

THE
ULTIMATE

A sourcebook for

HERO
SYSTEM
FIFTH EDITION

MENTALIST



STEVEN S. LONG

THE ULTIMATE MENTALIST™

BY STEVEN S. LONG



HERO  **PLUS**™

THE ULTIMATE MENTALIST™

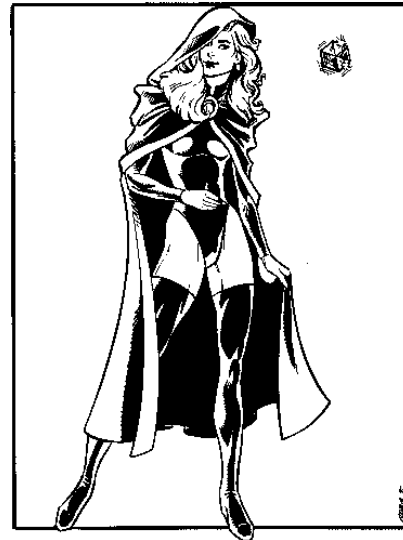
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	6
Preconceptions About Mental Powers..	7
How to Use this Book	7
Glossary	8

Chapter One: Character Creation

MENTALIST ARCHETYPES	10
The “Brain In A Tank”	10
The Clairvoyant	10
The Empath	10
The ESPionage Agent	10
The Mental Parasite	10
The Multiple Mind	10
The Parapsychologist/Psionic Investigator ..	11
The Psionic Adept	11
The Psionic Gadgeteer/Computer	11
The Psionic Mage	11
The Telekinetic	11
The Telepath	12
Examples of Common Mental Powers	12
CHARACTERISTICS	13
EGO And Presence Attacks	13
SPD and Mental Powers	13
Skills	13
Mental Skills	13
Cloak	14
Combat Skill Levels	14
Facade	14
Knowledge Skill: Psionic Etiquette	15
Knowledge Skill: The Psionic World	15
Mentally-Enhanced Skills	15
Professional Skill: Meditation	16
Psionic Familiarity	16
Psionics	16
Sciences	16
Skill Levels	16
Veil	16
TALENTS	17
Combat Sense	17
Danger Sense	17
Eidetic Memory	17
Find Weakness	17
Latent Mentalist	17
Lightning Reflexes	18
Resistance	18
Simulate Death	18
POWERS	19
Summary Of Mental Powers	19
Mental Powers: Their General Nature	20
Effect Rolls	20
Resisting And Breaking Free	
From Mental Powers	20
Instant And Constant Mental Powers	21
The Visibility Of Mental Powers	22
Competing Mental Powers	22
Complementary Mental Powers	22
Mental Signatures and Mental Traces	22
Implications, Options, and Clarifications	23
The “All-Or-Nothing” Nature	
Of Mental Powers	23
Breakout Rolls	24
Changing Levels Of Effect	24
Classes Of Minds	24
Competing Mental Powers	25

Converting Standard Powers To Mental	
Powers	25
Line Of Sight	25
Mental Powers	27
Astral Form	27
Clairsentience	28
Cyberkinesis	31
Ego Attack	32
Mental Defense	33
Mental Illusions	34
Mental Invulnerability	41
Mental Senses And Sense-Affecting	
Powers	41
Mind Control	43
Mind Link	49
Mind Scan	50
Telekinesis	55
Telepathy	60
Other Powers	65
Adjustment Powers	65
Change Environment	65
Characteristics	65
Damage Reduction	66
Damage Resistance	66
Darkness	66
Desolidification	66
Detect	67
Dispel And Suppress	68
Duplication	68
Energy Blast	69
Entangle: Mental Paralysis	69
Extra Limbs	70
Flash	70
Flight	70
Force Field And Force Wall: Mental Shield ..	70
Images	71
Instant Change	71
Invisibility	71
Killing Attack, Ranged	71
Knockback Resistance	71
Life Support: Psionic Immortality	72
Missile Deflection And	
Reflection: Mental Deflection	72
Movement Powers	72
Shape Shift	72
Skills	73
Teleport	74
Transform	74
Tunneling	76
POWER ADVANTAGES	77
Affects Desolidified	77
Area Of Effect	77
Autofire	77
Based On Ego Combat Value	77
Continuous	79
Cumulative	79
Damage Shield	79
Difficult To Dispel	80
Explosion	80
Invisible Power Effects	80
Sticky	80
Trigger	80
Usable By Others	80



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Limited Power	81
POWER LIMITATIONS	81
Endurance Costs	
For Continuing-Effect	
Mental Powers	81
Mental Powers Based On Characteristics	
Other Than EGO	81
No Conscious Control (-2)	83
No Range (-½)	83
Psionic	83
Side Effects	83
POWER FRAMEWORKS	84
Telekinesis Frameworks	84
Mental Powers Power Pools	84
Mentalist Power Pools	84
DISADVANTAGES	85
Age	85
Distinctive Features	85
Hunted	85
Physical Limitation	85
Psychological Limitations	85
Psychosomatic Limitations	85
Susceptibility	86
Vulnerability	86

Chapter Two: Campaign Creation

GENERAL ISSUES	
RELATING TO MENTALISTS	88
Preconceptions About Mental Powers	88
Power level of Mental Powers	88
Reliability of Mental Powers	89
Getting the Power level and “Feel” You Want	89
Low-Powered	89
Mid-Powered	89
High-Powered	89
Genre Mental Powers	90
Cyberpunk/Near Future	90
Espionage	90
Fantasy	90
Horror	90
Martial Arts	90
Pulp Era	90
Science Fiction	91
Superheroes	91
Western	91
Dealing with Mentalist Problems	
in Your Campaign	91
Their Sheer Existence	91
The Mentalist Sniper Syndrome	91
Mentalists And Mysteries	92
Mentalists and Society	92
Mentalists And The Law	92
Anti-Mentalism Prejudice	93
PSIONICS CAMPAIGNS	94
Standards for Psionics Campaigns	94
Types of Psionics Campaigns	94
ESPionage	94
PsiCops	96
Psychic Wars	97

Chapter Three: Mental Combat

Basic Rules of Mental Combat	102
Implications, Clarifications, And Options	102
Mental Combat Modifiers	102
Mind-to-Mind Combat	103
What Is A Mentalist?	103
Mind-To-Mind Combat	
And Physical Combat	104
Mental Combat Maneuvers	104
Visualizing Mental Combat	105
Explanation Of Mental Combat	
Maneuvers	106
Combat Tactics For Mentalists	112

Chapter Four: Source book

PSIONIC GADGETS	115
Offensive Gadgets	115
Defensive Gadgets	119
Movement Gadgets	120
Communications	
And Reconnaissance Gadgets	120

Chapter Five: Villians

Mentalist Villains	
In Other HERO System Products	121
The Varanyi	122
Appearance	122
Varanyi Mental Powers	122
Varanyi Society And Culture	123
The Varanyi Attack On Earth	125
T’Nereq Skolvasian	
Commander of the Sitharados	126
Typical Hrewinth H’varr	128
G’u’radic (Varanyi Star Galleon)	130
Brainchylde	131
Psychophant	133
Headhunter	134
Mordecai Mentos	137
Psiphon	138
Solitaire	139

Appendices

Appendix A: Bibliography	148
Comics	148
Books	148
Films and Television	149
Appendix A: Checklist of	
Optional Mental Powers Rules	150
Appendix C: Conversions	153
Buying Powers	153
The Listings	153
Power Advantages	158
Level-Based Systems	159
GURPS®	159
Shadowrun®	160
StoryTeller®	160





INTRODUCTION

Solitaire awakened, coughing. The dust was thick in the air around her. She shook her head to clear the ache away. She looked up, and was pleased to see that Widget had escaped the destruction.

You okay? she asked the floating crystal telepathically.

Yes, it replied, glad that she was awake.

Next, Solitaire looked for Seeker. There he was, lying on the floor, covered with bits of rubble. Fortunately, he appeared to have escaped the worst of the cave-in; her healing powers did not seem to be needed. As she pulled the rubble off of him, she thought back to what had happened just a few minutes ago. The Champions had been pursuing Dr. Draconis, who they had discovered was still alive, and had finally managed to uncover his base. They had split up into three groups, hoping to explore the base quickly and find him before he could escape.

Unfortunately, she and Seeker had found him almost at once, on one of the lower levels. His counterattack had brought the entire lab down on them, trapping the two of them inside a tiny pocket of air. Heaven only knew what had happened to him; he'd probably escaped—again.

Seeker began to stir. "Oy, Soli," he said groggily, holding his head in one hand, "didja get the number of the truck that hit us?" He grinned, slightly, and she knew he was all right.

"Sit still a moment, Seeker. I'll get us out of here." She looked at one of the larger rocks, and used the sheer power of her mind to pick it up and move it out of the way. As she began to lift it, the other rocks around it shifted, too, so she quickly put it back.



She began to concentrate, casting her mind outwards, searching for a mental presence quite familiar to her—Defender. It wasn't long before she found him and Obsidian—in another part of the base. *Defender, we could use some help!*

What's going on, Solitaire? he responded.

Draconis has trapped me and Seeker in some rubble...

So that was the rumbling we felt a few minutes ago!

...and we need your help to get out. I think I could move most of these rocks and bits of machinery with my psychokinesis, but I'm afraid of causing the whole thing to collapse further. If you and Obsidian help, we should be able to do a safer job.

Okay, we're on our way! ... Er, where are you?

We're on Sublevel 3-B. First you need to find a stairwell...

For centuries the concept of mental powers has fascinated humanity. Men have often dreamed of employing vast psychic powers—reading thoughts, foreseeing the future, mentally controlling other men, moving physical objects with the sheer power of the mind—for their own benefit, or the benefit of mankind.

With the advent of modern-day fantastic fiction, this fascination has continued; often, mental powers become the focus or theme of a particular story or film. Science fiction characters from Luke Skywalker to Telzey Amberdon have possessed mental powers. The wizards of fantasy fiction can ordain the future and invoke other mental powers with their magic. Mental abilities even creep into horror fiction on occasion; the terrible havoc they can wreak, and the fright that having your mind invaded can inspire, can act as a perfect springboard for a horror author's work.

Mental powers have probably seen their greatest elaboration in comic books. Comic-book mentalists use all of the standard mental powers, such as telepathy and telekinesis, but may be able to “expand” these abilities. Some superheroic mentalists can manipulate molecules and atoms with their mental powers, or teleport themselves, or do dozens of other things which stretch the definition of “mental powers” to the breaking point. Indeed, some of these characters simply use the term “mental powers” to describe the origin of their abilities, not any particular limitation of or conception for those abilities.

Whatever type of mentalist character you like to play, *The Ultimate Mentalist* has something to offer you. It deals with all aspects of *HERO System* mental powers, from the “mechanical” aspects of creating them, to how to use them in your campaign without letting them ruin it, to structuring entire campaigns around them. *The Ultimate Mentalist* even has psionic gadgets and other source book material that you can drop right into your campaign.

Finally, *The Ultimate Mentalist* includes conversion notes for a number of popular roleplaying systems, so you can use these rules for mental powers with the system that you like.

Preconceptions About Mental Powers

In the author's experience, it is common for gamers, particularly *HERO System* gamers, to rework a game's rules on mental powers to suit their particular conception of how mental powers should work. In writing this book, an effort has been made to avoid enshrining any particular preconceptions about how mental powers work by turning those preconceptions into hard and fast rules. Some of this is unavoidable, but the author and editors have tried to minimize it as much as possible. Since every reader is free to pick and choose what he likes from this supplement (or any other), no one has to use a preconception that he is uncomfortable with. For example, in *The Ultimate Mentalist* you will find a discussion of “mental signatures” and “mental traces.” If you don't believe that mental powers would leave signatures or traces, ignore those sections.

The Ultimate Mentalist lets you decide how mental powers will work in your campaign; design guidelines are included (as well as a campaign design form). For further discussion of this subject, please refer to the section on Campaign Creation.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

If you're a Game Master, you'll want to read all of this book, paying particular attention to the Campaign Creation section. You'll need to decide how to integrate these new rules into your campaign, or whether you might want to start up a new campaign based on these rules. The handy Campaign Checklist form helps you keep track of the decisions you make about mental powers and how they work in your campaign.

