk test for each, at one level of difficulty less than normal; Easy becomes Automatic. The danger is that the sorcerer has to wait for as many minutes equal to 20 minus his Dimension Walk skill (20–Dimension Walk) between hops, empathically recalculating his next jump. During this time, the inhabitants have a chance to make the sorcerer's acquaintance, something that the sorcerer may not find desirable. This counts as "Dimension Walk to another dimension" for purposes of Darkling detection.

During Dimension Walk operations, a Catastrophic Failure means that the sorcerer has tapped into the wrong dimension, usually totally at random, and stable for 1D20 turns—that means the portal

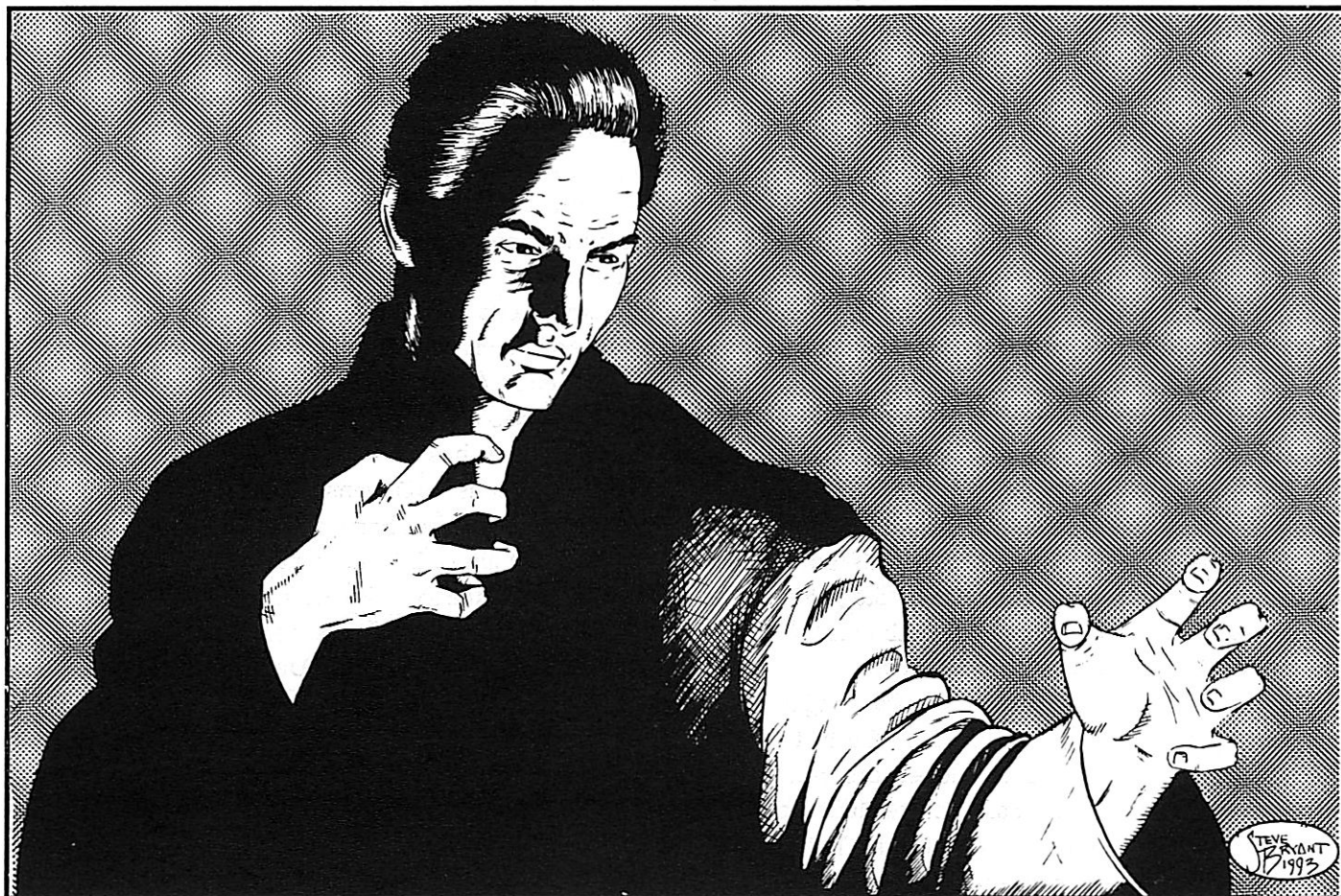


will be there for 30 seconds to 10 minutes, and things can pass through it, both ways. The exception to this is during the "peephole" Dimension Walk, where it means that the "peephole" expands to a full-sized portal on the other side for 1D20 turns, so things can come through to the sorcerer, but he can't go through to the dimension and still sees a "peephole."

Phase: This is perhaps one of the most useful skills. Likewise, it is also one of the most difficult. It involves the sorcerer opening a portal to another proto-dimension, but not fully entering it, rather remaining balanced between proto-dimensions in a condition known as the out-of-phase state. If done properly, it conveys certain advantages upon the sorcerer: First, the sorcerer is immune to physical attacks from either proto-dimension (not being in either proto-dimension). Second, the sorcerer may

at any time choose to step all the way through into either proto-dimension. However, phasing sorcerers may still act and be acted upon empathically. Phasing completely into one dimension or the other, or entering the Phase state, takes an entire five-second action, but maintaining an out-of-phase state does not take an action. In order to use the Phase skill, the sorcerer must successfully make a Phase task at two levels greater than situational difficulty would call for. The length of time a sorcerer may remain out-of-phase is determined in the same manner as Dimension Walk portal duration (see above), but using time units of 30-second turns instead of five-second phases. Once out-of-phase, sorcerers remain in it without concentration, and may use other empathic skills.

While out-of-phase, sorcerers may walk through walls and other solid obstacles. However, because





of their immateriality, they cannot climb stairs, go up elevators, or otherwise walk on anything but the ground, because they can't touch anything not existent in both dimensions. This assumes that both dimensions share roughly the same ground topography. Most phasing sorcerers who want to leave ground level use their sorcerous ability to fly (see next entry). For example, a sorcerer in a high-rise building who phases will drop through the floor unless he happens to be flying when he enters the out-of-phase state. Phasing counts as "Extended Dimension Walk in a different dimension" for the purpose of Darkling detection.

Phasing backlash is hideous. A sorcerer who rolls a Catastrophic Failure when phasing partially enters both dimensions, then exits abruptly before completely phasing. This can result in the sorcerer leaving body parts and internal organs in the wrong place when phasing back in. The sorcerer suffers 1D6xD6 damage to one random hit location. If the damage suffered reaches Critical damage level, the body part so damaged is severed, left in the other dimension.

Sorcerous Flight: This is a very carefully controlled use of gravity manipulation. The sorcerer manipulates another proto-dimension's gravity to levitate and move about. Taking off requires an Average: Sorcerous Flight test. Once take-off has been achieved, sorcerers do not have to test again unless their concentration is disturbed (by being wounded, panicked, or fear-stricken, etc.) or they have to make a difficult or tricky maneuver (changing direction abruptly, stopping suddenly, etc.). If the sorcerer's concentration is disturbed, the sorcerer has to pass a Difficult: Sorcerous Flight test or fall. If the sorcerer has to make a hard maneuver, the referee determines if he makes the maneuver first, setting the difficulty level for a Sorcerous Flight or Agility test (whichever is higher), then the sorcerer makes an Average: Sorcerous Flight test to remain in the air.

Flying sorcerers (pun *not* intended) can move at a speed of 3 times their Sorcerous Flight skill in meters per turn. Altitude is gained at the expense of forward movement.

Backlash for Sorcerous Flight varies. Sorcerers who fail their initial Sorcerous Flight tests become dizzy from the momentary gravity change and can't take any further actions that turn (except for falling prone or hiding behind something). Catastrophic Failure causes the sorcerer to rocket 3D6 meters into the air, then fall.

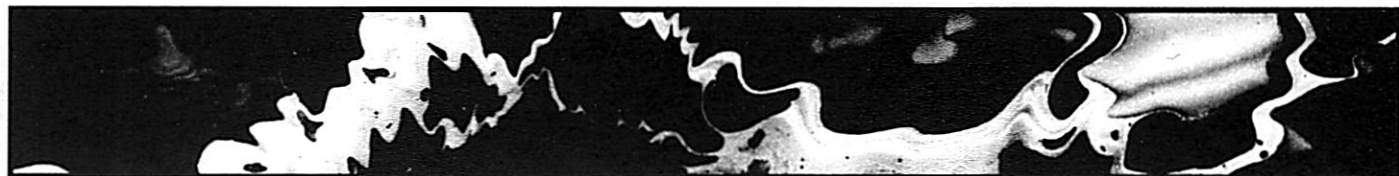
Sorcerous Telekinesis: Sorcerous Telekinesis is another tricky and delicate use of controlled gravity manipulation. The sorcerer must juggle the gravity around the object being moved, maintaining a fragile and sometimes unpredictable gravity bubble. This method is crude and can only cause objects to move; it cannot be used to manipulate moving parts, just to transport an object. Where the psionic picks up and manipulates items at a distance without any problem, the sorcerer struggles to gently float a feather across a meter of space.

The sorcerer's telekinesis has a range equal to the Sorcerous Telekinesis skill in meters. Telekinesis is rendered more difficult by the amount of movement needed rather than by the amount of weight to be levitated. Simply levitating an object up to the sorcerer's range in meters across is an Average skill test. Moving an object is a Difficult skill test, and the object can be moved a number of meters per phase equal to the Sorcerous Telekinesis level. Both of these tests are made one level more difficult by great stress or combat, and are made two levels more difficult by incredible stress.

Note that an object's mass is of no concern to a sorcerer. A greater or lesser gravity nullification makes no appreciable difference to the final effect. The entire item must be no larger than the Sorcerous Telekinesis level in meters in any direction, however, or the telekinesis attempt simply can't work.

Backlash occurs when a Catastrophic Failure is rolled. The object to be levitated shoots 3D6 meters into the air, then falls back to the ground.

Despite its difficulty, Sorcerous Telekinesis can be an effective, if clumsy, weapon. A sorcerer with enough skill could comfortably lift a car, wobble it over a target, and let it fall.



SORCERY POWERS TABLES

Change Environment (Short Term)

<i>Task Type</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Total Security	Easy	Change Environment+EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Change Environment+EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Change Environment+EMP	—
Great Stress, Combat	Formidable	Change Environment+EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Change Environment+EMP	—

Change Environment (Extended)

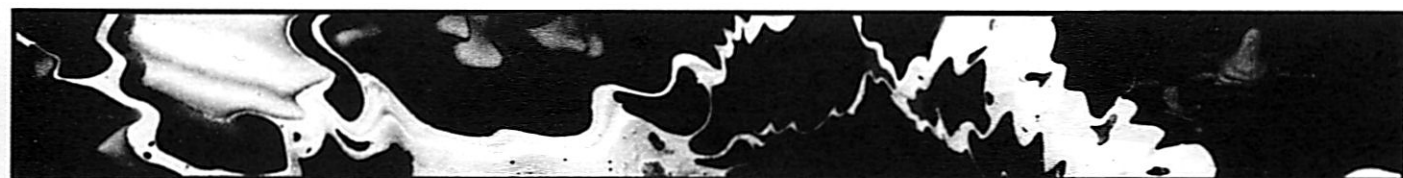
<i>Task Type</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Notes</i>
One Change	Easy	Change Environment+EMP	—
Two Changes	Average	Change Environment+EMP	—
Three Changes	Difficult	Change Environment+EMP	—
Four Changes	Formidable	Change Environment+EMP	—
Five Changes	Impossible	Change Environment+EMP	—

Change Environment (Special)

<i>Task Type</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Total Security	Easy	Change Environment(Special)+EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Change Environment(Special)+EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Change Environment(Special)+EMP	—
Great Stress, Combat	Formidable	Change Environment(Special)+EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Change Environment(Special)+EMP	—

Close Portal

<i>Task Type</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Total Security	Easy	Close Portal+EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Close Portal+EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Close Portal+EMP	—
Great Stress, Combat	Formidable	Close Portal+EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Close Portal+EMP	—



Dimension Walk

<i>Task Type</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Total Security	Easy	Dimension Walk + EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Dimension Walk + EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Dimension Walk + EMP	—
Great Stress, Combat	Formidable	Dimension Walk + EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Dimension Walk + EMP	—

Phase

<i>Task Type</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Total Security	Difficult	Phase + EMP	—
Relaxed	Formidable	Phase + EMP	—
Normal Stress	Impossible	Phase + EMP	—
Great Stress, Combat	—	—	Not Possible
Incredible Stress	—	—	Not Possible

Sorcerous Flight

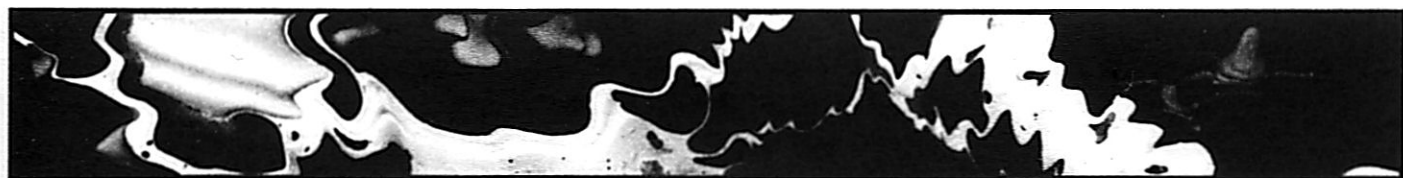
<i>Task Type</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Take-Off	Average	Sorcerous Flight + EMP	—
Remain Airborne	Average	Sorcerous Flight + EMP	Failure results in a fall
Concentration Disturbed	Difficult	Sorcerous Flight + EMP	Failure results in a fall
Tricky Maneuver	Difficult	Sorcerous Flight + EMP	Failure results in a fall

Sorcerous Telekinesis

<i>Task Type</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Simple Levitation	Average	Sorcerous Telekinesis + EMP	—
Other Movement	Difficult	Sorcerous Telekinesis + EMP	—

MYSTICS





The mystic discipline is the oldest of the empathic schools, beginning in prehistory. The first primitive shamanistic rituals were mystic in nature, possibly coupled with actual empathic ability. Cave paintings and their sympathetic magic were sophisticated evolutions of mysticism, the realization that everything in the universe was related, that all things, all life, were one. Any actual power of such cave paintings may have been sorcerous, but the underlying truth of mysticism had to be defined before sorcery could even be conceived.

Mysticism was, and is, the easiest of the empathic disciplines to understand. Unlike psionics, it requires no knowledge of the workings of the brain and the nervous system; nor does it need the intimate information on the composition and juxtaposition of reality necessary for dimension-spanning sorcery. All it requires is the admission that the universe within is as vast as the universe without, and that the two are the same; the mind is the universe, and the universe is the mind. From that point, all the truths of mysticism become self-evident, and all is revealed through exploration of one's self.

HISTORY

The mystic disciplines evolved into philosophies, and were adopted into religions. Even today, many religions of the East are still heavily influenced by the mystic doctrines.

But only the truly gifted could fully see the universe within and without; many were awakened, but they were still blind. The gifted learned to use their gifts to accomplish things that the blind could not. Unfortunately, some of the gifted used their sight for evil, and the discipline had to be hidden, for blind humans came to fear the sighted.

Still, the disciplines were preserved, often by religions—religious servants were often some of the few people who could find the time necessary to learn the disciplines correctly. Westerners heard the messages of the Eastern religions and carried mysticism to the West, returning it to the hills, shrines, and ancient monuments of the West's mystic past.

In the West, the philosophy of the physical took

over, pushing mysticism into obscurity. But even as the physicists scoffed at it as myth, superstition, and nonsense, some of them tried the discipline. Eventually, however, the physical won out, and Westerners built a world on its philosophy.

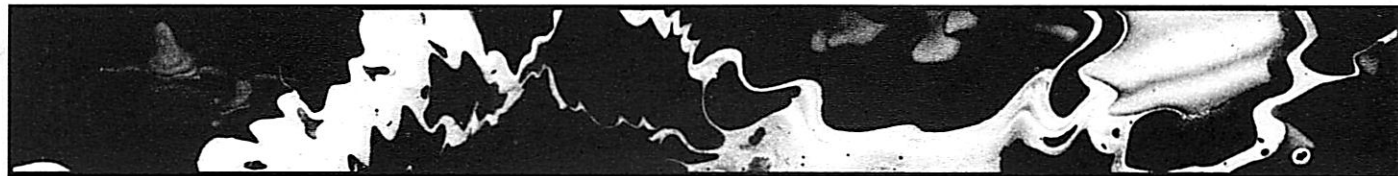
Then came the Dark Ones, myth and superstition made real. At the same time, many of the gifted came to light, those whose eyes could see the universe within. As phantasms and fearful fantasies arose to threaten the world, the priests of the physical flocked to embrace the mystical, at last convinced of its truth, and seeing it as another weapon to use against the Dark Ones.

MYSTICISM AND THE EMPATHIC UNDERGROUND

For centuries, the empathic underground consisted of the practitioners of mysticism. From the sacred monasteries of the Himalayas to the New Age "pyramid-power" shops of the United States, the truths and secrets of empathic ability were sustained, and even passed on to the public (although usually in mangled, perverted form). The mystics served as the base and the communications system of the loose brotherhood of those who could see the universe within, whether working as religious brothers or purveyors of pseudo-psychic pap. They avoided contact with scientists, knowing that there was no way to scientifically prove their discipline, and not really wishing it to be proved, clinically studied, and scientifically analyzed.

When the Dark Minions arrived, the mystics felt their coming—who could see the universe and miss such things? Galvanized by this, the mystics approached the scientists concerned with the Dark Invasion and offered their assistance. Perhaps the classic mystic, devoted to peace and tranquility, could not fight the Dark Minions as effectively as other empathes, but the mystics could provide great passive resistance, anchored firmly on their understanding of the cosmos and the universe within.

In the active empathic underground, the mystics serve largely as support rather than as active weap-



ons to destroy the Dark Minions. They are teachers, leading the gifted to understand the meaning of mysticism and teaching them the mysteries of the universe without and within. They are defenders: Whole remote villages and suburbs of mildly empathic mystics screen and shield empathic schools and research facilities from the psychic probes of the Dark Ones. They are sentinels, skilled mystics braving the new terrors that stalk the astral proto-dimension in order to scout out the intrusions of Dark proto-dimensions into Earth's reality, and report back to those who hunt the Dark Ones. Some are even minion hunters, seeking to cleanse the universe of the sores of Dark encroachment. Their aggression pains the elders of the discipline, for the true philosophy holds that the universe changes as it will, without paying attention to the wishes of presumptuous humanity. But the elders cannot deny the youths their fiery determination, knowing that submission to the Dark Ones is unthinkable.

MYSTIC TRAINING

The mystic arts and abilities are difficult to learn without a teacher, someone to guide the student along the path of enlightenment and knowledge. An empath can learn mystic disciplines and powers alone, but must spend three times as many experience points as normal to advance the skill. With a teacher, the skill costs are normal. Mystic teachers are solid empathic contacts.

Learning the mystic disciplines takes a long time and a lot of meditation. Mystic empaths spend at least an hour each day in meditation to maintain their connection with the universe within. Learning a new mystic skill takes 15 days, minus the character's INT level in days; at least eight hours of each of these days must be spent in teaching and meditation.

The following character careers may start with mystic skills and knowledge: mystic, psychic test subject, renegade ET.

MYSTIC POWERS

The ancient abilities of mysticism differ from the powers of sorcery and psionics in that all of them (except Dimension Walk, as noted below) involve the mystic leaving the body behind and moving the soul, the essence, beyond to accomplish the marvels only it can perform. To the mystic, the body is nothing more than a shell that supports the soul in the material world.

Some mystic skills are so simple that they require divorcing the mind from the body for only a split-second. Others require such concentration that the mystic must render the body catatonic in order to free the mind for the task at hand. Whether the mystic leaves the body for a second or a year, the body is uncontrolled, without direction or volition. It feels nothing, it perceives nothing, and its muscles go limp as soon as they obey the last order given—a mystic can “pop” in and out of the body for extremely short astral trips, and if the body is engaged in repetitive activity, it will continue the activity. For instance, walking mystics using the Third Eye (see below) to keep an eye on someone



following them would continue walking as long as they only took glances lasting less than a few seconds, and even then the body would be walking blind—liable to walk awry and collide with anything in the way. In a similar situation, mystics using the Third Eye power while speaking would slur their speech and lapse into the gibberish of fading consciousness until they returned to their body.

If a mystic divorces mind from body for more than three seconds, the body loses all power and collapses, only the autonomic nervous system still operating to maintain the body (breathing and heartbeat will be steady, but very, very slow).

Because of this, the mystic discipline does not easily adapt to the rigors of combat, when the body is in peril and consciousness must be maintained. Mystic powers are best used from a position of safety, where the mystic's body will be safe and undisturbed.

Note: All empathic success rolls are to be made by the referee and kept secret from the player. PCs should know they have succeeded, but they should not know the exact stage until they attempt to exploit it, or their success is revealed by events.

In the example of Empathic Healing, given below, Ahmed the mystic will know he has succeeded in reducing the healing time of his wounds, but he will not know exactly how much of a reduction he has achieved until the healing process progresses a bit.

Trances

In order to completely free the mind from the body, an empath trained in mystic disciplines can enter a trance state. This takes 30 seconds (one combat turn), and is accomplished without any skill test. As the mystic enters the trance, his body goes limp, heartbeat and respiration sink to minimums necessary to sustain life, and the mystic's body becomes completely helpless. It will remain so until the mystic returns mental control to the body, or until another consciousness seizes control of the deserted form.

While in the trance state, mystics find their abilities heightened, due to the lack of physical distractions.

All empathic ability scores are *doubled* while in a trance. In addition, a mystic's Initiative increases to his Intelligence+2 during the trance, unless the mystic's normal Initiative is higher. Some mystic skills require that the mystic enter a trance state in order to perform them (astral skills, for instance). Even with this requirement, the mystic's empathic skills are still doubled while in trance state.

Returning the mind to the body requires more effort than leaving it. In order to regain control of their body, mystics have to pass a Willpower test. If such mystics are unhurried and take their time, the process is Automatic and requires 30 seconds. If a mystic is in a hurry, the process is more difficult. A Willpower test is required, as revealed in the sidebar.

Returning to the Body

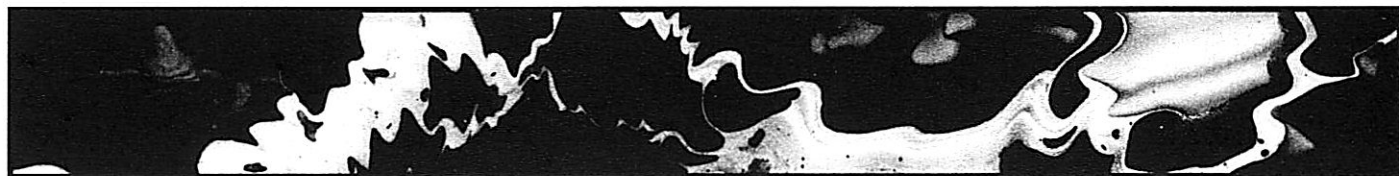
<i>Time to Regain Control</i>	<i>Difficulty*</i>
5 phases (25 seconds)	Easy
3 phases (15 seconds)	Average
2 phases (10 seconds)	Difficult
1 phase (5 seconds)	Formidable

*If the mystic is in empathic combat or under empathic attack at the time, the difficulty is one level higher.

A Catastrophic Failure to regain control of one's body can have severe consequences. If Catastrophic Failure occurs, roll on the Trance Catastrophic Failure table on the following page and subtract the mystic's Willpower skill from the roll.

A person in a trance will suffer from lack of food and water, but only requires one-tenth the sustenance. In short, a person in a trance can stay there for days without much trouble, but will be ravenous and terribly thirsty upon waking. Intravenous fluid and food supply will help prolong the amount of time a mystic can safely remain in a trance.

Suspended Animation: The trance state has one other ability, if the mystic needs to conserve body resources. Mystics can slow their body functions to near-death, so low that only sophisticated instruments can detect any life. Using this ability, mystics



Trance Catastrophic Failure

D20 System Roll

Consequence

1 or less	Stunned for 1 phase
2-9	Stunned for 1D6 phases
10-17	Unconscious for 1D6 hours
18-19	Catatonic for 1D6 days
20	Comatose*

*A person in a coma requires hospital life support and care. A mystic suffering from this condition may try to wake up. Once per week, the mystic may try a Difficult: Willpower test. If the mystic succeeds, he comes out of the coma.

The only way for an outsider to wake mystics who are unconscious, catatonic, or comatose is to enter their mind, find their consciousness, and guide it back to control. See Project Thought, below.

can reduce the need for oxygen, food, and water to nothing for up to EMP^2 years. The mystic still requires atmospheric pressure (although greatly reduced pressures—down to $\frac{1}{3}$ atmospheres—seem to have no adverse effect), and is vulnerable to being consumed by animals (but not bacteria) in the meantime, but time does not pass for such mystics, and when they wake, they will be the same as when they went into the trance, as long as no outside agency has disturbed their body in the meantime.

Waking from such a suspended animation trance is the same as regaining control from a normal trance, save that all time scales are multiplied by 360. For example, attempting an Average waking requires $(360 \times 15) = 5400$ seconds, or 90 hours—that's $3 \frac{3}{4}$ days. Small penalty to pay for having been preserved through time for years, or decades, however.

Animal Empathy

A mystic's ability to communicate with animals arises from the mystic's relationship with the unified whole of life—all living creatures are part of the brotherhood of life, and animals are simpler and closer to this spiritual whole than humans. Darkling creatures may be alive, but are so different from terrestrial life that contacting them requires a quite different discipline (Darkling Empathy).

Mystics can use Animal Empathy without entering a trance state, although a trance still has its beneficial effects when using the skill.

Computer Empathy

This skill is foreign to the mystic discipline. Mystic powers flow from life to life, and computers are the antithesis of life. Yet some note that the concentration of the true computer empathy is little different from the mystic's trance state.

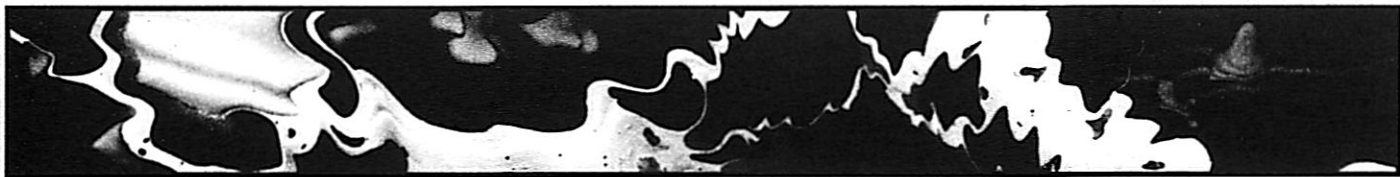
Knowledge of mystic disciplines can enhance Computer

Empathy, particularly when the computer is connected to another life, such as another computer empath or one of the alien biocomputers. If a computer empath is willing to enter a trance state when conducting Computer Empathy, he gains the benefits of the state (as well as the disadvantages). Strangely, a computer empath in trance state still retains posture and muscle control necessary to continue manipulating computer keys, a mouse, etc.

While in a trance state, a computer empath that contacts another life in the computer network may attempt life Empathy skills such as Human (and Darkling) Empathy and Project Emotion and Thought. The Computer Empathy serves as the connection through which these skills are transmitted.

Dimension Walk

This is one of the few skills in which mystics bring their body along. To a mystic, proto-dimensional travel is a matter of encouraging the segmented parts of the universal whole to become one for a space in time. The problem is the chance that the parts of the universe that appear may not be the ones the mystic was looking for. A mystic calling up another dimension with this skill makes an Average: Dimension Walk test after the portal has been created. If the test is successful, the portal created



leads to the dimension the mystic desired to enter. If unsuccessful, the portal leads to another proto-dimension altogether...

Mystics skilled in Astral Travel are more familiar with the proto-dimensions—after all, the astral proto-dimension is nothing more than a reflection of the universal whole, and many proto-dimensions link into it. When using Dimension Walk, they may use their Astral Travel skill instead of their Dimension Walk skill when determining if the portal is opened to the correct proto-dimension.

The trance state is useless to a mystic using Dimension Walk, unless the mystic has no intention of using the portal or is carried through it by others.

Use of the Dimension Walk skill or any of its cascade skills can attract the attention of the Darklings. Any mystic using any Dimension Walk-related skill (as noted in this chapter) must make a task roll to avoid detection (see the Dimension Walk Detection Table in the Sorcery chapter, page 72).

Note: No user of Dimension Walk or any of its cascades can enter, look into, or otherwise observe or manipulate a proto-dimension unless the user is familiar with that proto-dimension. This means that the user must either have been taken to that proto-dimension by someone or something else, or a complete enough psychic impression must have been transferred to the user by means of project thought or a

similar empathic means. One visit is enough, and the visit can be voluntary (during empathic training) or involuntary (kidnapping by Dark Minions, etc.). The user must remain at least five seconds in the proto-dimension in order to gain a sufficient psychic impression to be able to return.