If you're a player looking for new abilities for your mentalist character (or if you'd like to design one for the first time), read through the Character Creation section, and certainly browse through Combat and the Source book sections, too. Before you start working on your characters, though, you'll need to check with your GM and find out just what decisions have been made regarding your campaign rules. *The Ultimate Mentalist* allows for all sorts of ways for mental powers to work, and it's up to the GM to decide exactly how things work in their campaign.

The Ultimate Mentalist assumes that you have a working knowledge of the *Hero System* rules, or are familiar with one of the game systems mentioned in the Appendix where the system conversions are presented. Since *The Ultimate Mentalist* is written in terms of the *Hero System*, an effort has been made to define or explain some basic *Hero System* terms. If you're not a *Hero System* guru, don't worry; questions about other game systems are dealt with in the Appendix. Just read through the book and get a feel for how things work, then turn to the Appendix for details on conversions to your favorite system.





GLOSSARY

The following are some of the terms and abbreviations used in this book to describe mental powers, their effects, and how they are handled using *HERO System* rules.

BOECV: Based On EGO Combat Value (a Power Advantage).

Breakout Roll: A roll made by a character who has been affected by a continuing-effect Mental Power to shake off the Power's effects.

Continuing-effect Mental Power: Mental Powers such as Mind Control, Mental Illusions, and Telepathy which are Instant Powers, but whose effects may continue to affect a character for a long period of time after the initial attack. Characters affected by continuing-effect Mental Powers are entitled to make Breakout Rolls to escape from their effects.

DECV: Defensive EGO Combat Value; ECV used to defend one's self against a mental attack.

ECV: EGO Combat Value, a Combat Value calculated as a character's EGO/3 and used to make attacks with (or defend one's self from) Mental Powers. Combat Value is the basic number that determines your chance to hit in the Hero System.

Effect Roll: A roll of the dice purchased in a continuing-effect Mental Power, to determine if the power successfully affects the target character. For example, a character with 40 points in Mind Control has purchased 8d6, and therefore has an 8d6 Effect Roll.

Line Of Sight: The ability to sense another character with a Targeting Sense; so called because one is ordinarily able to draw a straight line from the attacking character to the target with no intervening obstacles. Line Of Sight is a requirement for attacking another character with Mental Powers. This term's exact meaning and effect on game play is subject to a wide variety of interpretations; it is discussed more fully in Chapter One.

LOS: Line Of Sight.

MD: Mental Defense (as either a Power or Characteristic).

Mental Power: A Power which uses mental energy to achieve certain affects, officially defined as such by the *HERO System* rules. The "standard" Mental Powers are Ego Attack, Mental Illusions, Mind Control, Mind Scan, and Telepathy; other potential Mental Powers are discussed in this book. Mental Powers should be distinguished from mental powers; the former term indicates a particular class of powers defined by the rules; the latter (non-capitalized) term indicates a special effect of superpowers.

Mental Signature: A mental "fingerprint" left by a mentalist when he uses his powers. Each mentalist's signature is unique.

Mental Trace: A mental "track" left when a mental power is used. Each mental power's trace is unique to it, i.e., the trace left by Mind Control is different from that left by Telepathy, or by a BOECV STUN Drain (but seven different "forms" of Mind Control will each have the same trace, the "Mind Control trace").

MTM Combat: Mind-To-Mind Combat, a form of psychic combat between mentalists.

OECV: Offensive EGO Combat Value, used to make attacks with Mental Powers.

Psionic Powers: Mental powers that deal with mind-to-mind contact; examples include Mental Illusions, Mind Control, and Telepathy.

Psychic Powers: Mental powers which act as "senses"; examples include Mind Scan, Detect Mind, Clairsentience and Danger Sense when defined as a Mental Power, and so forth.

Psychokinetic Powers: Mental powers which affect the physical world, i.e., Telekinesis and powers with "telekinetic" special effects.

CHAPTER

ONE

CHARACTER

CREATION

Because of the potential breadth of the term “mental powers,” creating a mentalist character is not always an easy thing to do. For this reason the first and largest chapter of *The Ultimate Mentalist* is devoted to the topic of creating mentalist characters. The bulk of the chapter is devoted to discussing the various Mental Powers (and other powers and abilities mentalists might buy) and their ramifications and implications. Information on related topics (such as mental combat) can be found in later chapters.



MENTALIST ARCHETYPES



As with any other character type, mentalists often fit into one or more of several “archetypes.” Players should use these archetypes as inspiration when thinking of what type of mentalist they want to play, and how they want to portray the character.

Mentalist archetypes are generally derived either from the particular types of powers the mentalist possesses, or how he tends to use them. They are not as well-defined as archetypes for other character types or genres, since mental powers tend to allow for a wide range of abilities. This makes it difficult to fit mentalists into any particular category. Players can pick and choose among these archetypes as they prefer; some characters will be pure examples of a particular archetype, while others will display aspects of several archetypes.

The “Brain In A Tank”

This archetype, used more often for villains than for heroes, is a mentalist with severe physical handicaps. The character is usually able to compensate for or overcome his handicaps with his mental powers, but it’s not always an exchange the character enjoys. Examples include the stereotypical mad scientist’s mutated brain trapped in a tank of nutrient fluid; Professor X of Marvel Comics’ *The Uncanny X-Men*, who is a paraplegic; or a character whose body is trapped in an unbreakable coma but whose brain is very much alive and active in its fleshy prison (and possibly insane as a result).

The Clairvoyant

This mentalist is one whose powers primarily relate to clairvoyance and other psychic powers. The Clairvoyant’s mental combat abilities and psychokinetic powers are often minimal, but his mental senses are second to none. The Clairvoyant may employ his abilities as a fortuneteller or seer, or (in the case of villains) may use them solely for his own profit (being able to accurately predict stock market activity is, after all, a sure ticket to riches). Another possibility is to combine this archetype with the Parapsychologist/Psionic Investigator (see below), particularly if the Clairvoyant’s powers include psychometric abilities or the sort of “sensitivity” displayed by spirit mediums.

The Empath

An Empath is a mentalist whose powers relate to emotions: he can detect them, project them, and even alter them. Empaths are also known for a unique form of healing in which they heal an injured or sick person by transferring that person’s wounds or disease to themselves (or sometimes to another willing subject). A good example of an Empath is the villain of that name who belongs to Marvel Comics’ group The Hellions.

The ESPionage Agent

This is a mentalist who uses his abilities to commit acts of espionage. Mind reading and mental control powers can make for the perfect spy—but the ESPionage agent has to be wary of enemy agents who have mental powers themselves! ESPionage Agents can form the basis for a type of Psionics Campaign (refer to Chapter Two for details). One of the best examples in fantastic literature can be found in Brian Lumley’s book *Necroscope*.

The Mental Parasite

The Mental Parasite, often known as a “psychic vampire,” is a character who is defined in terms of his relationships with and approaches to other people. Milder forms of this archetype simply enjoy affecting others with their mental powers. More extreme forms of this archetype actually leech psychic energy from their targets, or cruelly manipulate them and take advantage of them. Examples of this archetype include Puppetman from the “Wild Cards” series of books and Marvel Comics’ Empath.

The Multiple Mind

This archetype represents a mentalist whose power derives from having multiple minds in the same body. This may be the result of natural processes (for example, a race of two-headed aliens with mental powers) or outside forces (for example, the Mind-Master Complex from *Creatures Of The Night*). It can lead to a number of interesting psychological maladies in addition to vast mental powers.



The Parapsychologist/Psionic Investigator

This character, whether or not he possesses mental powers himself, is often a staple of stories involving mentalists and psychic or supernatural phenomena. He specializes in investigating these subjects, and is usually quite knowledgeable about them. If he has mental powers, they are often of the sort that assist him in his work (for example, Clairvoyance, Precognition, Danger Sense, and the like).

The Psionic Adept

This type of mentalist usually only possesses one or two mental powers, but is extremely skilled in their use. He often has a Power Framework which allows him to use his power in all of its aspects. Telekinetic Adepts are perhaps the most common form of Psionic Adepts, but other types are possible.

An example of this archetype is Marvel Comics's Mastermind, who wields potent Mental Illusion-type powers. He also possesses some aspects of the "Psionic Gadgeteer" archetype, below.

The Psionic Gadgeteer/Computer

Some mentalists derive their powers not from mutations or accidents, but from building gadgets which provide them with mental powers. The usual gadget is a helmet or headband, but a clever gadgeteer can probably think up many other devices. Of course, a Psionic Gadgeteer needs to know SC: Psionic Engineering and other skills related to electronics, neurology, and so forth. He may also have innate mental abilities relating to machines (such as Cyberkinesis).

In some cases, a sentient computer or robot will develop mental powers. There have been several examples of this in television's "Star Trek," such as the sentient computer Landru. Psionic computers will often have Cyberkinesis in addition to powers which affect living beings. Psionic computers and robots are most often found as villains, but may be heroes, too.

The Psionic Mage

Wizards are often depicted as having mental powers in addition to (or as an aspect of) their mystical abilities. Their mental powers may be relatively weak, but subject to being augmented by magic, or they may be extremely powerful to begin with. Alternately, a PsiMage may simply be a mage who specializes in spells that mimic "normal" mental powers.

The Telekinetic

This is a type of mentalist whose powers are based around Telekinesis and other psychokinetic effects: a mentalist who uses mental powers to manipulate physical objects (and, in some cases, types of energy). Telekinetics have a broad range of powers in addition



to simple Telekinesis: they can, for example, create telekinetic force blasts and force screens (Energy Blast, Force Field); attack their enemies with telekinetic "spears" or simply rip them apart from the inside (Ranged Killing Attack); kill them by preventing their hearts or lungs from moving (Ranged Killing Attack, NND, Indirect); shatter and break objects with telekinetic force (various forms of Killing Attack, Dispel, and so forth); dissipate gases and similar substances (Dispel gas-based attacks); and so on. The list is practically endless.

Most other "kinetics" are identified by type of substance or energy the power affects. These include:

Biokinetics: Biokinetics control biological functions, whether their own or those of others. They can, for example, increase their reaction times, cause someone to suffer a heart attack, heal broken bones, and so forth.

Cryokinetics: Cryokinetics manipulate cold, ice, and frost. They can lower temperatures, generate ice storms and ice structures.

Cyberkinetics: A cyberkinetic can read, reprogram, and control machines, primarily computers. Interface from *High Tech Enemies* is a cyberkinetic.

Electrokinetics: Electrokinetics control electricity. They can generate lightning bolts, short out electrical circuits, and so forth. They may also have some cyberkinetic powers.

Pyrokinetics: Pyrokinetics can create and manipulate heat and flame. Firebug from *Justice Not Law* and Ashtray Art from *Underworld Enemies* are examples of pyrokinetics.



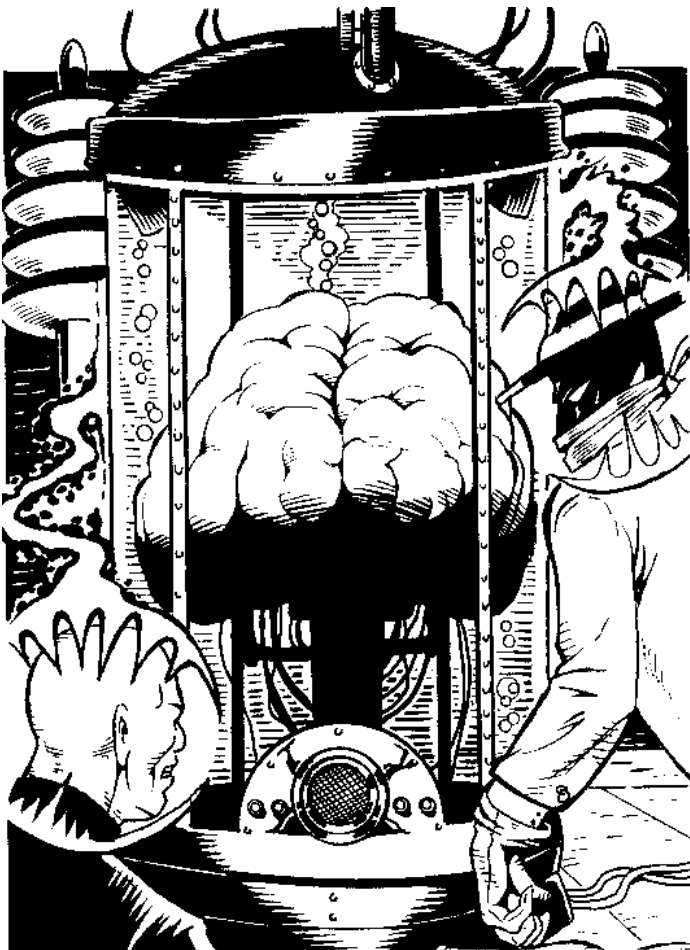
There are plenty of telekinetic characters in the source literature. One of the best known is Marvel Comics' Marvel Girl, who possesses a wide variety of telekinetic abilities. Larry Niven's Gil Hamilton is a good example of a character with very low-power Telekinesis.

The Telepath

A Telepath is a mentalist whose primary powers relate to reading minds and projecting thoughts into the minds of others: in short, Telepaths specialize in mental powers classified as "psionic." Since this includes Telepathy (the ability to invade peoples' mental privacy) and Mind Control, Telepaths are often among the most feared and despised types of mentalists.

EXAMPLES OF COMMON MENTAL POWERS

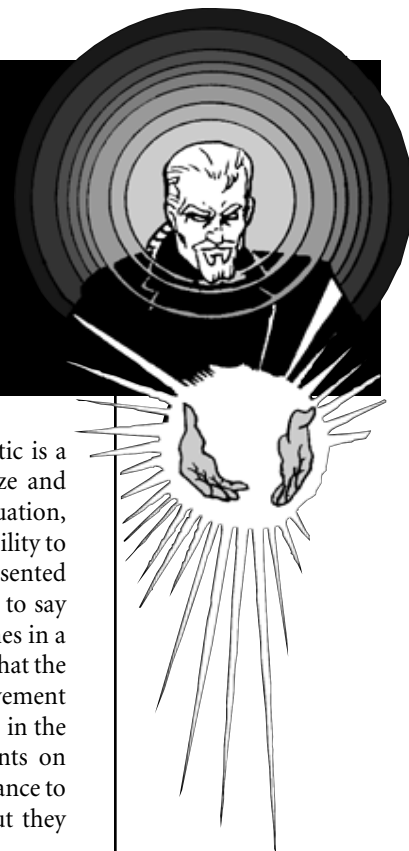
The chart below gives brief examples of how to create some of the more common mental powers seen in the comics and other source material. Further details can be found in the next section of this book.



Effect	Power Used
Alter someone's memory or personality	Psionic Surgery
Attack someone's mind with your mental power	Ego Attack
Become invisible to perception by other minds	Psionic Invisibility
Bring a person's "greatest fear" to life and have it "attack" him	Mental Illusions, "No Conscious Control" (-1)
Control/manipulate machines	Cyberkinesis
Control/manipulate someone's mind	Mind Control
Control/manipulate animals' minds	Theriokinesis
Detect emotions or "psychic impressions" associated with an object or place	Psychometry
Leeching someone's "soul" or "life- force" away from them	Psychic Vampirism or BOECV RKA
Mentally search for another mind	Mind Scan
Move physical objects with mental power	Psychokinesis
Read, project, and/or control emotions	Empathy
Read someone's mind	Telepathy
Transfer one's mind into another person or an object	Mind Transference and/or Psionic Immortality



CHARACTERISTICS



This section discusses some aspects of Characteristics that may be important to mentalist PCs. Of course, EGO is the primary Characteristic that mentalists should acquire; it assists mental powers in both offense and defense. Aside from that, here are some other points regarding Characteristics.

EGO And Presence Attacks

In *HERO System* rules, either EGO or PRE are used to resist the effect of Presence Attacks. Mentalists will frequently have high EGOs as a result of their mental powers, but this has little or nothing to do with their bravery or ability to resist being startled or impressed by a Presence Attack. To simulate this, the GM can rule that only PRE can be used to resist Presence Attacks, or he can allow mentalists to buy EGO which "Does Not Protect Against Presence Attacks" (-1/4).

SPD And Mental Powers

You may want to design a character that can use mental powers more frequently than they can act physically. After all, in the *Hero System* if you increase a character's SPD then the character can perform any sort of action more often, and then can also run much faster. This may seem odd for a mentalist character, who may not be able to run much faster than the average person. Characters who want to have Phases on which they can only use their Mental Powers should not buy extra points of SPD with some sort of Limitation. This tends to create as many problems as it solves, and is not the best solution for game balance. Instead, characters can simply sell off some inches of Running. Here's how it works:

In the *Hero System* the Speed Characteristic is a reflection of your mental ability to recognize and evaluate the proper action in a combat situation, rather than a purely physical rating of your ability to move or react quickly (which is mostly represented by Dexterity). So it's not unreasonable at all to say that the ability to use mental powers four times in a turn (as a SPD 4 character could) also means that the character could take physical actions (like movement or attacks) four times in a turn instead. Now, in the case of a character that's mostly spent points on mental abilities, they won't have much of a chance to hit someone or hurt them with a punch, but they could try that if necessary.

The only thing that may seem odd is that a SPD 4 character can run twice as fast as a SPD 2 character (both move at 6" per phase; the SPD 4 character moves 24" in a turn, the SPD 2 character moves 12" in a turn). A simple way to rectify this is for the SPD 4 character to sell off 3" of Running, which gives them back 6 points. Then they only move 3" per phase, or a total of 12" per turn, the same total movement as a SPD 2 character. Thus you can have a mentalist who acts like a SPD 4 character, but only runs as fast as a SPD 2 character. This technique can, of course, be used to for other SPD ratings.

Skills

This section highlights some aspects of Skills that may be important to mentalist PCs. It also includes some new Skills for mentalists.

Mental Skills

Skill	Base Roll	Base/+1 Cost	Notes
Cloak	9+(EGO/5)	3/2	"Mental Stealth"
Combat Precognition	—	—/5	8 pt. level, -1/2
Combat Psychokinesis	—	—/5	8 pt. level, -1/2
Combat Telepathy	—	—/5	8 pt. level, -1/2
Facade	9+(EGO/5)	3/2	"Mental Disguise"
KS: Psionic Etiquette	11	2/1	
KS: Psionic World	11	2/1	
PS: Meditation	11	2/1	
Psionic Familiarity	General	2/—	For each Skill/Power
Psionics	9+(EGO/5)	3/2	Control Roll
SC: Psionic Engineer	11	2/1	
SC: Psionic Surgery	11	2/1	
SC: Pharmaceuticals	11	2/1	
Veil	9+(EGO/5)	3/2	"Mental Concealment"



Cloak

Cloak is a new EGO-based Skill. It is, in essence, a form of “Mental Stealth.” Cloak is used to hide use of a character’s mental powers from persons with Mental Powers or Mental Awareness. It reflects a subtle use of a mental power, one cautious enough that most people will not notice it. Cloak cannot be used to hide a mental attack from the target being attacked, any more than normal Stealth can be used to hide the effects of a normal attack. To do that, characters can achieve a +20 effect on their Effect Roll (see below).

Cloak can be used to make mental signatures and traces (see below) harder to locate. If the mentalist uses Cloak when using a Mental Power on someone, another mentalist trying to use Telepathy to locate his signature/traces must make a PER Roll in a Skill versus Skill contest with the first mentalist’s Cloak Skill.

Cloak does not hide a mental power which has the Limitation “Visible” from normal sight; it only hides mental powers from detection by mental senses such as Mental Awareness. Of course, as with normal Stealth, if someone who can sense mental powers is “looking” (or using other senses) directly at the attack, Cloak will not serve to hide it or render it “invisible” to them. The “Invisible Power Effects” Advantage is required to do that.

Characters who are attempting to detect the use of a mental power hidden with Cloak can make a PER Roll; this is a Skill versus Skill contest. The GM may impose appropriate modifiers to either or both rolls depending on the situation.

Cloak Skill is harder to use the more mental power is used; the GM should apply a -1 to the Cloak Skill Roll for every 10 active points of mental power used. So if 40 active points of Telepathy are used, then the Cloak Skill roll would be -4. Subtle uses of mental powers are easier to hide than high amounts of power.

The GM should apply situational modifiers, both positive and negative, to the use of Cloak Skill. For instance, it would be easier to hide your use of mental powers when there is a lot of psionic activity going on. Certain locations may be more or less “psionically active,” which may make it easier or more difficult to use Cloak Skill. Adding modifiers to use of Cloak Skill lends a lot more flavor to the use of mental powers in general, if the GM can provide good descriptive reasons for the modifiers given.

Combat Skill Levels

A few clarifications:

Levels with “all Mental Powers” are 5-point Levels, as are Levels with a character’s Mentalist or Egoist Power Pool (see “Power Frameworks,” below)

Characters should not be allowed to buy Levels with DECV alone. If appropriate, they may use Levels with “all Mental Powers” for DECV.

8-point Levels with “All Combat” apply to Mental Powers which are used in combat.

Some mentalists are “combat precognitives” who can use their mental powers to “predict” what an enemy will do or subconsciously influence an enemy’s actions. This ability can be simulated with 8-point Skill Levels with the $-\frac{1}{2}$ Limitation, “Psionic-Based” (meaning that the Levels only work against creatures with minds).

Some mentalists may be “combat psychics” who can use their mental powers to predict what an enemy will do or subconsciously influence an enemy’s actions. This ability divides into three categories: telepathic, precognitive, and psychokinetic. Any of the three may buy 8 point Skill Levels with the $-\frac{1}{2}$ Limitation (Psionic). The 8 point Combat Skill Levels bought this way are considered Mental Powers, and are affected by anything that affects Mental Powers in general (such as Suppression); they are also detectable when in use, like any other Mental Power.

Combat Precognition works in the same fashion as Combat Telepathy. The difference is that the Combat Precognitive is predicting the opponent’s moves slightly ahead of their actual occurrence.

Combat Psychokinesis uses minute amounts of psychokinetic energy to move your opponent’s blows out of line. This only works with physical hand-to-hand attacks. (If you want this sort of power usable on ranged attacks, buy Missile Deflection).

The Combat Telepath uses telepathy to read the opponent’s mind and determine what their next action will be; this allows the character to react much better to the actions of his opponent. The Skill Levels can’t be used if the character’s opponent doesn’t have a readable mind; for instance, if the character is being attacked by a robot.

Facade

Facade is a new EGO-based Skill. It is, in essence, a form of “Mental Disguise.” It is used to change the “appearance” of mental signatures and traces (see “Mental Powers: Their General Nature,” below, for information on these phenomena). If the character makes his Facade roll, he may make his mental signatures or traces resemble those of another mentalist or power; in order to mimic someone else’s signature, the character must have knowledge of that signature (either from having “seen” it before, or from having used Telepathy on that person). Alternately, Facade can be used simply to muddle a mental signature or trace to the point that it is unrecognizable.

Another mentalist using Telepathy to search for a signature or trace that has been covered up with Facade must first make a PER Roll to detect the fact that the signature or trace has been altered; this is a Skill versus Skill contest. If he wishes to remove the disguise and see the true signature or trace, he must use his own Facade Skill to do so; this is also a Skill versus Skill contest.

Characters can more reliably hide mental traces and signatures with psionic surgery (refer to “Telepathy,” below, for more details) or with the $+\frac{1}{4}$ Advantage “Invisible Power Effects (No Signature/Trace).”



Facade can also be used to mask a character's surface thoughts from a telepathic scan. The character must make a Skill versus Skill roll against the telepath's EGO Roll. If the character succeeds, he may disguise his surface thoughts to look like someone else's (he can even mimic another character's thought patterns, if he has read them before; another Facade roll is required to determine how accurate his imitation is). Deep, hidden thoughts and subconscious thoughts cannot be hidden this way.