Astral Travel: The classic mystic skill, Astral Travel allows a mystic to slip into the astral proto-dimension. The mystic school of thought holds that the astral proto-dimension is the binding force of the universe, where all of the universe truly becomes one. Since it is always nearby, a mystic can enter it easily.

Classic astral travel requires mystics to leave their body completely. This requires a trance, and a successful test of Astral Travel skill. (Astral Travel is a cascade from Dimension Walk, and Dimension





Walk can be substituted at one-half value if the mystic has no Astral Travel skill. This is not recommended, however, because the astral proto-dimension can be a very dangerous place.) The difficulty of the skill test depends on the circumstances (largely the haste of the entry into the astral proto-dimension). If a mystic is at peace and calm, the task is Easy and takes 30 seconds. If the mystic is wasting no time getting into the proto-dimension, the task is Average and takes 15 seconds. If the mystic is in a hurry, the task is Difficult and takes five seconds. If the mystic is emotionally upset (angry, sad, alarmed, etc.) the task is one level more difficult. If the mystic is affected by violent emotion (panic, rage, extreme grief, blind fear, etc.) the task is two levels more difficult.

Once in the astral proto-dimension, mystics can journey far from their bodies. Re-entering the body and regaining control is accomplished just like regaining control from a trance (since that's exactly what the mystic is doing). No matter how far mystics travel in the astral proto-dimension, their bodies are just a thought away, via psychic link. This link appears in the form of the classic "silver cord"—it doesn't really exist, being merely a mental reference in the existence of the astral proto-dimension. But other travellers in that proto-dimension can see it, too.

Astral travel allows a mystic to accomplish several effects normally associated with other psychic powers. For instance, mystics can mimic clairvoyance simply by sending their astral form to the appropriate place and observing. Postcognition and psychometry are duplicated by linking on to the mind of someone in the past and by following the psychic vibrations of the object in question back through previous time, respectively. Precognition is—for some reason not understood by mystics—not possible; psychic vibrations seem to hit a "wall" and stop in the direction of the future. See the astral proto-dimension, below, for more on the properties, perils, and mechanics of the astral proto-dimension.

"Third Eye" is not a separate skill, but a trick of Astral Travel. The mystic slips into the astral proto-dimension for a short time, allowing such persons to look into the astral proto-dimension and the real

world without turning their neck. The uses of this ability include parlor tricks such as blindfolded mystics seeing beyond the blindfold, describing items behind them, etc. Another less frivolous use is maintaining an astral watch—many Dark Minions resonate strongly in the astral proto-dimension, particularly those closely associated with "magic." Dark Minions without physical form, such as bleaks, ghosts, poltergeists, and so on, primarily exist in the astral proto-dimension, intruding on the "real" world to wreak their havoc. Such strong psyches cannot hide when viewed through astral eyes.

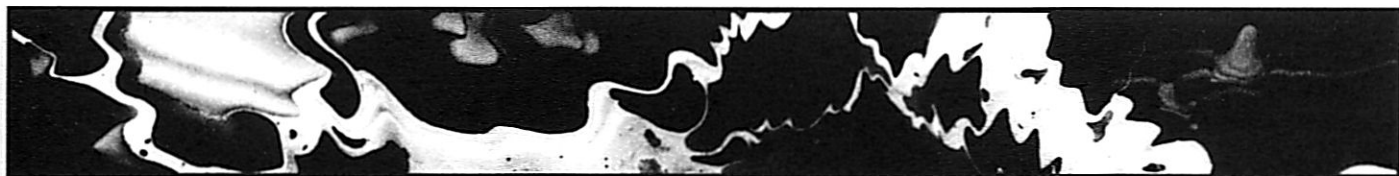
The Third Eye trick does require some skill. Slipping into the astral proto-dimension for a moment is no problem, but oscillating back and forth between the proto-dimension and one's body in order to maintain consciousness is. As stated earlier, if a mystic divorces mind from body for more than three seconds, the body loses all power and collapses. And if the mystic stays in the astral proto-dimension using the Third Eye for over 10 seconds, that person has to re-enter the body as if recovering from a trance, at one level of difficulty higher than normal.

In order to maintain a semblance of conscious control while using the Third Eye, mystics have to pass a normal Astral Travel test each time they pop back into the astral proto-dimension, modified as per the circumstances. Failing the test means that they didn't make it into the astral proto-dimension, and they are stunned for five seconds (one combat phase).

The Third Eye cannot be done while in a trance. Popping into the astral proto-dimension while in a trance is really Astral Travel.

Clairvoyance: This is a cascade of Dimension Walk. Anyone who can manage Astral Travel can fake clairvoyant abilities, and usually with more detail and success. However, Astral Travel requires a trance state, with its attendant drawbacks. Clairvoyance is done while the mystic is conscious, and doesn't take as long.

In order to use this skill, mystics must either know the location they are attempting to see/hear—knowing a location means the mystic must have



been there for at least an hour—or be able to link into a person at that location. Linking into a person is a (Clairvoyance+Human Empathy)+2 test: Easy if the mystic knows the person well, Average if the mystic has met and touched the person, Difficult if the mystic has only seen the person before, and Formidable if the mystic has never seen the person before.

Once the link is accomplished (or the mystic knows the place being seen/heard), a successful Clairvoyance task roll (difficulty according to circumstances) allows the mystic to see/hear what is transpiring at that location. If the mystic is using Clairvoyance without a link to a person on the scene, the mystic can see or hear the proceedings (the mystic may attempt to do both, but this makes the clairvoyance attempt one level more difficult). If the mystic has established a link through a person on the scene, the mystic sees and hears only what that person sees and hears—this may result in a very limited view of the action.

Clairvoyance is not normally detectable, but a mystic using the skill through a link with another person can be detected by another empath in empathic contact with that same person.

Once a mystic succeeds at establishing clairvoyant observation, there is no limit on the length of time the Clairvoyance can be maintained. If conscious, the mystic's body will tire and eventually run out of energy (i.e., the mystic will get tired and hungry, as well as suffering from other normal body functions). A link to another person will be broken if that target loses consciousness. But until the Clairvoyance is terminated, the mystic can observe what happens as it happens.

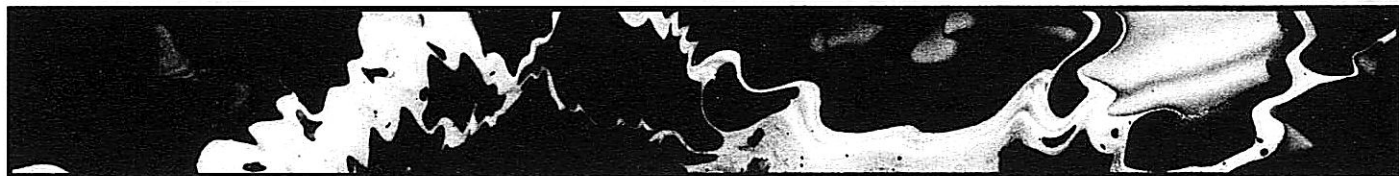
Psychometry: A cascade skill from Dimension Walk, psychometry allows the mystic to look into the past of an object, “reading” the shifting aura of timestream existence that accrues to all matter. Psychometry, like Clairvoyance, does not require Astral Travel and is relatively safe.

The process of Psychometry requires that the mystic touch the item being probed. (Trance state has the normal effects on the Psychometry skill.) A Psychometry task roll is required, with the difficulty

dependent on the amount of time the mystic wishes to probe back into the past. The amount of time the process takes is also dependent on this time-shift. To read the last hour of history is Easy and takes 30 seconds; to read the last day is Average and takes five minutes; to read the last week is Difficult and takes 30 minutes; to read the last year is Formidable and takes an hour. Reading any further back is Impossible and takes two hours for every 10 years.

Normally, a simple success allows the mystic to read the highlights of the object's history—as the past flashes before the mystic's senses in fast-motion, the mystic is able to remember only those occasions which most impressed him. An Outstanding Success means that the mystic can remember nearly every detail, and can “stop the film” and “rewind” back to review events of interest.





Empathic Healing

For a mystic, Empathic Healing is not the clinical directing of physical resources to injured areas. Instead, it is a concentration on returning the body to its whole, of directing it to restoring itself to a healthy image held in the mystic's mind. A mystic finds it difficult to heal just one area, but rather must heal the entire body at once.

Empathic Healing functions as described on page 59 of *Dark Conspiracy*, with the following additional changes: Mystics using Empathic Healing test only once for all wounds on the subject. Each wounded area after the first makes the test one level more difficult. They ignore the Human/Animal Empathy limit on healing wounds in others; instead, using Empathic Healing on another is an additional level of difficulty higher.

Like other empathic powers, Empathic Healing benefits from the advantages of the trance state. However, the advantages of the trance state are *doubled* for empathic self-healing—thus quadrupling the empath's effective skill+EMP. The disadvantage is that the empath must remain in the trance state for the duration of the healing period, as the concentration of the mind is dedicated exclusively to healing the body vessel. If the mystic fails to successfully speed his healing, the trance persists for the entire unmodified duration of the healing process, until the mystic is completely healed.

Example: Ahmed has suffered Serious wounds to both his legs and a Critical wound to an arm. His Empathic Healing skill+EMP is 14, and he finds a quiet place where he can concentrate on his task. This would normally make the difficulty Easy, but because he has three areas wounded, the difficulty becomes Difficult. He rolls a 1 (an Outstanding Success), and succeeds in generating a Stage Three success (skill+attribute of 14, plus a 1D10 roll of 6=20, minus his own Willpower skill+INT of 8=12, doubled by the Outstanding Success to 24= a Stage Three success on the Empathic Power Level Table), reducing the healing time on his legs to four days (the normal healing time of seven days is reduced by one day per stage of success) and the healing time on his arm to 11 days (again, three days taken off of the 14 days needed for a Critical wound). If Ahmed had decided to go into a trance to heal, his

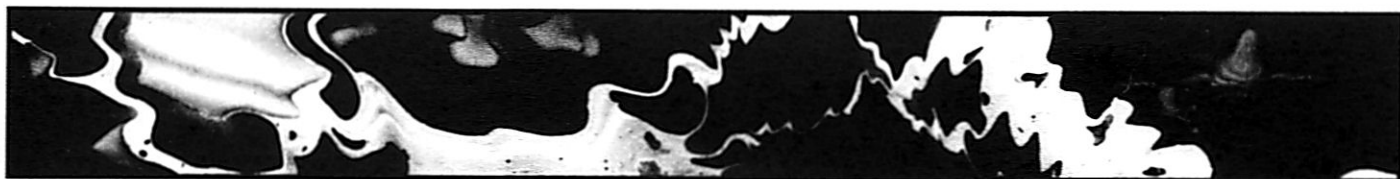
skill would have been quadrupled to 52, and his roll of 1 would have generated a Stage Six power level (the quadrupled skill+EMP of 52+1D10 roll of 6=58, minus his Willpower+INT=50, doubled to 100=Stage Six)—Ahmed's legs would have healed in one day, and his arm in eight days, but he would have been in a trance for the entire eight days.

Later, Ahmed tries to heal a wounded comrade. The comrade has wounds to chest, arm, and head, making Ahmed's task difficulty Formidable.

Invulnerability: This is a mystic cascade skill from Empathic Healing. It is the mystic's ability to draw on the body's reserves to knit its tissues even while it is being harmed. Invulnerability takes one combat turn (six phases) to activate. Once activated, Invulnerability can be used in any phase that the mystic has an action. Using it, the mystic may attempt to subtract points from damage taken that phase. To do this, the mystic makes an Impossible task attempt versus Willpower+ Invulnerability. If successful, the damage subtracted is equal to 4 times the stage level attained. A Catastrophic Failure wounds the mystic: Roll the power level and inflict Stage×1 point of additional damage on the mystic. The mystic's Willpower is added to the Invulnerability skill for purposes of determining power level.

Example: Sabrina (a mystic with Invulnerability 10 and Willpower 12) has to walk through a burning room to escape a living wildfire (a hellfire, from *Dark Races Compendium*, Vol. 1). She spends one turn preparing her mind and body for the ordeal (the skill takes no roll to "activate"), then plunges into the flames. The referee determines that the entire room is ablaze and the air is filled with flame, so every body part will take 1D6 damage per phase. It will only take Sabrina two phases to clear the fire.

On the first phase, she takes 27 points of damage to various hit locations. She has to roll a 5 or less to reduce the damage done. She rolls a 3, for a Power Level of 27 (Stage Two), allowing her to reduce the damage by 8 points. On the second phase, she takes another 18 points of damage, and rolls a 10. She cannot heal that damage immediately, but bursts from the flaming room 8 points healthier than she would have been. She can, of course, heal the damage normally or attempt to speed her healing with Empathic Healing.



Foreboding

Like most empaths, mystics are at a loss as to the exact nature of empathic foreboding. The current mystic theory holds that such mental events are nothing different than the fall of raindrops on a person in a rainstorm—to those who can see, the forces shaping the future are very visible. And the subconscious mind seems to be better equipped for sorting through the maelstrom of information, for the conscious mind is soon overwhelmed by the problem of looking for one incident among the uncountable number of probabilities. According to this theory, a foreboding is a tendril of time caught and processed by the subconscious, stored in human memory until it is recalled by some sort of association. This is a good working definition, but remains unproven.

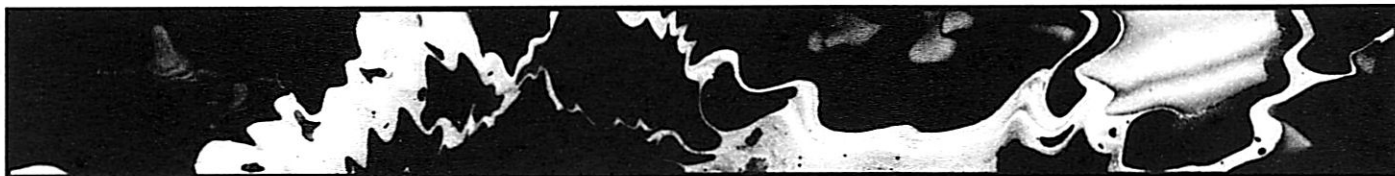
Unlike other empaths, mystics can actually enter the astral proto-dimension and go to watch the probabilities of the future evolve. This is detailed in *The astral proto-dimension*, below.

Human (and Darkling) Empathy

To a mystic, touching minds with another person is as easy as reaching out and touching him with a finger. It's a very natural thing, life flowing to life. Of course, with Dark Minions, the "life" on the other end may be a very loose definition of the term.