Knowledge Skill: Psionic Etiquette

In psionic campaigns or other games where mental powers are common, there may exist an etiquette for asking someone if you can use mental powers on them, for conversing telepathically, and so forth. This Knowledge Skill gives a character knowledge of this etiquette. In some situations it may be replaced by, or act as a Complementary Skill to, High Society.

Knowledge Skill: The Psionic World

This Knowledge Skill gives a character information about the Psionic World—the subculture of mentalists and mentalism that exists in the world. Mentalists often tend to be very private and secretive (especially in societies with strong anti-mentalist prejudices), and even a high Streetwise roll often is not enough to locate one without the use of this Skill. KS: The Psionic World tells the character who's who in the Psionic World, where to find these persons, and what types of powers they are known to have (and their power level). Characters may take more limited KSs (such as "KS: The European Psionic World") to narrow their knowledge of this subculture.

Mentally-Enhanced Skills

It is possible for a mentalist who possesses certain Skills to use certain Mental Powers to enhance those Skills. Essentially, the character is subtly using his Mental Power to "boost" the Skill. This provides a bonus to the Skill Roll: +2 to the roll for every 5 points of Mental Power used to enhance it.

The mentalist must pay END for using Mental Powers to enhance Skills. They must also purchase a 2-point Skill, Psionic Familiarity (PF), to simulate their ability to coordinate the use of the Power and the Skill. A separate PF must be purchased for each Skill-Power combination. Thus, a character's ability to enhance his Oratory with his Mind Control is a 2-point PF; his ability to enhance his Oratory with his Mental Illusions is a separate 2-point PF; and his ability to use his Mind Control to enhance his Persuasion Skill is a third 2-point PF.

Using a Mental Power to enhance a Skill is detectable by Mental Awareness. It also allows the target of the Skill to add his Mental Defense to whatever Skill Roll he makes to counteract, avoid, or fight the Skill.

Example: Brainstorm is trying to use his Persuasion Skill to persuade a dumb guard to let him go. He decides to mentally enhance his Persuasion Skill with 40 points worth of his Mind Control, giving him +16 to his base Persuasion Roll of 12- (total 28-). This will cost him 4 END. The guard will resist the attempted persuasion with his base EGO Roll of 11-. He also has 5 points of Mental Defense. This adds to his EGO Roll, giving him a 16- roll to resist Brainstorm's Persuasion roll.

Even though a Skill is being enhanced with Mental Powers, it cannot be used to accomplish anything more than could be accomplished through a normal use of that Skill—though of course, with the bonuses involved, making extraordinary rolls and the like becomes much easier. To achieve greater effects, mentalists must purchase Mental Powers Based On Characteristics (refer to "Power Advantages" section for details) or use straightforward mental powers.

Example: A mentalist could use mentally-enhanced Oratory to convince someone which way to vote in an election, just like someone with Oratory and no mental powers could, although the mentalist will probably have less trouble accomplishing his purpose. The mentalist couldn't use mentally-enhanced Oratory to convince, say, either a strong liberal or a dedicated communist to vote for a conservative candidate. A mentalist with Mind Control Based On PRE (possibly with "Requires An Oratory Roll" as a Limitation) could convince the liberal (assum-



ing a sufficiently high Effect Roll was achieved), but not the dedicated communist (after all, the communist doesn't even believe in the democratic process, much less the conservative viewpoint). Straight-forward Mind Control could be used by the mentalist to "convince" the communist (assuming a sufficiently high Effect Roll was achieved).

The most appropriate Skills for mental enhancement are the PRE-Based Skills. In most cases, Mind Control is the best power to enhance them with, though occasionally Mental Illusions or Telepathy would also work. Sometimes INT-Based Skills, such as Criminology or Tracking, could be enhanced by psychometric powers (Retrocognition) or Telepathy; the same applies to, for example, Demolitions or Cryptography. Background Skills, Combat Skills, DEX-Based Skills, and General Skills usually are not susceptible to psionic enhancement, though this may depend on the situation.

In some instances, characters will not possess a certain Skill as a result of training, but may buy that Skill solely to reflect extremely subtle and low-powered use/manifestation of their Mental Powers. Use of this sort of Skill does not cost END, but is detectable by Mental Awareness and is defended against by Mental Defense as outlined above for mentally-enhanced Skills. For example, with High Society, the mentalist would be subconsciously (1) influencing people into thinking that he is suave, debonair, and charming; and (2) telepathically "leeching" information on etiquette and proper behavior from the minds of those around him. Of course, if the people around him don't know what they're doing, the mentalist won't either, even if he makes his Skill Roll. This sort of thing is most appropriate for PRE-Based Skills, but the same "special effect" can be applied to some INT-based Skills and other Skills. For example, a mentalist could buy a high Criminology roll to reflect his psychometric powers.

For ideas on ways to simulate powers of this sort, refer to "Mental Powers Based On Characteristics" in the "Power Limitations" section of this chapter.

Professional Skill: Meditation

This Skill is purchased by characters who are trained to enter meditative states. If bought as a 3-point EGO-based Skill, +1 per 2 points, it can be used as a Required Skill Roll for Mental Defense or various Mental Powers, signifying the "calming" effect that meditation has on the mind (which allows a character to fight off the effects of Mental Powers, or employ his own Mental Powers more easily). Most Powers bought with this Skill as a Required Skill Roll will probably also take Limitations like "Concentrate."

Psionic Familiarity

This Skill (or, more accurately, group of Skills) simulates a character's ability to enhance certain Skills with certain Mental Powers. Refer to "Mentally-Enhanced Skills," above.

Psionics

This is an EGO-based Skill (costs 3 points, +1 to roll for 2 points) which is often used as the Skill for changing Mentalist Power Pools, or as a Required Skill Roll for mental abilities. Side Effects may be linked to a failure to make the roll. It also imparts a general knowledge about the types of mental powers known to exist, how they work, and so forth.

Sciences

Science: Pharmacology/ Psychopharmaceuticals

This is the study of the effects and properties of drugs which effect emotions and behavior (so-called "psychoactive" drugs). Characters with this Science know how to create and administer such drugs, what their effects are, and how to counteract them.

Science: Psionic Engineering

SC: Psionic Engineering is the Skill needed to build gadgets which provide Mental Powers to the user. This Science is not necessary to build a gadget which provides Mental Defense; any gadgeteer can build such a gadget. But a character must know this Skill to build any gadget which provides a character with Mental Powers.

Science: Psionic Surgery

As discussed below under "Transform," this Skill may be required for mentalists to perform Psionic Surgery (the excision or alteration of memories, Psychological Limitations, and the like).

Skill Levels

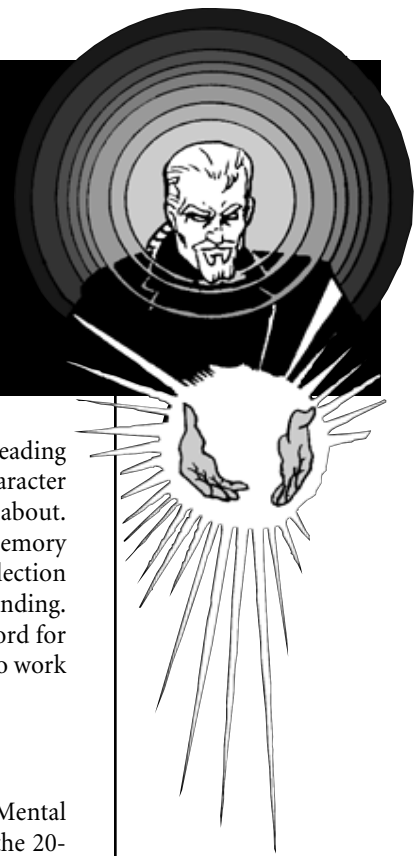
Skill Levels with a character's EGO Roll (or any other single Characteristic Roll) are 2-point Levels. This is so even if the character has several powers or abilities which require him to make an EGO Roll to use them. However, GMs should be extremely wary about allowing characters to buy Skill Levels with their EGO Rolls, since they make Breakout Rolls much easier, and are thus a cheap way to avoid the effects of many mental powers.

Veil

Veil is a new EGO-based Skill. It is, in essence, a form of "Mental Concealment." It is used to hide mental signatures and traces (see "Mental Powers: Their General Nature," below, for information on these phenomena). If the character makes his Veil roll, all signatures and traces are hidden. A mentalist using Telepathy or Retrocognition to search for them must make a PER Roll to detect the hidden signatures or traces; this is a Skill versus Skill contest.



TALENTS



Combat Sense

A mentalist could buy Combat Sense defined as sensing all of the mental presences and/or harmful thoughts in his vicinity. Mental Defense would not protect against this—the defense would be perceived by the character—but Invisibility to the Mental Sense Group would. This sort of Combat Sense belongs to the Mental Sense Group. In some cases “Mental Combat Sense” can take the Limitation “Psionic” (-¼) to simulate the fact that it only works when there are minds the character can sense (it would not work against most robots, for example).

Danger Sense

Danger Sense can be a “classic” mentalist power. In some cases it is more or less local; the character has the ability to sense harmful thoughts (such as ambushers) or harmful psychic traces or residues (such as the mental trace energy of the thoughts of the villains who set the trap that the mentalist is about to walk into). This sort of Danger Sense may take a -¼ Limitation, “Psionic,” to signify that it will not work against some dangers, such as rock slides and other natural phenomena (which have no psychic energy).

Alternately, Mental Danger Sense may be more mystical and/or powerful in nature, allowing the mentalist to detect danger anywhere on Earth based on the mental impressions of evildoers, the mental anguish of the potential victims, or what have you. This form of Mental Danger Sense does not take any Limitations.

Both forms of Mental Danger Sense should be considered part of the Mental Sense Group.

Eidetic Memory

Eidetic Memory is a Talent that frequently shows up on mentalist character sheets. It’s a way of reflecting the immense intellect, vast brain power, and strength of will that such characters possess. However, Eidetic Memory creates some problems in a game system where characters are expected to pay for the knowledge they possess (i.e., buy KSs, Languages, PSs, and SCs). Just buying Eidetic Memory cannot grant a character a Knowledge Skill, Science Skill, or Language just because he reads about a subject, since that would adversely affect game balance. Characters with Eidetic Memory who want to acquire Skills have to study and pay points for them like everyone else. If the character wants to simulate an Eidetic Memory-

based ability to instantly pick up Skills just by reading about them, he should set aside some of his Character Points and only spend them on Skills he reads about. However, it’s important to note that Eidetic Memory is usually interpreted as a photographic recollection of material studied; it does not imply understanding. You may be able to recite the calculus text word for word, but that doesn’t mean you know how to work calculus problems.

Find Weakness

Find Weakness may be purchased for a Mental Power (or for all Mental Powers at once, at the 20-point level). This simulates a powerful mentalist’s ability to locate the weaknesses in his target’s Mental Defense and punch through them. Characters can buy the Power “Mental Invulnerability” to defend themselves against this ability; ordinary Lack Of Weakness offers no defense.

Latent Mentalist

This new Talent allows a character to be considered a “mentalist” for purposes of engaging in Mind-To-Mind Combat. In the comics, certain characters with extremely strong wills (such as Marvel Comics’ Magneto) are able to engage in psychic duels with mentalists, even though they do not possess any mental powers. Characters who purchase this Talent can engage in MTM Combat, and can use any of the Basic Mental Combat Maneuvers. If they can find someone to teach them, they can learn (i.e., purchase) Advanced Mental Combat Maneuvers. Of course, since the character does not possess any mental powers, Mental Combat Maneuvers that require the character to have certain powers as “prerequisites” (for example, Mind Bar) cannot be used by them.

Latent Mentalist generally does not allow a character to initiate MTM Combat, only to engage in it once attacked. A Latent Mentalist lacks the necessary “mental circuits” to deliver the first blow in MTM Combat. Latent Mentalist does not grant a character Mental Awareness.

Latent Mentalist costs 5 points.





Lightning Reflexes

A character with Lightning Reflexes has an increased effective Dexterity only for the purposes of acting earlier in a phase. Each +2 Lightning Reflexes for all actions costs 3 points. Each +1 Lightning Reflexes for a single action or attack costs 1 point.