For mystics, this process is one level easier than it is for other empaths. In addition, making empathic contact with friends and close associates is one level easier, too (for a total of two levels easier than normal). The drawback is that in order to probe more deeply than surface emotions, mystics have to leave their body and actually enter the psyche of the subject. This means that a mystic can only probe one mind at a time, and that the mystic's body is helpless and mindless until the mystic chooses to break the contact and return. When mystics do decide to break contact, they return to their body without difficulty—assuming that the body is still safe at the time, and in range. Furthermore, a mystic intruding on the mind of another mystic may be rudely thrown out if discovered—see *Project Emotion*, below. Mystic empaths are still bound by the same range limitations as other psychics.





The exception is when a mystic uses Human or Darkling Empathy while in the astral proto-dimension. While there, a mystic may make empathic contact with other minds in the same dimension, or with minds in the "real world." While in the astral proto-dimension, a mystic's Empathy range restrictions apply only to the Astral form—the body may be located very far away, but the mystic has to keep Astral form within Empathy range of the subject, as per the normal rules.

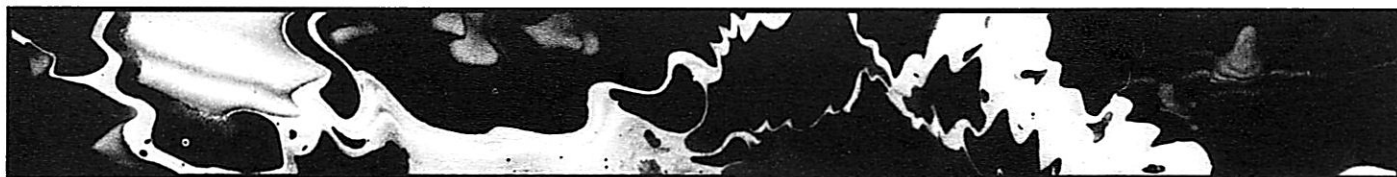
As usual, a mystic may go deeper into a subject's psyche than mere surface emotions. Other empaths read the thoughts like a book, or hear them subvocalized. Mystics experience them as if the foreign thoughts were their own, perceiving and feeling what the subject perceives and feels, although the perceptions and emotions are alien enough so that they don't affect the mystics. This situation changes when a mystic manages to penetrate the subconscious mind (thoughts proceed from basic emotions to surface thoughts to

deeper thoughts to the subconscious—i.e., it takes at least a Stage Four success to enter the subconscious). Entering the subconscious mind is easier when the subject is dreaming—a mere Stage Two success is all that is needed.

The subconscious mind is a place of chaotic power, flowing from the most basic desires and fears of an individual. The impulses filling the subconscious can be powerful enough to overwhelm a mystic intruding into this arena of mental turmoil. Each minute (or part thereof) that a mystic spends in another person's subconscious, he has to pass an

Average: Willpower test (Difficult: Willpower if the subject is dreaming—the subconscious runs rampant during such activity). If the roll fails, the mystic is affected by the emotions and desires raging through the probed psyche and suffers a temporary loss of 1 point of Willpower, just like a Basic Success Willpower Drain. If Catastrophic Failure is suffered, the mystic flees from the other mind and involuntarily returns to his body, rolling on the Catastrophic Failure Table for regaining control from trances. And when such mystics wake, they will be deeply affected by the emotion/desire which repelled them (the exact emotion/desire is up to the referee, as appropriate).

So why go into the subconscious? The subconscious mind cannot lie; not even the most experienced yogis can conceal their desires and emotions in the subconscious. And the subconscious is where fears, phobias, post-hypnotic suggestions, and other mental aberrations lurk. Curing one of these problems requires a trip to the subconscious.



Aura Reading: Mystics can use the basic detection aspects of Human (Darkling) Empathy through Aura Reading, a cascade skill of Human Empathy. All life has an aura, and can even give auras to inanimate objects through long emotional attachment. Life auras are always much brighter and more distinct than the auras attached to inanimate objects.

Aura Reading is accomplished in the same fashion as Human Empathy, except that additional stages of success can only increase the area sensed or sense additional people. Auras can be read while the mystic is using Astral Travel; otherwise, the mystic must be awake and able to see the location of the aura. A successful aura reading will tell the mystic the following facts about the person being read: the person's existence (even if hidden behind cover); his, her, or its emotional state; and whether it is tainted by the Dark Masters' influence. All this is seen through the color of the aura; auras tainted by the Dark Masters feature a sickening green-black-purple glow surrounding them.

The only way to mask an aura is through Psychic Invulnerability, below.

Sensing the aura of an inanimate object is one level of difficulty greater than reading living auras. A successful reading of an inanimate object's aura allows the mystic to guess at the emotion the owner most closely associated with the object, and identifies the owner's aura. It does not identify the owner, or reveal anything else about the object—for more information the mystic must use Psychometry (see above). However, a mystic who identifies the aura of an object and later spots the same aura on a person can be sure that the person is the owner of the object in question.

Psychic Invulnerability: By concentrating on the inner self, mystics can shield their mind, their psyche, from detection and disturbance. In doing so, mystics pull all empathic perceptions back into themselves, essentially "running blind" empathically.

Psychic Invulnerability is a cascade skill from Human Empathy, and can be achieved in or out

of trance state. Concentration on the inner self, on blending with the background of the universe, is more effective in a trance—the standard benefits and drawbacks apply. A standard test of the Psychic Invulnerability skill is required, with difficulty modified according to circumstances. If such mystics are successful, each stage of success achieved is *subtracted* from any other empathic skill directed at them. And once this success is achieved, it can be maintained as long as the mystic is conscious.

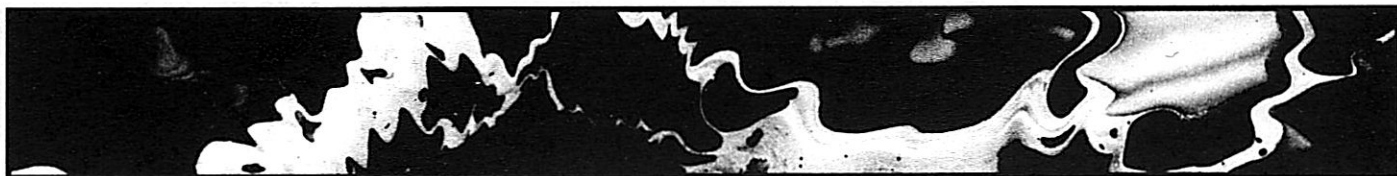
The main drawback to Psychic Invulnerability is the necessity of maintaining empathic "silence." Any use of any other empathic skill nullifies Psychic Invulnerability.

Psychic Invulnerability does not do anything to mask the mystic's physical form. Such trickery is covered under Psychic Invisibility, below.

Example: Claudia decides to shield herself from psychic probes, knowing that there are psychic Dark Minions about. Her Psychic Invulnerability skill is 10, and she's in a relaxed environment. She rolls 4 and succeeds; her power level is 18, giving her a Stage Two success. Later, a bloodkin vampire attempts to lure her close with its illusion. The vampire achieves a Stage Four success with its Project Thought skill, normally enough to project an auditory and visual image. Claudia is still protected, though, and subtracts two stages from the illusion—she sees the illusion as a ghostly hologram, and clearly sees the vampire through it. She brings up her sawed-off shotgun...

Psychic Tracking: A mystic can follow the aura of another life through the whole of the universe. In theory, another life can be found anywhere. In practice, actual distance limits the effectiveness of the tracking, although it is easier to find those persons more attuned to the oneness of the universe than those whose auras are dim.

Psychic Tracking is a cascade skill from Human (or Darkling) Empathy. In order to use it, the mystic must know the aura of the life to be tracked. A successful test of Psychic Tracking+Subject's Empathy means that the psychic has found the subject.



The difficulty is determined by circumstances, as usual, with the addition of range modifiers.

If the subject is close (within a range of the mystic's Empathy $\times$ 20 meters), the difficulty is lowered by one level. If the subject is somewhat far away (mystic's Empathy $\times$ 20 kilometers), the difficulty level is not altered. If the subject is distant (mystic's Empathy $\times$ 200 kilometers), the difficulty is increased one level. If the subject is a world away (mystic's Empathy $\times$ 2000 kilometers), the difficulty is increased two levels. If the subject is farther away than that, Psychic Tracking is not possible.

The level of success determines how much the mystic was able to tell about the subject's movements. Basic Success allows the mystic to know the subject's general location, Stage Two tells the mystic the subject's exact location, and each additional stage means that the mystic can backtrack on the subject's movements for 24 hours per additional stage—for example, a Stage Five success means the mystic knows the subject's exact location and can follow its previous movements for up to 72 hours before the present time.

Psychic Tracking can be used while in the astral proto-dimension.

Project Emotion

When mystics make empathic contact with another life, they actually step inside the mind of the life form. Since they are already there, insinuating an emotion into the subject's mind is a simple process. If the subject's Willpower reduces the power level to 0, the subject will become aware of the mystic's presence in his mind. If the subject is another mystic, he can draw back into the mind to confront the intruder. If the subject mystic wishes to expel the foreign presence from his or her mind, treat the ensuing combat as a variant of Astral Combat (page 108). Both mystics substitute their Project Emotion skill for Astral Travel skill, and since the subject is defending his own mind, that mystic adds Willpower skill to Project Emotion skill for all purposes during the

battle. The combat uses the same tactics as Astral Combat, but there is no "silver cord" available to attack.

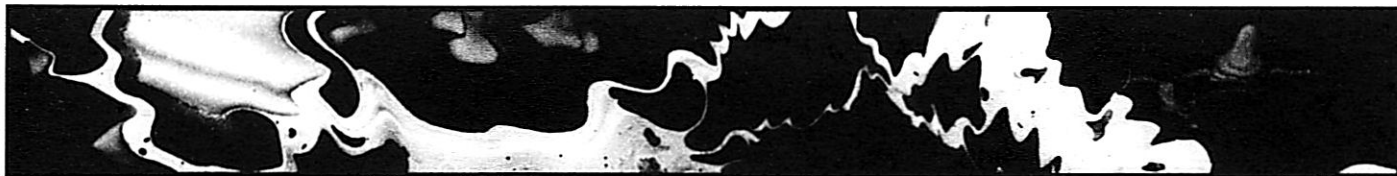
Unless the subject is another mystic, emotion projection follows normal rules for Project Emotion. As long as the mystic is still in the subject's mind, he will immediately know if the subject falls prey to the emotion or not.

Psychic Beacon: A mystic can, if desired, project a strong emotional thought pattern that acts like a psychic beacon in the astral proto-dimension. This beacon can be immediately identified as belonging to the mystic, by all who know that person—the beacon bears a distinctive aura—and reduces to Easy all difficulties of any Psychic Tracking attempts aimed at that mystic. Psychic Beacon is a cascade skill of Project Emotion. The success of such projection measures how long the mystic can maintain the beacon on a single attempt: The Stage *cubed* (Stage³) is the number of hours the beacon can be maintained, even through unconsciousness.

Once established, a Psychic Beacon can be stopped with a single thought from the mystic. Mystics may use other empathic abilities while maintaining a beacon.

Project Thought

Like Project Emotion, use of Project Thought is simple for mystics, since they are already in the subject's mind. In addition to projecting images and simple sentences, mystics can choose to reveal their presence in a subject's mind, meaning that the subject can "see" such mystics in the mind's eye. Mystics may choose to alter or cloak their mental appearance; treat this as a regular use of the Project Thought illusion. Once mystics have revealed themselves, they can converse with such subjects naturally, with the subjects subvocalizing their responses. A subject can try to lie to a mystic; the mystic's success with Human (Darkling) Empathy determines if the mystic can tell for certain when the subject is lying.



Dream Intrusion: As noted earlier, a mystic can slip into another mind more easily during dreams. Normally, this results in the mystic being caught in the undertow of the subject's whirlpool of disjointed memories, images, fancies, and unfettered subconscious emotions—a dangerous place to be. While any empath with Human Empathy skill can “eavesdrop” on a dream, watching it like a person watching a vid show, a mystic actually feels the mental backlash and is battered by the wild subconscious.

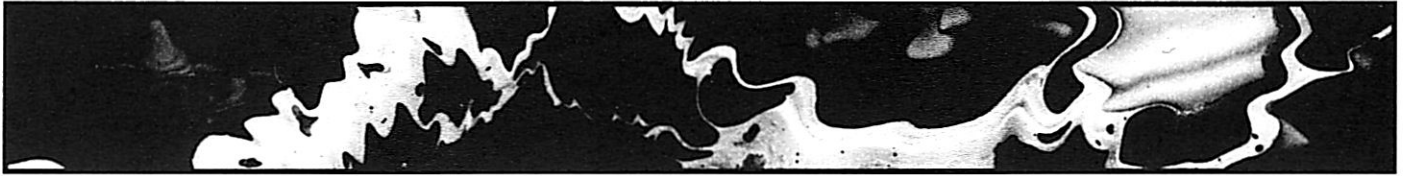
Dream Intrusion is a cascade skill of Project Thought, and actually inserts the mystic into the subject's dream. The subject can perceive the mystic's form, if the mystic desires (as above, Project Thought illusion can be used to alter the mystic's appearance) and can interact with the mystic. While in a subject's dream, mystics can use the Dream Intrusion skill to alter the subject's dream, changing it to their liking. This can be dangerous, as the subject's subconscious can resist the changes.

A successful Human Empathy test is required to contact the subject's subconscious, as noted under Human Empathy; once contacted, going into the dream is an Easy: Dream Intrusion task. Altering the dream is an Average: Dream Intrusion task. Each time the mystic changes the dream, the subject's subconscious will resist. In this case, the mystic has to make an Average: Dream Intrusion test, *adding the subject's Willpower to the die roll*. If the test is failed, the mystic intruding on the dream is rudely tossed out and has to return to his or her body; check as if regaining control in one phase. If the roll is a Catastrophic Failure, the mystic has to roll on the appropriate Trance table.

If a mystic encounters a hostile empath inside the subject's dream, Dream Intrusion can be used as a “reality changer,” allowing the mystic to change the dream's “reality” to fight the foe. Both empaths use their Dream Intrusion (or Project Thought, used as a cascade skill—note that Dark Minions specializing in nightmares use their Project Thought at full strength) in the combat, making Difficult tests.

Subtract the *subject's* Willpower from the power levels, unless one empath is clearly aiding the subject, in which case the subject's Willpower is *added* to the assisting empath's power level. Subtract the higher power level from the lower, and determine the winner's stage of success. Stages Two through Five success repels the loser, forcing him or her from the subject's dreams—mystics have to return to their bodies; check as if regaining control in one phase. Stage Six success forces the loser from the dreams, as above, and also requires the loser to succeed at an Easy: Constitution test or suffer heart failure—in the dream, the loser died horribly.





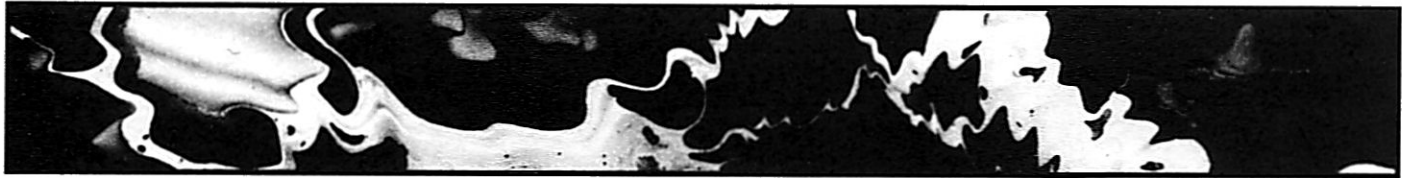
Mystics with Dream Intrusion can allow another person into their own dreams. This requires a successful Difficult: Human Empathy test, followed by a successful Average: Dream Intrusion test, before such a mystic goes to sleep. The mystic and the others to be allowed into his or her dreams must sleep touching one another. Using the skill in this fashion is not as useful as intruding on another's dreams, but if a mystic is under subconscious attack, he can thereby bring allies into his dreams, where the subconscious makes them active participants in the dreams and they can assist in repelling the attack—allies add their Willpower to the subject's. One situation where this is extremely useful is in the case of a dream master attack; the mystic can enter the dreams of the attacked person and even bring nonempaths in to assist. For more on the dream master, see *Dark Races Compendium*, Vol. 1.

Example: Inexperienced empath Tam is being plagued by a dream master. Mystic Claudia has been defeated by the dream master before; tonight she's bringing her strong-willed cyborg friend Stiel in to assist.

Note: As the *Dark Races* book suggests, "Referees are encouraged to roleplay with their players the nightmares...rather than simply announcing what the creature rolled and having the character check.... The dream settings should be based upon the affected character's skills" (and experiences). If the subject is having nightmares, they tend to play on that person's fears, anxieties, and inadequacies. Just defeating a consistent fear can be enough adventure for the most hardened mystic minion hunter; taking on a dream master is much worse.

Exorcism: Since all lives are intertwined in existence, it is possible for one life force to dominate another, controlling the physical vessel, making it do things the owner doesn't want. In ancient times, this was called "possession." The ancient practitioners of mysticism knew what they were talking about; a seldom-taught and less often used ability in mystic lexicons allows mystics to do this (see Possession, below). With the onset of Darkling activity, possession incidents have increased, and the fear of Darkling possession becomes very real.





The mystic lexicons also contain methods of fighting the phenomenon. Exorcism is a cascade skill from Project Thought, and is the ability to drive a foreign mind from a host body. It can be used from the astral proto-dimension as well as from the "real world."

The actual exorcism is a contest of wills and empathic power. The exorcising mystic and the possessing power make Difficult test rolls—the exorcist uses the Exorcism skill, and the possessor uses the Possession skill. Both parties determine their power levels based on the appropriate skill *plus* Willpower, and the possessor



subtracts its total from the exorcist's. If the exorcist achieves a Basic Success with the remaining power, the possessor is expelled from the body, just as if the host mind had repulsed the possessor.

If the host mind is in the host body at the time of the exorcism, the host's Willpower is also added to the exorcist's combined Exorcism and Willpower skills for purposes of power level.

Exorcism is a long and arduous process, often taking a number of hours equal to the possessor's Possession skill. Each stage of success the exorcist scores over Basic Success halves the time required (round down in this case). And the possessor can make the host body move in the meantime. Restraining the host body is a common precaution.

Example: A malevolent haunt has possessed Claudia's cyborg friend Stiel. After a prolonged battle, the cyborg has been caught and restrained. While nervous soldiers watch with aimed weapons, Claudia enters a trance and ascends into the astral proto-dimension to do battle with the spirit. Her Exorcism skill is 9 (doubled to 18, because she's in a trance state), and her Willpower is 6. The haunt has no Willpower, but its effective Possession skill is 32. Fortunately, Stiel's mind is still in his body, and his Willpower is 15.

Both parties succeed at their tests. Claudia's combined skill is 39 (her Exorcism and Willpower, and Stiel's Willpower); her power level is 44. The haunt's power level is 40, so after an exhausting 32 hours (based on the haunt's Possession skill), she barely manages to drive the haunt from her friend. Had she rolled an Outstanding Success, her power level would have been 88. After the haunt's power level was subtracted, she would have had a Stage Five success, reducing the time required to two hours.

An exorcism struggle can go on for days. Dark Minions are usually powerful empaths, and while exorcism is exhausting, it isn't dangerous (beyond the ability of the possessed to wreak physical damage), so often, human exorcists have to work for a long time to finally defeat the possessor.

Hypnosis: One reason for wanting to reach into the subconscious is that, while powerful, the subconscious is also rather gullible. A slight suggestion can take on concrete strength there. Parlor-trick hypnotism has proved this, often with hilarious (or sinister) results.

Parlor-trick hypnosis requires a willing subject. The hypnotist then puts the subject into a trance (this requires a successful Difficult: Hypnosis test and 30 seconds of uninterrupted effort). Once the





subject is in the trance, the hypnotist can question the subject (Average: Psychology test to get true and useful answers), make the subject act differently (Average: Hypnosis test), or implant post-hypnotic suggestions (Difficult: Hypnosis test). Subjects can resist post-hypnotic suggestions; when the suggestions are triggered, such subjects make a Formidable: Willpower test (Difficult: Willpower if the suggestion would have them do something they violently disagree with). If successful, such a subject resists the suggestion and the power of the suggestion is broken.

Parlor-trick Hypnosis may be learned separately as a cascade skill from Psychology.

Mystic hypnotism is more powerful than any parlor trick. It is a cascade skill from Project Thought, and is more insidious than other forms of thought projection. Of course, the mystic knows how to do the parlor-trick hypnosis, too; it's a minor version of the major skill.

After penetrating to the subject's subconscious mind, a mystic with Hypnotism may implant commands and opinions there, in the form of desires and emotions. The more complex and specific the command, the more difficult it is to implant it. For instance, a vague, unfounded dislike, such as prejudice against industrial polluters, would be an Easy: Hypnosis task. Turning this into hatred of a single company would be an Average: Hypnosis task. Aiming all the subject's fury at a single executive of this company would be a Formidable: Hypnosis task. The more specific the case, the more justification the implanted command requires.

Working against the subject's desires is not easy. Commanding a subject to kill a loved one, or to do something else that the subject is equally opposed to, is one level of difficulty greater.

This careful mental work takes time. It has to be subtle and long lasting. An Easy task takes a minute; an Average task takes five minutes; a Difficult task takes 30 minutes; a Formidable task takes 90 minutes; and an Impossible task takes three hours.

If the mystic succeeds in implanting a command

or opinion, the subject believes it to be his or her own, complete with rationale to explain it. That is the strength of mystic Hypnotism: Entire facets of a personality can be changed, and the source of the changes is almost invisible. Even Psyche Surgery (see below) has trouble finding and correcting such changes.

Mystic Hypnosis can be broken by the subject. If the command or opinion is one that the subject violently disagrees with, the subject makes an Impossible: Willpower test. If successful, such subjects resist the command/opinion and realize that an alien idea is rattling around inside their brains.

Possession: In a sense, a Stage Six success with Project Thought is possession—the empath is able to control every movement, every action of the subject. The cascade skill Possession is different in that such mystics don't *control* a subject; they place their mind in a subject's body and *become* the subject, and can remain in control of the subject's facilities for a long time.

In order to do this, such mystics leave their own body, usually in a trance, and venture into the astral proto-dimension. There, they spot the target subject and attempt Possession. This is a standard Possession test, and a Stage Five success allows such mystics to overlay their mind on a subject's and take control. The process takes 30 seconds, and such subjects perceive it while it's happening—the safest time to possess a subject is while the person is sleeping. Possessing mystics can stay in charge until they decide to leave, or are forced out.

While in charge of a host body, mystics can manipulate it like their own (within physical limits: a host body can't do things beyond its capabilities; a high-strength mystic taking over a child's body would be advised to forgo lifting 100-kilo weights) and perceive everything the host body perceives. The mind in charge is the mystic's, though, and possessing mystics have no access to a host's memories or skills. In addition, while possessing another, mystics cannot make use of their own empathic powers—their ability is being used to maintain control of the host's body.



If the host's consciousness is still in the body, it will fight a mystic's control. Anytime the mystic does something that the host violently disagrees with, the mystic must pass an Average: Possession test, *subtracting the host's Willpower from the Possession skill before rolling*. For instance, a mystic with Possession 13 fighting a host with Willpower 8 would have to roll a 5 or less to remain in charge of the host. A mystic who fails is expelled from the host body and returned to astral form.

When a possessing mystic leaves a host body, the host remembers all that transpired while possessed (unless there was no mind in the body; see below). The mystic can prevent this by using Project Thought skill to erase that portion of the former host's memory; a Stage Five success is needed to accomplish this as the mystic seeks out the familiar experiences and transforms them into a fuzzy dream. A Stage Six success blanks out those experiences altogether.

A mystic can possess a body that has no mind, either a person who has suffered brain death or a person whose mind is far away in the astral proto-

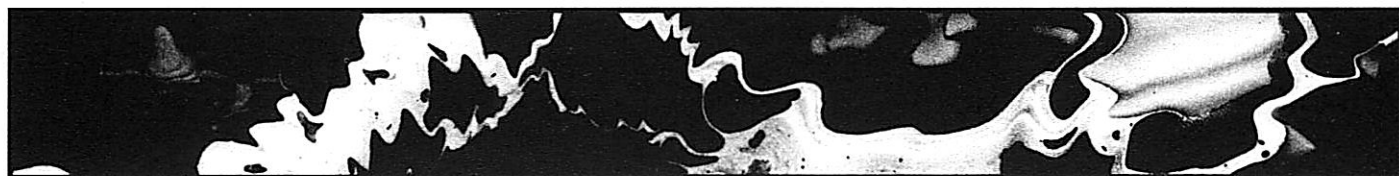
dimension. The mystic only needs a Stage Two success to do this. There is no chance of the mystic being expelled from the host while entering—there's no mind there to fight back.

If a host body dies while a mystic is possessing it, the mystic is hurled back into his own body, rolling on the Trance Catastrophic Failure table.

There is an additional hazard to possession: The possessing mystic's "silver cord" is quite visible, leading from the host body back to the mystic's own body. Anyone in the astral proto-dimension can see it and follow it. This can lead to mystics being possessed by Dark Minions while they're off wandering in the astral proto-dimension; smart mystics leave friends guarding their bodies, and have code-words and countersigns to identify themselves. And mystics returning from an astral trip to find their body under another's control may be annoyed enough to backtrack and possess their possessor's body in retaliation...

Possession is a classic (and favored) Darkling tactic, especially by minions who have no physical form to be possessed in turn.





Psychic Invisibility: Psychic Invisibility is a cascade skill from Project Thought, and is closely related to its illusory powers. For a mystic, though, the concept of cloaking oneself in illusion is alien and mechanical. Psychic Invisibility is a blending process, where mystics attempt to merge with the universe, to hone their psychic vibrations to match the cosmic background and broadcast this harmony to other minds around.

In practice, Psychic Invisibility is simple to use. Such mystics spend five minutes attuning themselves to the frequency of the universe, and make their Psychic Invisibility test, modified as per circumstances—it's easier to concentrate on being invisible when you're not under stress. The stage of success achieved can be used in two ways, at a mystic's option: Each stage can subtract one minute from the time required for universal tuning, or it can subtract 2 points from the Observation skill of every living thing that perceives the "invisible" mystic.

Psychic Invisibility does not actually make the mystic invisible. Instead, it clouds the perceptions of all living things that see, hear, touch, or smell the protected mystic, as long as they perceive the

mystic directly. Such mystics are still fully visible to mechanical senses—they show up on TV cameras (but the camera operator has trouble seeing them, even though a viewer at a remote location wouldn't have any problems), they photograph normally, they trip infrared and sonic sensors, etc.

Using Psychic Invisibility precludes the use of any other empathic skill (except Astral Travel). It can be used while in a trance, but mystics can't do anything else at the time—they're just invisible to people that try to perceive them.

Psychic Invisibility can be used in the astral proto-dimension, to screen a mystic from notice. In the astral proto-dimension, Psychic Invisibility works against empathic perceptions, lowering the success stage of Human Empathy by one per success stage of the Invisibility. If the searching empath manages even Basic Success despite the subtractions, the Invisibility is stripped away and the shielded mystic exposed.

Outside of the astral proto-dimension, Psychic Invisibility is not as effective against empathic perceptions. It still lowers the success stage of Human (Darkling) Empathy as above, but any success at all with Human Empathy alerts the probing empath that there is another presence in the area, and it's shielded.

Example: Ahmed wants to sneak into a corporate building that harbors insectoid ETs. He manages Stage Three Invisibility, and starts out. The guards at the door have Observation 8, so his Invisibility subtracts 6 from their chances to notice him. They don't, and he waltzes past. In the meantime, the guard in the surveillance room three stories up is watching the security camera network, and idly wonders who that guy is that the other guards let pass without incident.

Ahmed sneaks down into the basement, and starts prowling around. He spends a bad moment as an adult insectoid clatters by. The insectoid's Observation is 16, reduced to 10 by Ahmed's Invisibility. The bug rolls a 10 and barely perceives that something is amiss. It calls on a humanoid ET to see if there are any humans around—the humanoid uses its Human Empathy, and manages a Stage Four



success. Ahmed's Invisibility lowers this to Basic Success, and the ETs are alerted to the fact that there's a shielded empath nearby. Ahmed is in deep trouble.

Psyche Surgery: This is not a cascade skill of Project Thought; it is a use of Project Thought, blended with Psychology, a way of treating psychological problems where they live, plunging into the subconscious to help victims solve their own mental mishaps. As with Dream Intrusion, mystics make themselves known in a subject's subconscious, and take such subjects into the ultimate "roleplay," travelling through the murky corridors of the id to confront the horrors that lurk there.

This practice can be used to treat mental illness, catatonia (such as leading a lost mystic back to conscious control), phobias, and emotional disturbances. It cannot help purely physical ailments such as brain damage or epilepsy.

Psyche Surgery is used in the same way as Psychology, but is much faster. With this skill, mystics use their Human Empathy to go to a subject's subconscious, then use an average of the Project Thought and Psychology skills to help cure a subject's problem. The difficulty of the skill test depends on the severity of the problem and the amount of ego identification the subject has invested in it. For instance, to cure a person of claustrophobia, a mystic psychiatrist builds a mental scenario of enclosure, and helps the patient defeat it. The mental experience of this success strengthens the patient's resolve and self-confidence, and drains away the fear. This would be an Easy: (Project Thought+Psychology)+2 test.