A character with a base Dexterity of 18 and +4 Lightning Reflexes (Total effective Dexterity $18 + 4 = 22$), would act before a character with a base dexterity of 20. Lightning Reflexes does not effect combat value, figured characteristics, skill rolls, or characteristic rolls. It does not change the rate at which a character recovers from Dexterity Drains and Transfers.

If the cost of a character's Dexterity would be effected by Normal Characteristic Maxima, then the cost of Lightning Reflexes would be effected as well. Double the cost for each point of Lightning Reflexes that brings a character's effective Dexterity over his Characteristic Maxima. A character with Normal Characteristic Maxima and a base Dexterity of 18, would pay $3 + (2 \times 3) = 9$ points for +4 Lightning Reflexes.

Characters can have Lightning Reflexes that only effect a single action or maneuver. This action can include a specific



Lightning Reflexes

Lightning Reflexes is a new Talent defined in *An Eye For An Eye*. Mentalist can buy Lightning "Reflexes" which apply to EGO instead of DEX: 1 point per +1 EGO only to go first in a Phase with a single action or Power; 3 points per +2 EGO only to go first in a Phase with all Mental Powers and actions.

Since Mental Combat relies on EGO instead of DEX to determine at what point during the Phase a character can act (*HERO System Rulebook*, page 147), the order of combat in a game involving one or more mentalists can become very confused, with characters sometimes acting on their DEX and sometimes on their EGO. Also, a character who acts on a higher EGO will be cheating himself of a possible DEX-based Half Move before attacking. For these reasons, GMs may require mentalist characters to buy Lightning Reflexes (for DEX or EGO) to equalize their DEX and EGO scores for combat initiative purposes.

Resistance

Some mentalists will buy Resistance to reflect their strength of will, or to simulate the fact that they can "override" their body's ability to feel pain by controlling their autonomic functions.

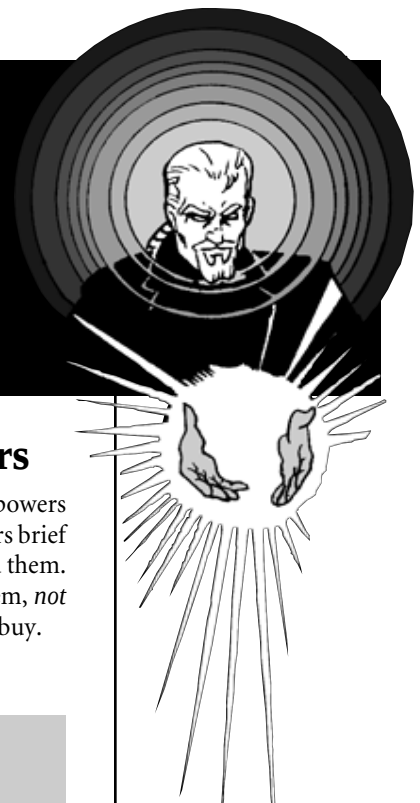
Simulate Death

This quasi-mystic Talent is often bought by mentalists who have received yoga-like training in the Orient, who can project their minds outside of their bodies for set periods of time, and the like.



18

POWERS



This section presents clarifications, optional and variant rules for Mental Powers and other Powers that mentalist characters might purchase.

Summary Of Mental Powers

The following chart lists the basic mental powers available to *HERO System* mentalists and offers brief descriptions of what they do and how to build them. This chart is intended as a useful reference item, *not* as a restriction on the powers mentalists can buy.

Name Of Power	Description	How Built
Astral Form	The ability to project one's "mental self" beyond the confines of one's body	Desolidification with Modifiers
Aura Vision	The ability to read basic auras	Detect
Clairsentience	The ability to sense things at a distance, from a viewpoint other than one's self	Clairsentience
Cyberkinesis	The ability to mentally control, manipulate, and program computers and other machines	Mental Powers and BOECV Powers with "Machines" as their default class of minds
Dowsing	The ability to detect water, metals and other objects	Detect
Ego Attack	The ability to directly attack another mind	Ego Attack
Empathy	The ability to sense and manipulate emotions	Mind Control and Telepathy with Limitations
Medium	The ability to contact the spirit world.	Mind Scan with Limitations
Mental Damage Reduction	A defense against mental attacks in which the mentalist can ignore a portion of the damage or effect caused by the Mental Power	Damage Reduction
Mental Defense	The standard defense against Mental Powers	Mental Defense
Mental Deflection	The ability to deflect (or reflect) mental attacks away from one's self	BOECV Missile Deflection
Mental Duplication	The ability to create a "second self" of mental energy	Duplication
Mental Illusions	The ability to create illusions in another's mind	Mental Illusions
Mental Invulnerability	The ability to prevent attackers from detecting the weaknesses in your Mental Defense	Mental Invulnerability
Mental Paralysis	The ability to paralyze someone with mental force	BOECV Entangle, with Modifiers

weapon attack, maneuver, form of movement, power, or other capability. When such a character uses Lightning Reflexes to increase his effective Dexterity, he may only execute that specific action or maneuver and none other in that phase. So, if a character has +4 Lightning Reflexes that only work with his Defensive Strike, then he may only execute the Defensive Strike (no movement, acrobatics, etc.) in a phase where he uses the +4 effective Dexterity.

- **Lightning Reflexes Cost:** 3 points for +2 Lightning Reflexes for all actions. 1 Point for +1 Lightning Reflexes for a single action or maneuver.





Name Of Power	Description	How Built
Mental Senses	Various senses based on mental energy	Enhanced Senses, Clairsentience
Mental Shield	A defensive field that blocks mental attacks	Force Wall
Mind Control	The ability to control the mind of another, forcing him to act as the mentalist wills	Mind Control
Mind Link	The ability to establish a link between two or more minds	Mind Link
Mind Scan	The ability to scan an area for a certain mind or mental presence	Mind Scan
Mind Transference	The ability to transfer one's mind into the body of another	Transform
Precognition	The ability to foresee or foretell the future	Precognitive Clairvoyance
Programmed Skills	Skills that are mentally implanted into an individual	Skills with Limitations
Psionic Immortality	The ability to sustain one's mental self indefinitely by transferring it from one host body to another	Life Support
Psionic Invisibility	The ability to render one's self invisible to the perception of other minds	Invisibility with Limitations
Psionic Surgery	The ability to alter, remove, or implant memories, Psychological Limitations, and other mental artifacts	Transform, BOECV
Psychic Absorption	The ability to absorb the energy of mental attacks and convert it to other uses	Absorption
Psychic Bond	A permanent mental link between two or more persons that exists regardless of distance or Line Of Sight	Mind Link
Psychic Flash	A mental attack which "blinds" a target's senses	BOECV Flash
Psychic Vampirism	A mental attack which leeches energy from the target and transfers it to the mentalist	BOECV Transfer
Psychokinesis	The ability to move physical objects with mental force	Telekinesis
Psychometry	The ability to detect impressions, emotions, or visions associated with an object or place	Retrocognitive Clairvoyance
Psychomorphing	The ability to change one's personality	Variant Shape Shift
Sensitive	Sense psychic phenomena	Detect
Theriokinesis	The ability to mentally communicate with and control animals	Mental Powers and BOECV Powers with "Animals" as their default class of mind

MENTAL POWERS: THEIR GENERAL NATURE

This section reprints, with some changes, the information on Mental Powers from the *HERO System Rulebook*, pages 54-55. Where the two sections differ, this material should be considered to replace the previous material (the same rule applies to the rest of the material in this book).

Mental Powers are based on a character's mental, rather than physical, abilities. They directly affect the target's mind, ignoring conventional defenses. Mental Powers are targeted with a character's EGO Combat Value (ECV), calculated by dividing the character's EGO by 3, using an *ECV Attack Roll*:

$ECV \text{ Attack Roll} = 11 + \text{Attacker's ECV} - \text{Defender's ECV}$

Willing targets can voluntarily lower their ECV to 0, making it easy for a friendly mentalist to "lock on." A willing target can also lower his Mental Defense to 0 (or not "turn it on" if it is not already in use).

Mental Powers can be used to attack any character within the mentalist's Line Of Sight (LOS). LOS can be established with any Targeting Sense; it means that the character can sense the target with a Targeting Sense. Mental Powers are not stopped by conventional barriers; for example, a mentalist with N-Ray Vision could use his Ego Attack to attack a target through a wall, so long as the mentalist could see the target. Once a continuing-effect Mental Power is established, LOS does not need to be maintained in order for its effects to continue, or for the mentalist to continue feeding END to the power (to prevent it from deteriorating) or to change the level of effect.

Mental Powers have no Range Modifiers.

At their base level, Mental Powers affect only one class of minds. The basic classes include Human, Animal, Machine, and Alien; the GM is free to add other classes or alter these as he sees fit. A character's Mental Powers operate against other minds like his as a default; for example, unless specified otherwise, a human's Mental Powers work on Human minds, not on Animal minds or Machines. A character may specify that his Mental Powers work against a different class of minds for free. For every class of minds that a power can affect in addition to his own, the character must pay for a +¼ Advantage to that power. If Mental Powers only work against a subset of a class of minds, they take a -½ Limitation; if they only work against a single species or type of mind, they take a -1 Limitation.

Example: Hacker is a human cyberkinetic—a mentalist whose powers affect machines, not human minds. Therefore, he defines his Mental Powers as working against the Machines class of minds, rather than the Human class of minds, which would be his default class. If he wanted his Mental Powers to affect both Human and Machine minds, he must purchase a +¼ Advantage on them. If he wanted his cyberkinetic

powers to affect only personal computers, he could take a -½ Limitation on them; if he wanted to be able to affect only a certain brand of computers, he could take a -1 Limitation.

Effect Rolls

Once the mentalist has made a successful ECV Attack Roll, he makes an *Effect Roll*. Mental Powers are rated in a number of dice of effect. Roll these dice, total them, and subtract the target's Mental Defense (if any).

For Ego Attacks, the total rolled on the Effect Roll minus the target's Mental Defense equals the STUN damage inflicted on the target.

For other Mental Powers—Mental Illusions, Mind Control, Mind Scan, and Telepathy—the attacker declares the effect he wants to cause to the target. Then he makes his Effect Roll, and the GM compares the roll to the target's EGO on the Effects Table for each Power (these tables are found in the description of each Mental Power). If the Effect Roll is greater than or equal to the target's EGO plus a modifier based on the desired effect, the attack is successful.

Resisting And Breaking Free From Mental Powers

The target can attempt to resist a successful Mental Illusions, Mind Control, Mind Scan, or Telepathy attack with a modified EGO Roll. This roll is known as a *Breakout Roll*.

Starting on the target's next Phase after being successfully attacked with a Mental Power, he may attempt to break free from the Power. These attempts are subconscious and take no time—whether or not the character succeeds, he may still act for the Phase. Since a character can only react to the effects of a Mental Power on his own Phases, and a character gets to make his first Breakout Roll on his first Phase after being successfully attacked with a Mental Power, a character will always get one (but only one) Breakout Roll before he has to suffer the effects of a Mental Power.

Example: Darkmind, a mentalist with SPD 6 and EGO 28, uses his Mind Control on Firebolt, SPD 6 and DEX 24, in Segment 4. Since Darkmind's EGO is higher than Firebolt's DEX, Darkmind acts first on Segment 4. Darkmind's ECV Attack Roll and Effect Roll are both successful. Since Firebolt has not yet acted in Segment 4, Phase 4 is his "first Phase since being successfully attacked with a Mental Power," and he gets to make a Breakout Roll. His roll succeeds, and since the Breakout Roll is subconscious and takes no time, he now has his full Phase in which to act.