On the other end of the scale, curing a psychotic paranoid megalomaniac (like Adolf Hitler) would require digging deep into the patient's memories, personality and childhood, and would take many lengthy sessions of Difficult: (Project Thought+Psychology)+2 tests, since the patient's self-image is literally built on delusions. A successful treatment would occur through constructing a different personality for the subject.

The difference between Psyche Surgery and mystic Hypnosis is that Psyche Surgery assists subjects to form their own opinions and permanent emotional patterns; mystic Hypnosis is faster and more brutal, impressing alien thoughts on the subject's subconscious. Mystic Hypnosis can be used to assist Psyche Surgery (particularly in rough cases), and Psyche Surgery can be used for evil purposes, as frighteningly effective brainwashing.

Psyche Surgery can be used to destroy the results of mystic Hypnosis. Just finding the hypnotic suggestion is a Difficult: Human Empathy task; removing it is a Difficult: (Project Thought+Psychology)+2 task.





THE ASTRAL PROTO-DIMENSION

"There is a fifth dimension, beyond that which is known to man. It is a dimension as vast as space and as timeless as infinity. It is the middle ground between light and shadow, between science and superstition. And it lies between the pit of man's fears and the summit of his knowledge. This is the dimension of imagination. It is an area which we call...the Twilight Zone."

Rod Serling,
20th century mystic.

What Is It?

The astral proto-dimension is a dimension of thought, a dimension of imagination, a dimension of the mind. It is a reflection of the thoughts and ideas of all the universe, and is tied to the universe which creates it. In the astral proto-dimension, you can access the universe and anywhere or anywhen in it—in theory. In practice, the astral proto-dimension near Earth is a reflection of the life, thoughts, and emotions of Earth, and going elsewhere is difficult and dangerous.

Only thought exists in the astral proto-dimension. When you check in, you leave your physical "luggage" behind.

What Does It Look Like?

The astral proto-dimension is a vast, star-studded universe of perpetual twilight. At the "bottom" is the terrain and territory of Earth; there, you can see the buildings as half-solid shadows, and the people as ghostly images, dimly lit from within. In daylight, the place takes on pale colors; at night, it looks like a *film noir*. As you fly "up," you move away from the confines of Earth's mental environment and journey toward the rest of the universe.

Near Demonground, the astral proto-dimension changes appearance, warping into a curious mix of Earth and somewhere else. Just where else depends on the proto-dimension that is leaking in. It could be anywhere.

Time and Distance

In the astral proto-dimension, everything is real-time...except when it isn't. Normally, one second there is the same as one second on Earth. But the astral proto-dimension is also the gate to the past and (to some extent) the future; you can cast your thoughts back in time, trying to link up with another life in the past. If you succeed, you can share that life for a while, experiencing what your host experiences. You can see history as it happened. But you can't change it. And going into the past is difficult; the farther back you go, the harder it is. And the less you remember when you return.

Time "Travel" to the Past: In order to experience the past, an astral traveller has to search through the fixed timestream of that which has already happened to find the correct time frame. If the traveller doesn't have a pretty clear idea of the circumstances and background of the specific time, finding the correct time frame is an Impossible: Astral Travel task. If the traveller does have a good idea of when and where he wants to see—either the traveller must have been there and then already, or has done at least 1D10 hours of library research on the venue—the difficulty of the task depends on how far back in time the traveller wants to go. Up to one year is Easy, one to two years is Average, two to 10 years is Difficult, 10 to 100 years is Formidable, over 100 years (or going to a past other than Earth's) is Impossible. Simple failure leaves the traveller confused, wasting 1D6×10 minutes wandering around in the astral proto-dimension looking for the right time. A Catastrophic Failure wastes 1D6×1 hour of the astral traveller's time. On the other hand, an Outstanding Success places the traveller in proximity to a famous person of the time, a prime candidate for an empathic link.

Once such travellers have found the correct time, they have to contact a person living in that time with Human Empathy in order to observe for more than a couple of minutes—astral travellers without such a "link" to the past will be swept past by the maelstrom of history, unable to hold their place in the timestream. Contacting a person in the past is a



Difficult: Human Empathy task. Once the contact is made, travellers can maintain it as long as they want; any time that they spend in this link counts as real-time passage. For instance, if a traveller stayed in the body of General Meade and observed the entire battle of Gettysburg, three days would pass for the traveller's body. This link does not permit the traveller to communicate with the person in the past.

When travellers voluntarily return to their body, remembering pertinent details is difficult—when a traveller to the past wants to remember an important detail, the test is made on Intelligence, and the difficulty is equal to that of the difficulty needed to find the correct time frame; i.e., Easy for up to a year, Average for one to two years, Difficult for two to 10 years, etc. The traveller only gets *one* test to recall each specific detail, as needed. If that test is failed, the traveller just didn't remember it.

Example: Rafim the Insane travels back into time to witness the summoning of a Dark One, which occurred centuries ago. He manages to find the correct moment and place his perceptions inside one of the acolytes at the ceremony, and witnesses the horrific visitation. Everyone there was killed, of course, but that doesn't affect Rafim. He returns to his body in the present, intent on copying the words of power that open the gate for the Master. This is an Impossible: Intelligence task, and Rafim's INT is 17. He rolls a 9, and spends the next several hours pacing, cursing, tearing at his beard, trying to remember those few phrases and unwilling to admit that he can't, and that the whole trip was for nothing.

Tracing Auras: A mystic can enter the astral proto-dimension and follow the aura of an object through the past, tracing its history. This is the same difficulty as traveling to the past and seeking a proper time frame, except that the mystic doesn't have to do research on the proper time or find a link—the object provides both. Remembering what was seen in the past follows the rules above, and anything remembered will be “seen” from the object's perspective.





Time "Travel" to the Future: Clues to the future are present in the astral proto-dimension, too. If you're good, you might pick something relevant out of the confusing whirl of probabilities. If you're very, very lucky, you might actually remember it when you wake up.

Looking into the "future" is a matter of entering the astral proto-dimension and perusing the shadows of probability as they seemingly stretch from the present. This is not to say that you'll be able to make any sense of them.

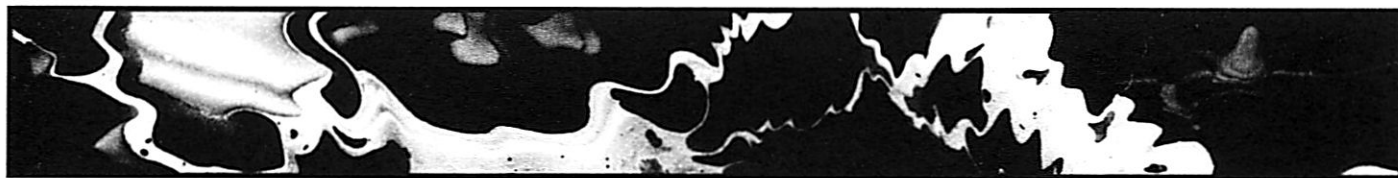
In the astral proto-dimension, the past stretches clearly away into the distance. But in the other direction, the "future" consists of nothing but fuzzy projections upon the "wall" of the present. There is no travelling beyond that wall. But the traveller can peer into it, as if into a glass, to study the myriad possibilities that proceed from the present. However, the experience can be extremely disconcert-

ing; every 30 seconds spent looking into the limitless future requires such travellers to succeed at an Impossible: (Willpower+Intelligence)+2 test or be overwhelmed and thrown back to their body in one phase.

Once a mystic has recovered from the inevitable mental blow of trying to perceive an infinite number of possibilities and probability permutations (and that's present even in one person's lifetime), he can try to remember something pertinent. The mystic may try once for each 30 seconds spent searching infinite prob-

ability. This is an Impossible: (Willpower+Intelligence)+2 task; success means that the mystic has remembered something seen in the future that is important, either to the mystic or to the world at large. The exact event and the clarity of the mystic's recollection is up to the referee, according to the plot. Whatever the event, it should be clearer and more concrete than a clue derived from Foreboding. (*Referee's Note:* Keep in mind that an event observed in the future may be only a low-order probability, and might not happen at all.)

Astral Travel: Distance on the astral proto-dimension is covered at the speed of thought. You can traverse the universe in an eyeblink, as long as you know where you're going. If you don't know, you have to find out first, and *that's* slow going. Say you want to go to Chiwaukee, and you're in Tokyo. Nothing to it. You swoop over the Earth faster than



any jet, faster than anything that ever flew in the planet's air. In a mere subjective second or so, there you are.

Now you want to go to Seoul. You've never been there, but it's close, right? Closer than Chiwaukee was. Again you fly, but a lot slower—slowly enough to see landmarks and recognize where you're going. And that's the way it is—unless you absolutely know where you want to go, you have to navigate your way there.

Other Dimensions

Astral travellers can even go to dimensions other than their own. If they know the dimension that they wish to access (they've been there, have seen the opening, etc.), opening the astral gate is a Formidable: Astral Travel task. If they know little or nothing about how to get to the desired dimension, opening the correct astral gate is an Impossible: Astral Travel task.

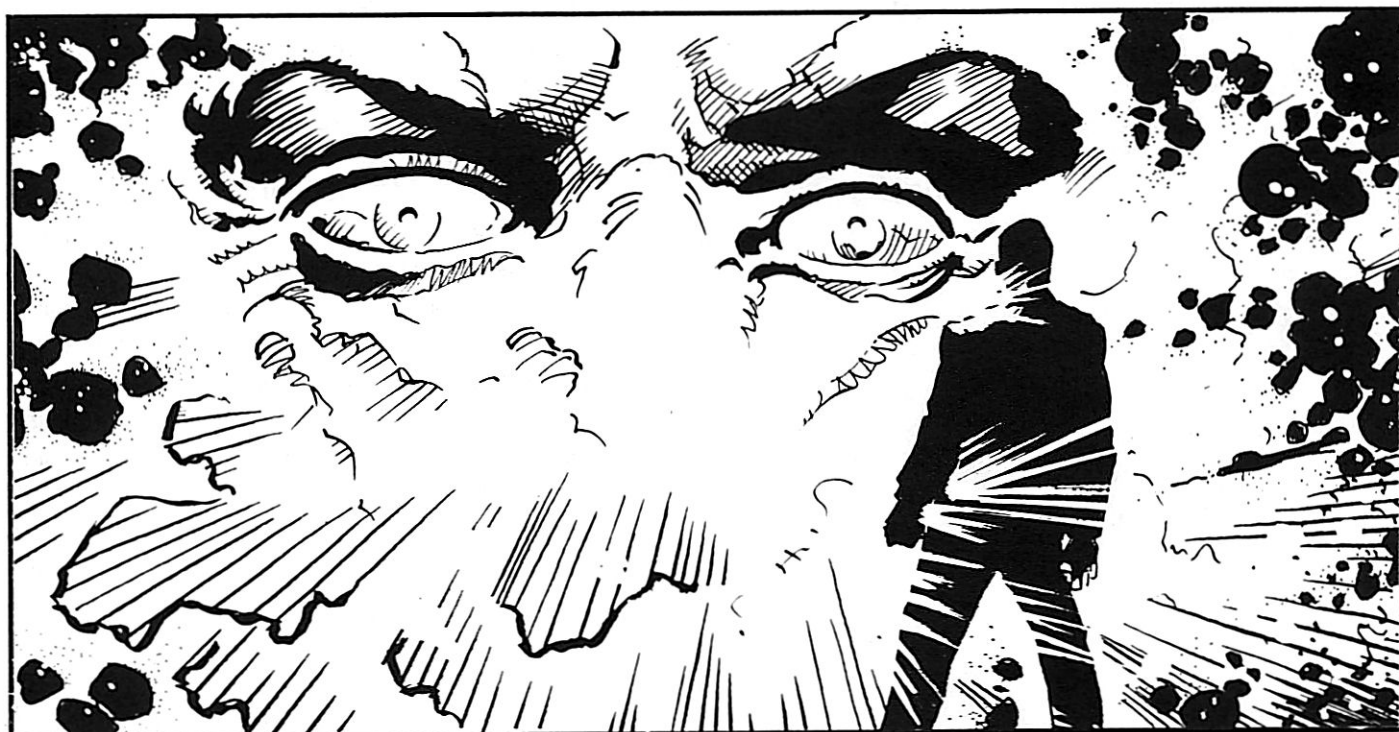
This practice has its problems. If such travellers succeed in opening the right mental gate, they can venture into the alternate dimension (even most proto-dimensions can be entered this

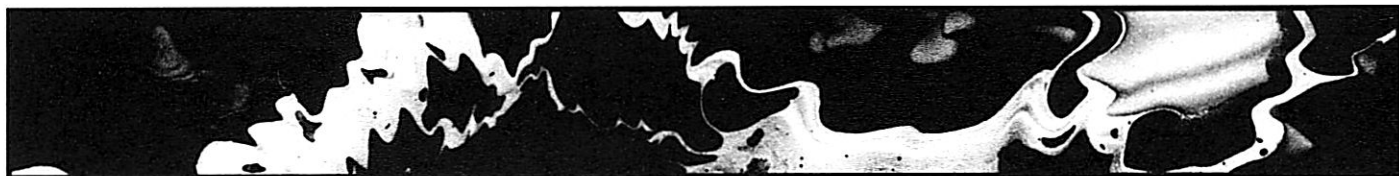
way), accepting the astral risks of that dimension. If they fail to open the correct dimensional door and rolls a Catastrophic Failure in the process, they succeed in creating an opening to a random dimension—the exact nature of that dimension is up to the referee. Odds are that this wrong dimension will not be a place that such a traveller will want to go to...

What Are the Dangers?

The astral proto-dimension links to every other reality in existence; it is a reflection of them. Through it, you can access anywhere, anywhen. *And things from anywhere can access your "real world," too.*

Many Dark Minions have a strong mental existence; the ones that have no physical form exist primarily on the astral proto-dimension, and it's hard to hide there. Most of the time, another being on the astral proto-dimension can follow you simply by tracing the line of the "silver cord," the visible astral metaphor for the link to your body. And if trouble finds you, you're armed only with your mind and your will.





Finding Others in the Astral Proto-Dimension

The astral proto-dimension is a big place, “as vast as space and as timeless as infinity.” If multiple astral travellers wish to meet, they do so at a prearranged time and place. Once together, they can travel the astral proto-dimension together if they wish, interacting with one another and the things they meet.

Encountering a stranger in the astral proto-dimension is less likely. It is a truly infinite place, and the chances of an honestly random encounter are infinitesimally slim. The chances of stumbling into someone (or something) nosing around a mutually interesting part of the astral proto-dimension are much better. For instance, if a astrally skilled Darkling realizes that there are astrally skilled minion hunters poking around its turf, it may decide to lurk in the astral proto-dimension and arrange an astral ambush.

Demonground is the exception to this rule. The Dark Minions from the dimension(s) stream out, seeking to explore Earth. They can just see/hear/smell/taste humanity waiting to be preyed upon. The astral proto-dimension near Demonground usually has one or more astral Dark Minions in it, probing, waiting, guarding.

Astral Combat

When opponents meet in the astral proto-dimension, their struggle is a contest of wills and skill, waged on a purely mental basis. Astral combat is usually nonlethal, since it is difficult to break a mind’s link to its body—only the weakest astral travellers are vulnerable to this, and only from the most powerful attackers. But the penalty for losing is inconvenient at best.

The mechanics of astral combat are similar to those of melee combat: The combatants have several tactical options that they can try each phase in which they act (remember, if an astral traveller’s body is in a trance, his or her Initiative may benefit—see Trances, page 85). The combatants’ skills,



capabilities, and statistics are determined by three statistics: Astral Travel and Willpower skills, and Empathy level.

The "Astral Combat" skill is equal to the traveller's Astral Travel skill. "Astral Damage," the damage done by Astral Combat, is $(\text{Astral Travel skill} \times \text{Willpower skill}) + 20$, rounded down. Astral Hits represent the mental damage a traveller can take before astral defeat, and are $(\text{Willpower} \times \text{Empathy})$.

Attacks: Attacks are brute psychic assaults (Astral attack), Willpower Drain (which lowers target's damage and hits), emotional attack (which can scare off or drive away a foe), or psychic destruction (attacker tries to "cut" silver cord with focused psychic assault of doubt, depression, fear, etc.).

Brute Psychic Assault: This is a normal astral attack, done in the same fashion as regular Unarmed Melee Combat strike attack (Difficult, but using Astral Combat+Emp instead of Melee Combat skill). If successful, a psychic assault inflicts Astral Damage hits on the opponent's Astral Hits.

Emotional Attack: This is a conventional Project Emotion mystic attack, as described earlier.

Psychic Destruction: Treat this as an aimed Unarmed Melee Combat attack (meaning that it's Formidable difficulty instead of Difficult). It does double Astral Damage, and an Outstanding Success cuts the victim's "silver cord," convincing him or her to commit psychic suicide. The mind is divorced from the body and doomed to wander the astral proto-dimension. The victim's body dies of

brain death (it can be sustained with artificial life-support, if available). Another mystic can travel in and lead the disembodied mind back to its body, or to another body that's brain dead but still alive.

Willpower Drain: This standard empathic skill counts as an astral attack. If it is successful, the victim's Willpower drops, and the victim must recalculate Astral Damage and Hits. Any hits the victim had already taken at the time of the Willpower Drain are retained; the victim still has the damage, he just has fewer hits to lose.

Defensive Tactics: An astral traveller can go on the defensive. This tactic is used to hold off a superior attacker while trying to return to the body. The defensive traveller cannot attack, and can only parry, as per standard melee rules. The advantage is that the traveller's hits are increased by Astral Travel $\times 2$.

Astral travellers who suffer a loss of all psychic hits are returned to their body in one phase and roll on the mishap table at a +10. Astral creatures without physical form are destroyed.



MYSTICISM SKILL CHARTS

Animal Empathy

Task Type	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Total Security	Easy	Animal Empathy+EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Animal Empathy+EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Animal Empathy+EMP	—
Great Stress	Formidable	Animal Empathy+EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Animal Empathy+EMP	—

Computer Empathy

Task Type	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Total Security	Easy	Computer Empathy+EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Computer Empathy+EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Computer Empathy+EMP	—
Great Stress	Formidable	Computer Empathy+EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Computer Empathy+EMP	—

Dimension Walk

Task Type	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Total Security	Easy	Dimension Walk+EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Dimension Walk+EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Dimension Walk+EMP	—
Great Stress	Formidable	Dimension Walk+EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Dimension Walk+EMP	—

Enter Astral Proto-Dimension

Task Type	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Unhurried	Easy	Astral Travel+EMP	Requires 30 seconds
Normal	Average	Astral Travel+EMP	Requires 15 seconds
Hurried	Difficult	Astral Travel+EMP	Requires 5 seconds
Emotionally Upset	+1 level		
Violently Emotional	+2 levels		

Clairvoyant Linking (See or Hear)

Task Type	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Target Well-Known	Easy	[(Clairvoyant Link+ Human Empathy)+2]+EMP	—
Target Touched	Average	[(Clairvoyant Link+ Human Empathy)+2]+EMP	—
Target Seen	Difficult	[(Clairvoyant Link+ Human Empathy)+2]+EMP	—
Target Unknown	Formidable	[(Clairvoyant Link+ Human Empathy)+2]+EMP	—

Clairvoyant Linking (See and Hear)

Task Type	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Target Well-Known	Average	[(Clairvoyant Link+ Human Empathy)+2]+EMP	—
Target Touched	Difficult	[(Clairvoyant Link+ Human Empathy)+2]+EMP	—
Target Seen	Formidable	[(Clairvoyant Link+ Human Empathy)+2]+EMP	—
Target Unknown	Impossible	[(Clairvoyant Link+ Human Empathy)+2]+EMP	—

Psychometry

Task Type	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
1 Hour	Easy	Psychometry+EMP	Requires 30 seconds
1 Day	Average	Psychometry+EMP	Requires 5 minutes
1 Week	Difficult	Psychometry+EMP	Requires 30 minutes
1 Year	Formidable	Psychometry+EMP	Requires 1 hour
1+ Years	Impossible	Psychometry+EMP	Requires 2 hours per 10 years



Empathic Healing

<i>Task Type</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Total Security	Easy	Empathic Healing+EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Empathic Healing+EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Empathic Healing+EMP	—
Great Stress	Formidable	Empathic Healing+EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Empathic Healing+EMP	—

Invulnerability

<i>Task Type</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Invulnerability	Impossible	Invulnerability+Willpower	—

Foreboding

<i>Task Type</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Total Security	Easy	Foreboding+EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Foreboding+EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Foreboding+EMP	—
Great Stress	Formidable	Foreboding+EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Foreboding+EMP	—

Human Empathy

<i>Task Type</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Total Security	—	—	Automatic
Relaxed	Easy	Human Empathy+EMP	—
Normal Stress	Average	Human Empathy+EMP	—
Great Stress	Difficult	Human Empathy+EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Formidable	Human Empathy+EMP	—
Target friend	+1 level		

Darkling Empathy

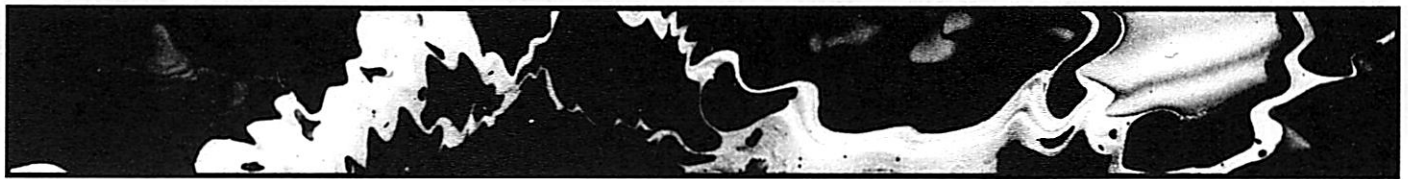
<i>Task Type</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Total Security	—	—	Automatic
Relaxed	Easy	Darkling Empathy+EMP	—
Normal Stress	Average	Darkling Empathy+EMP	—
Great Stress	Difficult	Darkling Empathy+EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Formidable	Darkling Empathy+EMP	—

Aura Reading

<i>Task Type</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Total Security	—	—	Automatic
Relaxed	Easy	Aura Reading+EMP	—
Normal Stress	Average	Aura Reading+EMP	—
Great Stress	Difficult	Aura Reading+EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Formidable	Aura Reading+EMP	—
Target friend	+1 level		

Psychic Invulnerability

<i>Task Type</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Total Security	Easy	Psychic Invulnerability+EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Psychic Invulnerability+EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Psychic Invulnerability+EMP	—
Great Stress	Formidable	Psychic Invulnerability+EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Psychic Invulnerability+EMP	—



Psychic Tracking

Task Type	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Total Security	Easy	Psychic Tracking+Subject's EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Psychic Tracking+Subject's EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Psychic Tracking+Subject's EMP	—
Great Stress	Formidable	Psychic Tracking+Subject's EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Psychic Tracking+Subject's EMP	—
≤(Empathy×20 meters)	-1 level	Psychic Tracking+Subject's EMP	—
≤(Empathy×20 km)	—	Psychic Tracking+Subject's EMP	—
≤(Empathy×200 km)	+1 level	Psychic Tracking+Subject's EMP	—
≤(Empathy×2000 km)	+2 levels	Psychic Tracking+Subject's EMP	—
> (Empathy×2000 km)	—	—	Not possible

Project Emotion

Task Type	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Total Security	Easy	Project Emotion+EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Project Emotion+EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Project Emotion+EMP	—
Great Stress	Formidable	Project Emotion+EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Project Emotion+EMP	—

Psychic Beacon

Task Type	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Total Security	Easy	Psychic Beacon+EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Psychic Beacon+EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Psychic Beacon+EMP	—
Great Stress	Formidable	Psychic Beacon+EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Psychic Beacon+EMP	—

Project Thought

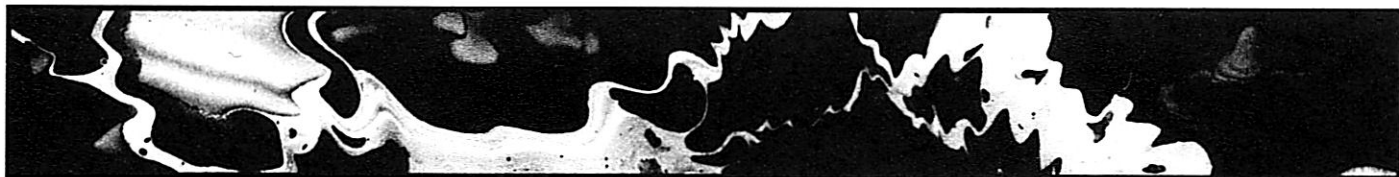
Task Type	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Total Security	Easy	Project Thought+EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Project Thought+EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Project Thought+EMP	—
Great Stress	Formidable	Project Thought+EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Project Thought+EMP	—

Time "Travel"

Task Type	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
<1 year	Easy	Astral Travel+EMP	—
1-2 years	Average	Astral Travel+EMP	—
2-10 years	Difficult	Astral Travel+EMP	—
10-100 years	Formidable	Astral Travel+EMP	—
100+ years	Impossible	Astral Travel+EMP	—
Unclear Destination	Impossible	Astral Travel+EMP	—

Dream Intrusion

Task Type	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Enter Dream	Easy	Dream Intrusion+EMP	—
Alter Dream	Average	(Dream Intrusion+Subject's Willpower+2)+EMP	—



Exorcism

Task Type	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Total Security	Easy	Exorcism+EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Exorcism+EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Exorcism+EMP	—
Great Stress	Formidable	Exorcism+EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Exorcism+EMP	—

Hypnosis (Parlor Trick)

Task Type	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Induce trance	Difficult	Hypnosis+EMP	—
Get True Answer	Average	Psychology+INT	—
Change Behavior	Average	Hypnosis+EMP	—
Implant Suggestion	Difficult	Hypnosis+EMP	—

Hypnosis (Mystic)

Task Type	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Induce trance	Difficult	Hypnosis+EMP	—
Implant Command	Variable	Hypnosis+EMP	See text for difficulty levels

Possession

Task Type	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Total Security	Easy	Possession+EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Possession+EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Possession+EMP	—
Great Stress	Formidable	Possession+EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Possession+EMP	—
Target Resists	Average	(Possession-Target's Willpower)+EMP	Failure means expulsion

Psychic Invisibility

Task Type	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Total Security	Easy	Psychic Invisibility+EMP	—
Relaxed	Average	Psychic Invisibility+EMP	—
Normal Stress	Difficult	Psychic Invisibility+EMP	—
Great Stress	Formidable	Psychic Invisibility+EMP	—
Incredible Stress	Impossible	Psychic Invisibility+EMP	—

Psyche Surgery

Task Type	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Cure Minor Phobia	Easy	[(Project Thought+Psychology)+2]+INT	—
Cure Major Phobia	Average	[(Project Thought+Psychology)+2]+INT	—
Cure Normal Disorder	Difficult	[(Project Thought+Psychology)+2]+INT	—
Cure Major Disorder	Formidable	[(Project Thought+Psychology)+2]+INT	—

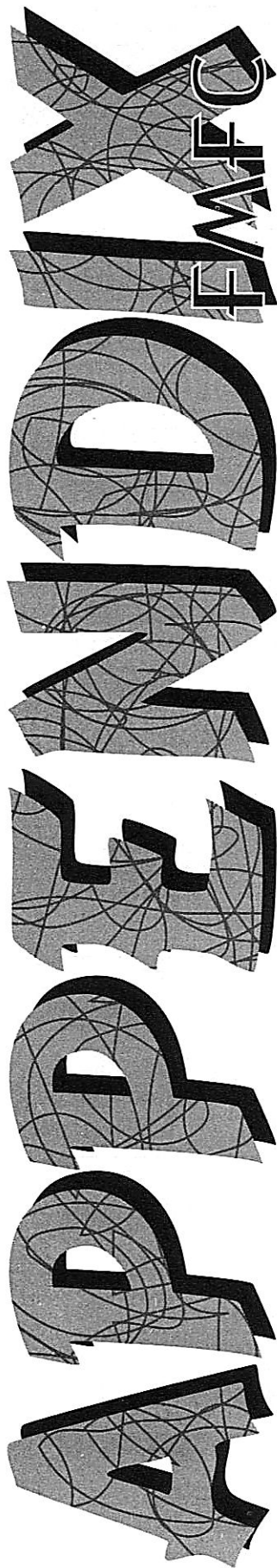
ASTRAL COMBAT

Task Type	Difficulty	Skill	Notes
Brute Psychic Assault	Difficult	Astral Combat+EMP	—
Emotional Attack	Formidable	Project Emotion+EMP	—
Psychic Destruction	Formidable	Astral Combat+EMP	—
Willpower Drain	Formidable	Astral Combat+EMP	—
Defensive Tactic	Formidable	Astral Combat+EMP	—

Astral Combat rating = Astral Travel rating

Astral Damage = Astral Travel skill × Willpower skill + 20 (rounded down)

Astral Hits = Willpower × Empathy



The following empathic underground cell is described in some detail, to serve as a more detailed example for referees. Because of its nature of seeking out individuals who have had strange experiences, the Free Mind Federation Cooperative can be very useful in Dark Conspiracy campaigns. It can even make a great launching place.