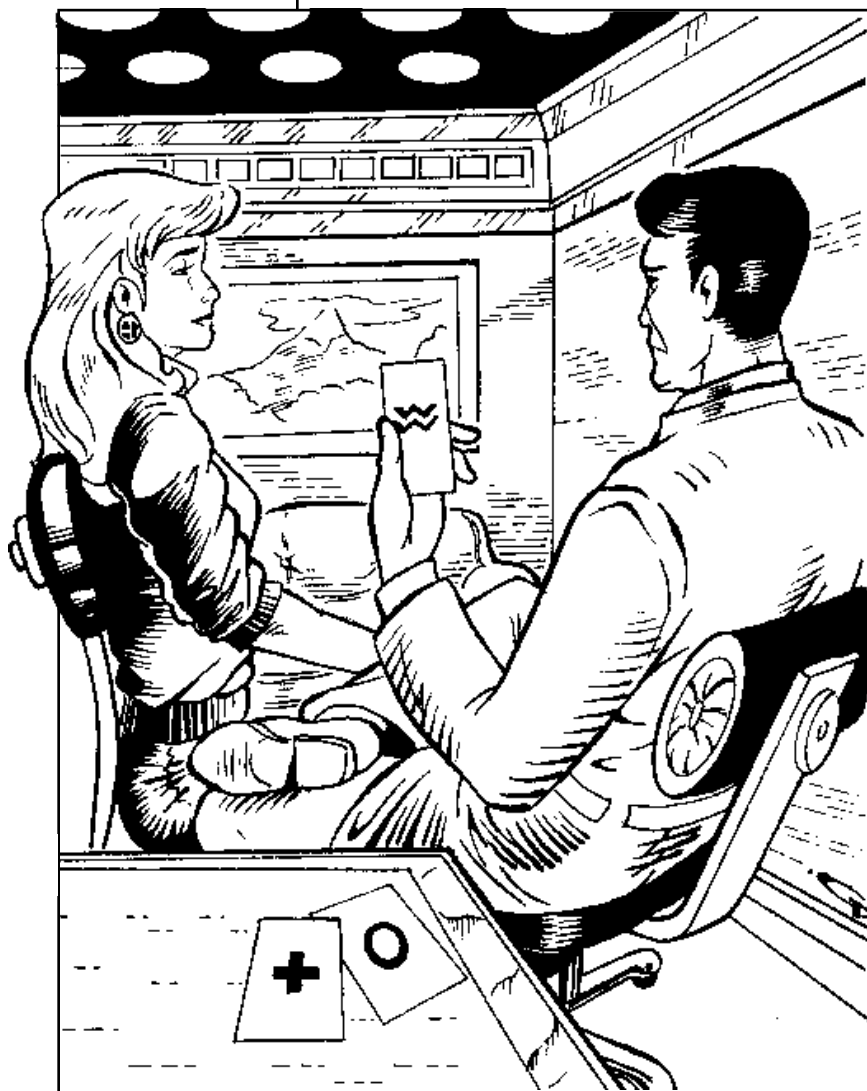
Darkmind survives Firebolt's attack and decides to go after easier prey. He chooses Firebolt's companion Nebula (SPD 5, DEX 23). In Segment 6 Darkmind uses his Mind Control on her; his ECV Attack Roll and Effect Roll are both successful (his command is that she "Attack Firebolt!"). Since



Nebula's SPD is 5, she can only respond to and follow this order on Segments 3, 5, 8, 10, and 12 (i.e., she does not act on Segment 6 just because the order was given in that Segment). Therefore, Segment 8 is her first Phase since being successfully Mind Controlled, and she gets her Breakout Roll at that time. (She is not entitled to a Breakout Roll in Segment 6 just because she was attacked in that Segment.) She fails, and immediately launches an energy blast at the hapless Firebolt!

A character's Breakout Roll is his EGO Roll (9 + EGO/5). The Breakout Roll is modified by -1 for every 5 points of effect over the minimum points necessary to achieve the desired level of effect on the Effects Table.

After the initial attempt to break free, the modified EGO Roll can be re-attempted at +1 for each step on the Time Chart. The character thus gets to roll at +1 after one Turn has passed, +2 after one minute has passed, and so forth. Note that the character only gets *one* roll per step on the Time Chart.



A mentalist can prevent a continuing-effect Mental Power from growing weaker by continuing to pay END each Phase. So long as the mentalist pays END each Phase, the target gets no EGO Roll bonuses for the passage of time (but he does get to roll). The mentalist cannot feed END to a power this way unless he has maintained "mental contact" with the target; for example, if he uses a Mental Power that is a slot in a Multipower and then switches to a different slot, he can no longer feed END to the power.

Instant And Constant Mental Powers

With one exception, Mental Powers are Instant Powers, even though their effects may continue for many Segments after they are used. Thus, END costs are paid when a Mental Power is used, regardless of whether it is effective. Once a continuing Mental Power has been successfully used, the attacker need not pay END to maintain the effect; the target will continue to follow the order, see the illusion, or communicate at the same level until he resists the effect with a successful Breakout Roll. If the mentalist is Stunned or Knocked Out, the effect of the Power will continue to affect the target. If a character has one of these Powers in a Multipower or Variable Power Pool, he may switch to another slot or Power without "erasing" the effects of a previous use of one of these Powers. However, he would have to switch the Framework back to that Power and make an ECV Attack Roll to change it in any way, or to keep paying END to prevent the target from getting bonuses to his Breakout Roll. If the character loses his Line Of Sight on the target, the effect of the Power will continue to affect the target.

To give a new order with Mind Control, change a Mental Illusion, or communicate on a different Telepathic level, the attacker must again attack with his Mental Power. The attacker makes a new ECV Attack Roll, rerolls his Effect Roll and compares it to the Effects Table, and pays the END cost. If for some reason a he wanted to change to a *lower* level of effect, he can do so automatically, without rerolling or paying additional END; if he later wishes to increase the effect, he must reroll and pay END as normal.

Example: Darkmind has a Multipower with Mind Control, Mental Illusions, Telepathy, and Telekinesis. After using his Mind Control on Nebula, in Segment 10 he switches to his Telekinesis slot so that he can throw a car at Firebolt. The effects of his Mind Control do not disappear simply because he switched slots; however, he cannot alter the level of effect on the Mind Control without switching back to his Mind Control slot, nor can he feed END to it to keep it from deteriorating over time. If Darkmind wishes to increase the level of his Mind Control over Nebula, he must re-establish mental contact with her by making an ECV Attack Roll, and then must make an Effect Roll.

The sole exception to this is Mind Scan, which is a Constant Power—the “lock-on” must be constantly maintained, or it will vanish. This is a change from previous editions of the *HERO System*, which list Mind Scan as an Instant Power; these references should be ignored. If a character has Mind Scan in a Multipower or Variable Power Pool and he switches from using Mind Scan to another slot or Power, the Mind Scan lock-on is immediately broken. However, unlike other Constant Powers, a character need only pay END for Mind Scan on Phases in which he makes an ECV Attack Roll with it.

The Visibility Of Mental Powers

All Mental Powers are invisible to characters who do not themselves have a Mental Power or Mental Awareness (see *Senses*). However, the target of a mental attack can sense the source of the attack and will know what Power is being used against him. This identification occurs immediately for Ego Attack or Mind Scan; for Telepathy, Mind Control, or Mental Illusions it usually occurs after the Power is no longer affecting the character. Of course, a mentalist can buy a Mental Power with the Power Advantage *Invisible Power Effects* (versus Mental Senses); in this case, the target would not be able to sense the source of the attack (but would, of course, know that he had been attacked with a Mental Power). A mentalist can prevent a target from knowing he has been attacked with a Mental Power by achieving a +20 effect on his Effect Roll.

Competing Mental Powers

It is possible for a mentalist to help another character who is being affected by one of the continuing-effect mental attacks (Mental Illusions, Mind Control, Mind Scan, and Telepathy). Once one of these Powers has been established on a character, another mentalist can attempt to break the character free by using Telepathy, Mind Control, or, in some cases, Mental Illusions (which Powers will work in a given situation is up to the GM). After making a successful ECV Attack Roll (the target cannot lower his EGO voluntarily), the mentalist makes his Effect Roll. If the total equals or exceeds the total of the initial effect, then the victim is freed.

Example: Mind Slayer used her 12d6 Mind Control to force Jaguar to attack his comrades. The total of her Effect Roll was 45. One of Jaguar's fellow heroes, Solitaire, tries to help him break free. After making a successful ECV Attack Roll, Solitaire rolls her 10d6 of Telepathy. Her Effect Roll is 47 (a great roll), which is just enough to break the Mind Control. Free at last, Jaguar bounds off towards Mind Slayer, intent on teaching her a lesson.

A similar situation occurs when a character is under the effect of two Mental Powers at once (for example, when two different mentalists are both giving him orders with Mind Control, but the orders

are not inherently contradictory). In this situation, if the character can react to both effects, he will do so; if he can only react to one, he will first react to the one which achieved its effect by the greatest amount (not necessarily the one which made the highest Effect Roll). If the lesser effect is maintained while the first one is being reacted to, the victim will have to do as that effect dictates after he has finished with the first one.

Example: Firebolt (EGO 15) is being attacked by two psionic aliens. Each of them successfully uses Mind Control on him. The first alien's order is "Bring me a salad," which is an EGO +10 effect on the Mind Control Effects Table; this alien rolls 39 on his Mind Control dice. The other alien orders Firebolt to "Attack those policemen!", an EGO +30 effect, and rolls 56 on his Effect Roll. The first alien made his Effect Roll by 14; the second alien made his by 11. The first alien's orders therefore take precedence (an Effect Roll made by 14 is stronger than one made by 11, even though the second Effect Roll achieved a higher total and a higher level of effect). Firebolt rushes off to a deli to get the salad. If the second alien continues to maintain his Mind Control and Firebolt does not make a Breakout Roll, he will have to attack the policemen after he fetches the salad.

Complementary Mental Powers

In some situations, two mentalists may wish to aid each other by affecting a target with the same Mental Power (for example, by both giving the target the same orders with their Mind Control powers). To do this, both mentalist must make successful ECV Attack Rolls, and each must make an EGO Roll (to simulate their ability to “coordinate” their attacks). If all rolls are successful, the mentalist with the lesser level of power (i.e., the fewest dice in the power) may roll $\frac{1}{4}$ of his dice and add them to the other mentalist's Effect Roll. The mentalists do not need to “coordinate” or act on the same EGO or Phase to do this. Even though both mentalists are now “in the target's mind,” the more powerful mentalist is still in charge of the power being used to affect the target. If the two mentalists begin to issue contradictory orders, describe different illusions, and so forth, refer to “Competing Mental Powers,” above.

Mental Signatures and Mental Traces

When Mental Powers are used, they leave two types of evidence of their use in the target's mind. First, each mentalist has a unique “mental signature” which is imprinted on the target's mind whenever he uses any Mental Power. Each mentalist's mental signature is distinctive, like a “psychic fingerprint.” A mentalist can recognize mental signatures for what



they are, but he cannot match a given signature with a given mentalist unless he has knowledge of that signature (i.e., KS: Mental Signatures, prior mental contact with that mentalist, and so forth).

Additionally, each Mental Power leaves its own distinctive “mental trace” on the target’s mind. Mental traces do not vary from mentalist to mentalist; one mentalist’s Mind Control trace looks just like every other mentalist’s Mind Control trace. Every mentalist with a particular Mental Power will know what that Power’s trace looks like.

A mentalist may use Telepathy to detect and recognize mental traces and signatures. Once the mentalist has successfully made telepathic contact with the subject, he may make a PER Roll to detect traces or signatures, one roll per trace or signature. The PER Roll is at -1 per step down on the Time Chart below one Turn that it has been since the Mental Power that created the trace or signature has been used. Thus, any mental traces or signatures created in the past Turn may be detected with a normal PER Roll, then at -1 per minute since creation, -2 per five minutes since creation, and so forth (this signifies that mental signatures and traces fade over time, but slowly). A failed roll may indicate that the character cannot find the trace or signature at all, or it may mean that he has misread the nature of the trace or signature. In some cases, particularly powerful mental attacks or effects may leave “mental scars” that do not fade over time; a mentalist may be able to tell something about what caused the mental scar if he locates it and makes a PER Roll. Each trace or signature counts as a “fact” or “question” that the mentalist can search for, so they take one Phase to locate.