FREE MIND FEDERATION COOPERATIVE

Goals: Trainers and Information Brokers

Methods: Pencil Commandos (but see SOL, below)

Empathic Philosophy: Mixed, but primarily mystical

Organization: Dictatorial Unit.

Assets: Superior (\$15,000,000 annually)

Size: Unknown, but well over 1000.

Level of Activity: Medium

Relations with ETs: Cautious

Relations with Other Cells: No official contact with other groups.

Headquarters: "Smithtown" (location unknown).

Description

You are not insane. We have seen what you have seen. Sit with us and talk; we have heard before what you will say. All we ask is that you stay and share with us the light of day.

These are the words one hears at the opening of every meeting of

the Free Mind Federation Cooperative, at every safe house of the group. They are words that bring comfort and help to those who suffer from hallucinations, bad dreams, feelings of being watched or followed, etc.—people who feel that they are losing their sanity.

Philosophy: The FMFC is the Free Mind Federation Cooperative, but its initials also stand for Father, Mother, Family, Country. These last four words sum up the elements of the philosophy of Winston Smith, the FMFC's founder. To members of the group, *Father* represents the cosmos, the opposite of chaos—god, in whatever form you may choose. *Mothers* symbolizes Earth, our planet and our natural order, the concept of one natural state where everything is interrelated. *Family* stands for the human race, all humans, controlled or free. *Country* represents the environment where you live, not a nation-state or artificial boundary, but rather the area you live in, your community or neighborhood, where you spend your life. Other important aspects of the philosophy include: *The Light*, the combination of emotion, intellect, and physical presence to do right; and *The Dark*, the evil that rots, destroys, and feeds off the terror it breeds in humanity.

Approach: On the surface, the FMFC is a support group similar to Alcoholics Anonymous. Its objective is to support individuals who are trying to cope with incidences that they believe to be supernatural; the group tries to help individuals to help themselves. However, below the surface, the FMFC is an important part of the empathic underground.

The FMFC is different from other support groups in several ways. One, it never tries to tell the members of the group, or "family" as they are called, that the problem is their fault. FMFC members are willing to believe that the stories told by the people who come to them for help are true. The group believes in the supernatural and the terror of its darker elements. What its members try to accomplish as a group is to help the individuals in the Family to get over their fear and bring their lives under control. They help one another to help themselves to gain back some normalcy in their lives, to stay on the job and stay with their families.



The telling of each individual's story of terror serves not only the victim of the Dark, but also serves the FMFC as a whole. From these stories, the FMFC gains information concerning the actions of the Dark Ones and their minions. Also, it serves as a recruitment organization. The FMFC puts together a profile for each new member of the Family. Occasionally, an individual comes to the FMFC with the right attitude for a potential minion hunter. These individuals, after being carefully screened, are asked to become more involved in the war against the Dark Ones—they are asked to join the SOL ("Soldiers of Light") special strike teams.

Many doctors and scientists not associated with the FMFC have dismissed these sessions and the therapy they offer. Some have even gone so far as to council against the FMFC, arguing that individuals should work through their problems only with certified and licensed professionals. In some cities, the FMFC has encountered legal resistance when authorities attempt to ban the organization, claiming it was providing medical assistance—practicing medicine—without proper license or authority. Thus far, the FMFC has been able to refute these claims, and has won court cases by using Alcoholics Anonymous as the basis of its claim to being a support group and insisting that it is completely nonmedical in nature.

To begin a new cell, a safe house is set up by a group from the FMFC, and advertising appears in the local media or by leaflets in neighborhoods and areas where Dark activities have been observed or reported. The location of the new FMFC chapter is always kept as secret as possible. The advertisements do not mention the location of the safe house, only a phone number. When potential members call, a brief interview is conducted over the phone, and if individuals seem serious, they are given the location of the local safe house and invited to attend the next meeting. These meetings draw in all types, mostly scared, some curious, some troubled and some trouble-makers. From these meetings, a report of each new member is prepared. Those that fit a carefully prepared profile (and pass a thorough screening process to winnow out Darkling

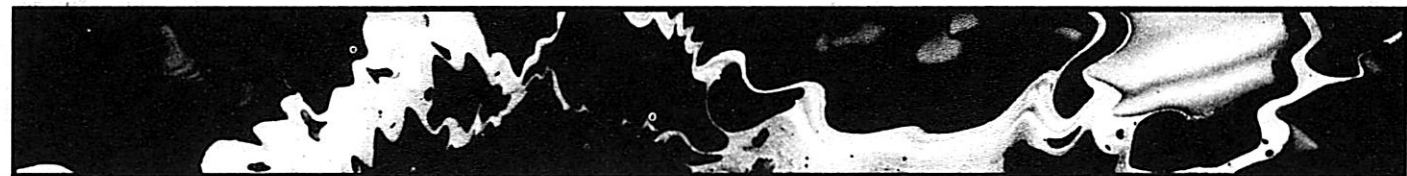
"plants") are asked if they would like to take part in special training to promote the FMFC in other areas. If they accept, they are transported to "Smithtown" for training, but always in such a manner that they should be unaware of the training ground's location. Those that complete their training and serve the FMFC well are later asked if they would like to partake in additional training. In short, they are recruited into the SOL for missions around the country. Training and utilization depends upon the individual. This special training takes place in several possible locations, but is always organized from "Smithtown."

Potential meeting places have to fit a certain kind of feel. Most are houses on the edge of nasty zones, some are warehouses, some are little shops. Houses are best, because it is easier to make those attending feel comfortable and "at home." Also, they give plenty of cover and easily serve multiple purposes. Preferred houses have living space upstairs, solid foundations, and lots of storage space. Windows then have bars added to them. Each chapter is usually on the fringe of an area heavily influenced by the Dark Ones and/or their minions, but not too deep within, as that could lead to secrets and special operations being compromised.

Each chapter is responsible to a state organization committee person who has direct communication with a limited number of chapters (maximum of five) within the state. The SOC chairperson reports to the national organization where the overall organization takes place.

History: The first FMFC "safe" house opened its doors two years ago to help 11 people who gathered together to tell their stories and share their fear. In so doing, they gained new strength in knowing that their problems were shared by others. That initial success convinced the founder, Winston Smith, to extend the group sessions to other parts of the city and to other cities. Now the FMFC builds on each new group in an area.

There are now FMFC safe houses in every major city, as well as in many smaller communities. The actual number of safe houses is unknown.



Winston Smith

The Myth: The following is an excerpt from a biography being written by Dr. H. J. Warren.

"Winston Smith was born in south Florida, near Orlando, in the year 1973. His exact birthdate is unknown, but it was in late October. He was raised by and lived with his mother for most of his life, until her death in 2002. He knew his father, and was told some family history by his mother. Most of this information he keeps to himself. What exactly hap-

pened to his father is unknown, as Smith refuses to discuss it. What is known is that from about the age of 5, Winston was fatherless. He will sometimes talk about his father to close friends, but in a strange, third-person fashion. To my knowledge (and that of others I have interviewed regarding him), he never mentions his father's name, simply referring to him as "my father." Smith holds no such reservations when discussing his mother, Evelyn Smith. He describes her in very colorful and emotional words and phrases, explaining that she taught him about truth, beauty, and humanity. He longs to visit her resting place more often and misses her greatly.

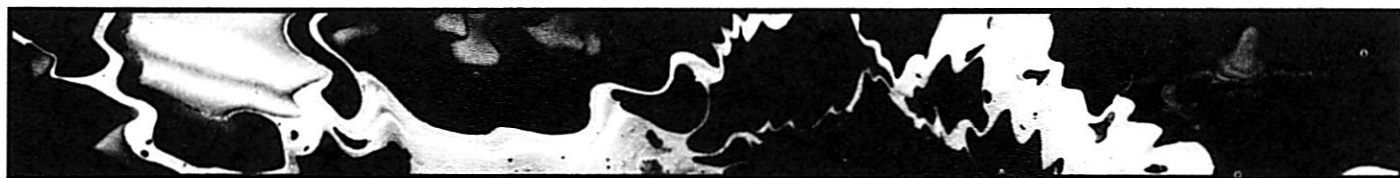
"Smith feels that there is a darkness that feeds off psychic energy. If pressed, he will admit that he cannot prove his theory, but that he feels it quite strongly, and that this is evidence enough. This constant feeling of dread caused him to believe at one time that he was going insane, and so he had himself admitted to a psychiatric hospital. After several months, both he and the medical staff concluded that while he did suffer from a mild case of paranoia, he was not going insane. Smith

then left the hospital and moved to New York City, looking for employment. It was there, he says, that he first came face to face with the evil that had been disturbing him—an external evil, and not of his own imagination. Convinced now that the evil was all too real, he was determined to combat it. Smith went to work using his successful food corporation as a cover to create the group that would counteract this conspiracy of Darkness.

"The Free Market Food Corporation is the name of the company Winston Smith created. The idea was to create the corporation so that he would have a substantial income with which to finance his struggle against the Dark Ones. The corporation marketed high impact food products such as Spray-On-Meals®, and Carb-Pump®. This company turned out to be a substantial financial success, so Smith faces very few problems funding his other projects."

The Reality: The name "Winston Smith" is an alias. His real name is Jeremy Mathews, and he was born somewhere in Oregon. His mother's name was actually Evelyn, however. His father's name was not Mathews—that was his mother's maiden name. His father was a humanoid extra-terrestrial, one of those rare ETs that had managed to avoid domination by the Dark Lords. He was of the ET race called the *Jes'da*, a race of creatures with the ability to slowly metamorph to suit their surroundings, to fit the expectation of those around them. When "Smith's" father made his desperate escape to our world, his first contact was with a governmental official of the United States of America. Unfortunately for him, these officials from the NSA confined him for interrogation and experimentation, refusing to give credence to his story of a supernatural evil sweeping through the ETs. They imagined that he was part of some alien plot to invade Earth.

Over time, he changed his form to look more human, and was eventually able to escape using his empathic powers. Fleeing across the country, he took shelter one night in the garage of a small



country house, where he was eventually discovered by the owner, Evelyn Mathews. Mathews saw in him not an alien monster, but an intelligent creature in need of help. In time, she came to love him and bore him a son which they named Jeremy. Although his appearance had progressively changed, so that he was by now nearly indistinguishable from the humans around him, Jeremy's father was not safe from the hounds of the Dark Lords. Rather than risk his family, he chose to leave them, leading the minions of the Dark Lords away. His current status is unknown even to "Smith." He may still be alive, but in hiding from the Dark Ones.

Early in his youth, Jeremy discovered that he had the ability to sense the weather—the changes in air pressure, mass, and the electromagnetic structure—in short he knew when it was going to rain. In general, he was in tune with nature. He also had the ability to tell when someone was angry, upset, or happy, abilities he inherited from his father. These very special parents made him into the remarkable person he is. His mother gave him humanity and his father gave him the strength to use it. She taught him what it meant to care, to have unconditional compassion for others. And his father's sacrifice showed him that if one truly cares for the well-being of others, than one must make sacrifices, and must have the courage and strength to make painful decisions in order to care for these people.

As "Smith" grew to be a man, he became aware of an evil menace at work in the world, not just as a vague force described to him by

his father, but as something that was almost palpable in the air. He decided to make combating this evil his mission in life, especially after what this evil had done to his father. He could sense that the evil was strong in New York, so he went there. At first, his passion for his purpose was such that it overpowered his common sense, and he made a rather foolish single-handed assault against a Dark One he found in New York. Fortunately, he was rescued by a cell of the empathic underground. The cell's name was Warriors (named after a street gang from an old movie called *The Warriors*). They were impressed by his fervor for the cause. From them, "Smith" learned a great deal about how to fight the Dark Ones and their minions. He in turn, by example, strengthened their dedication to the fight. This cell, however, became a victim of its own success; the Dark Lord could no longer dismiss it as a minor annoyance. He turned his attention toward the Warriors, and the group was destroyed almost to a man. Only "Smith's" empathic powers allowed him to escape the massacre. He left New York and set about forming his own empathic underground.





SOLDIERS OF LIGHT (SOL)

Goals: Hunters, Liberators
Methods: Any
Empathic Philosophy:
Mixed, but primarily mystical
Organization: Dictatorial Unit
Assets: Superior (\$15 million annually)

Size: Unknown, but over one hundred.

Level of Activity: Highly dedicated

Relations with ETs: Cautious, but willing to help non-subverted ETs

Relations with Other Cells: They try to dominate

other groups they contact. Otherwise, they try to establish friendly relations. If they feel incapable of achieving a particular objective, they may try to hire others to do it.

Headquarters: "Smithtown" (location unknown).

Description: This is a paramilitary group. Strike teams from the SOL have three primary goals: (1) take out the Dark Ones and their minions; (2) retrieve family (rescue prisoners); and (3) acquire information. Operations are carefully prepared in advance by the central command. Mission objectives are spelled out to minimize casualties among the family. SOL strike forces use FMFC chapters to provide them safe starting points and local information, but individuals in FMFC group sessions are not allowed to see or associate with SOL strike force team members. Missions are specifically conducted so as to achieve maximum success, but with the absolute minimum of casualties among the team.

History: The SOL was founded shortly after the FMFC. Once several chapters were established, those individuals who fit a specially prepared profile were invited into the Soldiers of Light.

FREE MARKET FOOD CORPORATION

Description: This company is actually a cover for Smith's other groups. It produces seasonings and quick meals for people on the go.

Products: Spray-On-Meals®, a flavoring used to enhance the food you serve with the best-seller Garlic Blaster®. Also Curry-A-Flavor®, and Tex&Mex®.

Carb-Pump®, a complete breakfast, lunch, or dinner in two minutes, hot or cold. Carb-Pump contains 10 to 20 times your daily needs of everything.

Note: Carb-Pump also serves as MRE (meals ready-to-eat) for SOL teams.

History: After Smith's experiences in New York, he left to form his own underground. He had learned from his time with the Warriors that financing a cell was costly, so he decided to first go into business. Then, once he had a successful financial income, he would form his new underground. Dr. H. J. Warren was recruited while Smith was in New York City. Warren had been loosely associated with the Warriors due to some unusual experiences of his own (the "loose" association saved him from the massacre). Warren had worked for a private medical company (Med-X) which had questionable connections worldwide, and which has been known to work with some unusual customers. He now became the head of Research & Development at the Free Market Food Corporation. While he is only a minor financial partner in the corporation, his opinions carry a lot of weight, due to his associations with Smith.

It took Smith five years to build the Free Market Food Corp., but it is now a very successful corporation. Smith has recently relinquished much of the management of the corporation to senior executive personnel, in order to devote his time more fully to the Free Mind Federation Cooperative and Soldiers of Light.



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Volume 1



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