Mental traces and signatures can be hidden, changed, or erased, but it is difficult. The “Invisible Power Effects” Advantage (covering the Mental Sense Group) will prevent a Mental Power from leaving traces or a signature. An Image to the Mental Sense Group, a Mental Illusion, or certain types of Transform could also be used to do the job, as could the new Skills, Facade and Veil. Transform, since it is permanent, is the best means of erasing or changing mental traces and signatures. However, don’t forget that using one of these Powers to erase or change a mental trace or signature will leave a separate mental trace! EGO-based Skills such as Facade, Veil, and Cloak do not, however, leave mental traces.

Mental signatures are generally left behind only when mental powers are used. They do not trail behind a mentalist everywhere he goes, to be followed by other mentalists the way a bloodhound follows a scent. A character who wants to be able to follow a person’s “mental presence” in that fashion should buy Tracking “Scent” (“Sense” would be more appropriate) for his Mind Scan, for an appropriate Detect, or for Retrocognitive Clairvoyance (where the “sense” is defined as “Mental Sense Group”).

The Mental Powers are:

Ego Attack
Mental Illusions
Mind Control
Mind Scan
Telepathy

(Author’s note: The list of Mental Powers should also include any other Powers the GM defines as “Mental Powers;” see below.)



IMPLICATIONS, OPTIONS, AND CLARIFICATIONS

The “All-Or-Nothing” Nature Of Mental Powers

Continuing-effect Mental Powers, such as Mind Control, have an “all-or-nothing” effect that most offensive Powers do not. For example, with an Energy Blast, once you hit a target you will usually do *some* damage—maybe just a little, maybe enough to Stun or Knock Out the target, or maybe enough to injure him badly but not Stun him. Mind Control, however, either works—in which case the mentalist has a fairly significant amount of control over the target—or it absolutely fails to work. There is no middle ground. The same applies to the other continuing-effect Powers.

This can be a problem—the “all” aspect of Mental Powers is powerful enough that some GMs forbid Mental Powers in their campaigns entirely. Conversely, the “nothing” aspect often makes players avoid playing mentalists.

The suggested solution for the “nothing” aspect is to impose a slight penalty on the target of an unsuccessful mental attack, to reflect the fact that he just “fought off” that attack. If the mentalist makes a successful ECV Attack Roll, but fails to make a sufficient Effect Roll to achieve his declared effect, the target makes an EGO Roll. If the target makes the roll, he suffers no penalty. If he misses the roll, he loses a Half Phase—this reflects the effort he puts into resisting the mental attack. If the mentalist’s ECV Attack Roll and Effect Roll both succeeds, but the target breaks out of the effect with his first Breakout Roll, the target loses a Half Phase in the Phase in which he made the Breakout Roll. No EGO Roll is allowed to avoid this effect. Of course, GMs using this rule should ignore the statement in the text of the rule that making Breakout Rolls takes no time; under this system, the effort required to resist or escape from the effects of mental powers can take some time.



Dealing with the “all” aspect of Mental Powers is much harder, if not impossible. The best solution for most GMs is simply to limit the number of Active Points that characters can put into Mental Powers so as to guarantee that Mental Powers will not achieve overwhelmingly powerful levels of effect.

Breakout Rolls

As noted in the text of the rule, a character who has been successfully attacked with a continuing-effect Mental Power gets a Breakout Roll on his first Phase after being attacked. That roll may come in the Segment on which he was attacked (if the character also has a Phase that Segment and did not move before the mentalist attacked him), or it may come several Segments later. If, during the “lag time” between the successful attack and the first Breakout Roll a friendly mentalist checks on the target’s “mental status,” he will discover that the character has been successfully attacked and is presently struggling to overcome the effects. The friendly mentalist may assist this effort; refer to “Competing Mental Powers” in the text of the rule.

For ease of play, some GMs prefer to give the target character his Breakout Roll immediately, as soon as the attacking mentalist has successfully used his power. If this rule is used, the target character does *not* then get to make another Breakout Roll in his first available Phase after being attacked—his next Breakout Roll cannot be made until one Turn after his first available Phase after being attacked.

Changing Levels Of Effect

The rule states that if a character is under the effect of a continuing Mental Power (such as Mental Illusions or Mind Control) and the mentalist wants to change the effect (create a different illusion, give a new order), he must make a new ECV Attack Roll and Effect Roll. If the Mental Power is bought with the Advantage “Continuous” (+1), then a new ECV Attack Roll does not have to be made. Effects dice must be rerolled, however.



Classes Of Minds

As explained above, all Mental Powers are now defined as working against one class of minds at their base level. The basic classes of minds are:

Human

This category includes Humans and other sentients sufficiently similar to them. In a fantasy campaign, this might include elves, dwarves, halflings, and other player character races. In a *Star Hero* campaign, it might include certain types of bipedal humanoid alien races. In a typical four-color superhero campaign, it would include only human beings.

Animals

This category includes nonsentient creatures, such as dogs, fish, birds, horses, insects, and wolves. Characters with mental powers which work against animals are known as *theriokinetics*.

Machines

This category includes computers and other electronic and mechanical equipment which is subject to mental manipulation. Hydraulics and engines, for example, generally are not susceptible to mental manipulation (though they can be telekinetically manipulated). Characters with mental powers which work against machines are known as *cyberkinetics*.



Aliens

This “class” is actually a large group of classes. Every alien, extradimensional, or other “weird” race is in its own mental class (the GM may arrange aliens into broader subgroups if he wishes, i.e., “all races of the Beta Ceti system”).

Game masters are of course free to expand or shrink these classifications as they see fit. Some campaigns will require broader groups of minds; in others, it is appropriate to restrict the breadth of each classification.

As a default, Mental Powers are assumed to affect the class of minds that their possessor belongs to. For example, a human mentalist’s powers affect Humans, while Sparky the Mental Mongrel’s psionic powers would affect Animals. A character may define his Mental Powers as affecting a different class of minds at no cost; a cyberkinetic, for example, would define his Mental Powers as working against Machines and not Humans as a default.

If a mentalist wishes to be able to affect more than one class of minds with his powers, he must purchase an Advantage on those powers: +¼ for every additional class of minds.

If a character’s Mental Powers only affect a particular subset of a class of minds, the powers take a -½ Limitation. If they only affect a single species or object, they take a -1 Limitation.

Example: Seelord has the power to communicate mentally with all sea creatures. He defines his Telepathy as working against Animal minds instead of Human minds as his default. Since he cannot affect all Animal minds, just the minds of sea creatures, he can take a -½ Limitation on his Telepathy. If Seelord could only use his telepathic powers on octopi, he could take a -1 Limitation on his Telepathy.

Competing Mental Powers

The basic rule for competing Mental Powers is a simple one: if the “helpful” mentalist makes an Effect Roll equal to or greater than the Effect Roll whose effects the character wishes to escape, the character is no longer affected by that power. As an optional rule, GMs might allow a roll which is less than the objectionable Effect Roll to help the character break free—by granting a bonus to his Breakout Roll:

Competing Mental Powers Bonus Table

Roll	Bonus to Breakout Roll
EGO	+1
EGO +10	+2
EGO +20	+3
EGO +30	+4
EGO +40 or more	+5

This option allows relatively weak mentalists to at least offer their friends some help when they are attacked by a stronger mentalist. Also at the GM’s option, an affected character might automatically get an extra Breakout Roll (with the bonus) in any Phase in which a friendly mentalist is trying to help him, rather than having to wait for his next roll based on the Time Chart.

Converting Standard Powers To Mental Powers

In some campaigns, the GM may wish to convert a standard Power, such as Telekinesis, Clairsentience, Mind Link, or Transform, into a Mental Power. Some Powers, such as Clairsentience, Mind Link, and Telekinesis, are so closely associated with mentalism or psionics that many *HERO System* gamers consider them to be Mental Powers, even though technically they are not.

Suggestions for performing these conversions are provided below under the descriptions of individual Powers. When the term “Mental Powers” is used in the text, it refers to the standard Mental Powers and any other powers a GM wants to include in that group (such as Clairsentience, Mind Link, Telekinesis, Mental Transforms, and the like). The term “mental powers” (lower-case letters) refers to any power with a “mentalism” or “psionic” special effect.

When deciding to make a Power a Mental Power, the GM should consider such factors as visibility, what defense applies to the Power, whether LOS is required to use the Power, whether the Power uses normal Range Modifiers, whether the Power can be deflected with Mental Deflection, and so forth.

Line Of Sight

Defining Line Of Sight

Line Of Sight can be established with any Targeting Sense. It can be roughly defined as having direct perception of a target with a Targeting Sense; a good rule of thumb is that the GM should be able to draw a straight line between the attacker and his target without any intervening obstacles to interfere (but of course the nature of what amounts to an “obstacle” will depend on what Targeting Sense is being used). But defining LOS more specifically can be difficult. There are several approaches.



The first approach is the “speck on the horizon” theory. Under this theory, if the mentalist can sense the target at all, he can use Mental Powers against it. This definition has the advantage of being a literal interpretation of the phrase “line of sight.” However, it can lead to the “mentalist sniper” syndrome, in which the mentalist character stays a mile away from the combat on a tall building zapping enemies while remaining effectively immune to counterattack.

The second approach is the “recognizability” theory. Under this approach LOS only extends to the point where the mentalist could recognize the target as an individual person (he does not have to be able to actually recognize him, just within range to recognize him if he did know him). This approach reins in the “mentalist sniper” syndrome considerably, but also denies mentalists much of the advantage of having powers with no Range Modifiers.

A third approach is called “recognizability by species.” Under this approach, the target does not have to be individually recognizable, just recognizable by its general species (for example, human, goblinoid, canine, Martian, or draconic). The mentalist does not have to actually be able to identify the species; he need only be within a range in which he *could* recognize it if he knew what it was. This approach falls somewhere in the middle of the other two in terms of advantages and disadvantages.

It is this third approach, recognizability by species, which is recommended. It does away with the worst abuses of the “speck on the horizon” syndrome—after all, a speck could be anything, even something inanimate—while still allowing mentalists some of the natural advantages of using powers which attack the mind. GMs and players are encouraged to experiment with this and the other standards to find one appropriate to the campaign.

In some cases the GM might want to require the mentalist PC to make an appropriate PER Roll (perhaps with an appropriate modifier, usually a bonus of +3 or more) to make sure that he does, in fact, have LOS (and/or is within the range of recognizability). If the PER Roll is failed, either no LOS exists, or the level of recognizability is “fuzzy.” In the latter case, the GM might consider imposing a Range Modifier on the mental attack, to simulate the difficulty the character is having “locking on” to the target. A related approach would be to require the mentalist to make an EGO Roll to determine if he has properly “drawn a mental bead” on the target.



At the GM’s option, a mentalist may still be able to make a successful mental attack even when he doesn’t have LOS. If the mentalist is attempting to attack a target he cannot sense, but that he has a reasonable idea of the location of, the mentalist’s OECV is halved. If the mentalist lacks LOS but has a fairly precise idea of where a target is (for example, the mentalist knows that someone is hiding in a particular closet, or in the trunk of a car), then his OECV might only be reduced by -1 to -3. Of course, in order to use this rule, the mentalist must have some reasonable idea that there is a target mind where he is planning to attack; mentalists cannot just lash out at random, hoping to hit something with half OECV. It is up to the GM whether a mentalist is allowed to attempt an attack in a situation where he lacks LOS.



Establishing Line Of Sight

LOS can be established by any Targeting Sense, though it will almost always be established by Sight. A mentalist can make a sense a Targeting Sense “Only For Establishing LOS” (a -½ Limitation), but this is not recommended.

LOS can be established on any part of the body—if the character is hiding behind a corner and only his left foot is visible, the mentalist can make an attack based on LOS, because part of the character is within his LOS (alternately, the GM could use the rules for lack of LOS, above). However, mentalists should remember that it can be risky using an attack on someone whom they cannot positively identify—that left foot may belong to someone the mentalist would rather not be attacking.

Situations may occur in which the mentalist can see parts of two bodies, but believes that they both belong to the same body. In this case, the GM should roll randomly to determine which body part is forming the primary basis of the mentalist’s LOS, and apply the mental attack to that person; the other person is unaffected.

There may also be cases in which a mentalist has LOS on what he thinks is part of a person, but which is not (for example, a shoe with no foot in it). In this case, the mentalist can make a mental attack as normal, but it will be a complete waste of time, and the mentalist will realize after making the attack that there is no mind present for him to attack.

Generally, LOS cannot be fooled by a disguise or an illusion which makes the target look like someone else. The target still has a mind, and that mind can be affected even if his outward appearance changes.

LOS generally should be established with the naked eye; establishing it with binoculars or telescopes will work, but GMs should be careful not to let mentalists take advantage of this to make themselves immune to counterattack—the use of such sense-enhancing devices may serve to cut a character off from his perspective of the spatial relationship between himself and his target so much that it effectively “blocks” LOS. A character cannot achieve LOS through television, Clairvoyance, or similar means. In the GM’s discretion, the only exception to this would be a character with Clairvoyance who bought a Mental Power with the “Indirect” Advantage. In that case, Clairvoyance *can* be used to establish LOS, though the GM may impose limits on the range of a mental power in this situation. Alternately, the GM could require characters to link Mind Scan with their Clairvoyance to achieve this effect.

Powers which work on a LOS basis do not have a maximum range of Active Points x 5”; they can work at *any* range at which LOS can be established. For example, if Eagle-eye has purchased enough Telescopic Vision to view people on the surface of the Moon, he can use his 8d6 Mind Control on those persons; he is not limited to a maximum range of 200” (40 Active Points x 5”).

Losing Line Of Sight

If a mentalist is using a continuing-effect Mental Power on a target and his LOS on that target is interrupted or broken (for example, a truck drives between them, blocking the mentalist’s LOS), the mentalist loses mental contact with the target. The effects of the continuing-effect Mental Power continue, in the usual fashion for such Powers; however the mentalist can not establish new Mental Powers until LOS is restore (through sight or Mind Scan).

MENTAL POWERS

Astral Form

Astral Forms are created in the *HERO System* by using Desolidification with a -1 Limitation, as outlined on pages 62-63 of the *HERO System Rulebook*. The following is an elaboration on that basic rule.

Characters may use Desolidification to create astral forms. This means that they project some part of their essence (their “soul,” their mental self, their ethereal double, or whatever is appropriate) outside of their body, leaving their helpless body behind. This is a -1 Limitation on Desolidification. Astral forms cannot affect the solid world with their mental powers unless they pay for the standard +2 Advantage on them. Ordinarily, astral form Desolidification is bought to 0 END, and often is Persistent as well.

When a character projects his astral form, his physical body is left behind. It is effectively comatose, unable to move or act. Any damage that the body takes, the astral form takes as well; thus, it is possible to kill the astral form by hacking its physical body to pieces. Typically, the astral form is required to return to its body within some set time period (usually 24 hours), or the host body (and hence the astral form) will wither and die. If an astral character’s body is moved, he cannot automatically locate and rejoin it; he will have to find it using his powers or wits. (At the GM’s option, these effects may amount to a separate Limitation, but this is not recommended.)

A character in astral form has entered a new reality, the “Astral Plane.” In the Astral Plane, the rules governing existence are different than they are in the solid world. First, astral characters need not eat or sleep, and they do not age, catch diseases, or suffer from extremes of climate.

Second, astral characters can use their own innate movement powers, or they can travel instantaneously—they can move from New York to Calcutta in the blink of an eye, with no chance of losing course or “overshooting” their target, assuming they know where their destination is. (An astral character has to have at least *some* idea of where his target location is; astral projectors would do well to study their geography! Without this knowledge, an astral character will



tend to get lost easily.) The typical range for an astral form is its host solar system, but this may vary depending upon the character, the situation, and the genre. Players and GMs should also remember that astral travel is *instantaneous*, so they can't view the scenery on the way or astrally scour the city looking for Dr. Destroyer's secret headquarters. (To do this, astral characters should use their ordinary forms of movement, and/or buy inches of Flight "Only When In Astral Form" [-1]).

Third, astral forms are not detectable by normal human senses; the Enhanced Sense "Astral Awareness" is required to detect them. In some cases, additional senses may also work, based on the special effect of the astral form; for example, a mentalist astral form could be detected by Mental Awareness. Mind Scan will usually suffice to detect astral characters as well, but this may vary depending on the circumstances. However, any sense which can detect an astral form is automatically considered to be a "Targeting Sense," even if it is not normally a Targeting Sense.

Fourth, characters on the Astral Plane cannot talk to, communicate with, or contact characters in "normal" space (even with Powers such as Mind Link and Mind Scan, unless they are bought as "Affects Solid World"), but they can sense and communicate with other astral characters.

Astral characters possess on the Astral Plane all innate powers and skills that they possess in the physical world (including their Characteristics and Skills). Thus, a mentalist still has his mental powers, a wizard his spells, and a mutant his mutant powers. However, gadgets and equipment, unless specially crafted or enchanted to be able to enter the Astral Plane, remain with the host body. Astral characters may use whatever powers they possess to attack other characters and creatures in the Astral Plane; they may not use them to affect the solid world (unless they have paid points to do so), nor may they affect desolidified characters who have a different special effect for their Desolidification (unless they have purchased "Affects Desolidified" for the power(s) they wish to use).

Astral characters cannot travel through any barrier which has been purchased with the "Affects Desolidified" Advantage; at the GM's option, some other forms of defense may block them as well (for example, a mentalist astral form would be blocked by a Mental Defense Force Wall).

Combat can have unusual effects on astral forms. If an astral character is Knocked Out, he will instantly "snap back" into his body unless the Astral Form power is bought Persistent (in which case an unconscious astral form will simply "float in place" until the character wakes up). If either the astral form or the physical body are killed, the other form dies as well. However, GM mercy may allow the astral form to take up residence in some other body or object, provided he can do so within the 24 hours (or other applicable time limitation); this may be an excuse for

a "radiation accident" and a rewrite of the character.

For further discussion of astral forms, and of the nature of the Astral Plane, refer to *The Ultimate Super Mage*, by Dean Shomshak.

Mentalist Astral Forms

Mentalist astral forms are projections of sheer mental energy—in essence, the mentalist is sending his brain power, his ego, out of his body to act on its own, unfettered by the demands of the flesh.

Mentalist astral forms should choose "mental powers" as the attack to which they are vulnerable while desolidified. Since Desolidified characters can already be affected by Mental Powers, "mental powers" means any power with a "mentalism" special effect (including Psychokinesis). Of course, in order to attack an astral character, a mentalist must have some means of sensing him (Mind Scan or Detect Mind will usually do).

Sometimes, a mentalist is more powerful in astral form than he is in the physical world. To simulate this, the astral form may even buy extra dice in certain mental powers with the Limitation, "Only Usable In Astral Form" (-1). This is particularly appropriate for Mind Control (reflecting the astral form's ability to "possess" people).

Clairsentience

Clairsentience and its sub-powers, particularly Clairvoyance, Precognition, and Retrocognition, are often considered classic mental powers. GMs should feel free to convert them to *HERO System* Mental Powers if they so desire. Mental Clairsentience is affected by sense-affecting powers (such as Flash) as if it were part of the Mental Sense Group; it is also subject to being affected by Adjustment Powers which affect Mental Powers.

General Notes On Clairsentience

Clairsentience, a member of the Unusual Senses Sense Group, is a sense with several unique properties. Its focal point can be at any location within the Power's range, instead of just at the character himself (most senses' focal points are the character's eyes, ears, and so forth). From that focal point the sense is used in the usual fashion, and Range Modifiers apply. Clairsentience is thus "Indirect" in some ways (since it can be projected inside buildings, around corners, and so forth), and operates in 360 Degrees (since a character can establish the focal point wherever he prefers within his range, including behind him, and sense in any direction from that focal point).



Implications, Clarifications, And Options

Clairmentalism

It is possible to define a Clair effect for Mental Sense Group senses, such as Mental Awareness or Detect Mind. However, since Mind Scan already has a “Clair-like” range, it does not need a Clair effect.

Clairsentience And Sense-Affecting Powers

Even though Clairvoyance is a form of sight, it will not necessarily be affected by a Flash against the Sight Group. Ordinarily, it is affected by attacks against the Unusual Senses Sense Group; if considered a Mental Sense, it is affected by Powers which affect the Mental Sense Group. Thus, a mentalist who has been blinded by a Sight Group Flash could use his Clairvoyance to overcome that effect simply by defining the viewpoint of the Clairvoyance as being his own eyes!

However, Darkness and Flash may work against Clairsentience in unusual ways, depending upon the special effects of the Clairsentience. Imagine, if you will, a typical use of Clairsentience in a fantasy setting: a coven of witches gathered around a cauldron whose waters display a scene several miles away (say, a group of knights on the march). How will Darkness and Flash work in this situation?

First, since the Clairvoyance is defined as using the witches’ eyesight to view a “picture in a pool,” if their eyesight is Flashed (or blinded by Darkness) the Clairvoyance will not work. The Flash could take

place at the cauldron itself (maybe an enemy of the coven has snuck up on it and cast a “blinding spell” or something similar); or it could take place at the scene being viewed—if one of the knights sets off a Sight Group Flash for some reason, the witches viewing it will be Flashed.

Second, the Clairsentience Power itself could be Flashed or blotted out by Darkness. A Flash versus Clairsentience would have to be launched at the witches themselves, since they are the source of the power—a Flash versus Clairsentience at the scene being viewed will not affect them. However, a Darkness versus Clairsentience used at either the scene of the cauldron or the scene being viewed will prevent the spell from functioning properly, since it will “black out” the area to Clairsentience. Since this particular Clairvoyance spell can be affected as either of two Sense Groups—Clairsentience or Sight—it is entitled to a -½ Limitation.

Precognitive Clairsentience and Retrocognitive Clairsentience should be considered separate from each other and from normal Clairsentience. Thus, a Flash versus Clairsentience will affect a character’s ordinary Clairvoyance, but not his Precognition or Retrocognition; a Flash versus his Precognition will not affect his normal Clairvoyance or Retrocognition. If a character has more than one form of Clairsentience (say, Clairvoyance and Clairaudience), it is the GM’s call, based on special effects and logic, as to whether they are affected separately or together by Flashes and similar attacks.

Mental Clairvoyance will be affected by sense-affecting Powers directed at the Mental Sense Group. For example, if a character is Invisible to the Mental Sense Group, a mentalist using Mental Clairvoyance to view the area in which he is standing will not see him, even though the mentalist could see him with his eyes. A Flash versus the Mental Sense Group used against the mentalist would prevent him from using his Mental Clairvoyance at all.



Limitations For Clairvoyance

The following Limitations are appropriate for Clairvoyance powers (and for some other forms of Clairsentience):

Can Only Sense Through The Senses Of Others (-½): This form of Clairvoyance uses the eyes of others to see through. If there are no creatures with eyesight within range of the clairvoyant, he cannot use his power. At the GM's option, this form of Clairvoyance might be blocked by a sufficient amount of Mental Defense (say, 10 points' worth) (this might be an additional -¼ Limitation). If the power can only be used through the eyes of a single specific creature, or a very limited group of creatures, the Limitation is worth -¾ or -1. This form of Clairvoyance may be Linked to Mind Link.

Blackout (-½): This Limitation signifies a character who cannot use his normal senses while using his Clairsentience. All normal senses are "blacked out" when Clairsentience is being employed, rendering the character deaf, blind, and numb until he turns off his Clairsentience.

Focusing Object: This Limitation represents a form of Clairvoyance which can only be used through a specific focusing object. For example, a mentalist might buy a form of Clairvoyance which only worked through a specific crystal ball—the crystal ball would be the focus point for the Clairvoyance, thus limiting the mentalist to viewing only those things near the crystal ball. The value for this Limitation is the same as that for the "Focus" Limitation: -1 for OAF-like Focusing Objects; -½ for OIF-like objects or for a set of OAF-like objects, and so forth.

Limitations For Precognition

Some precognitive characters can only experience their "visions" while dreaming, after taking certain drugs, and the like. "Only Through Dreams" would be a -1 Limitation on Precognition; use of particular drugs or other mood-setting "props" can be simulated with the "Focus" Limitation. Activation and "Visions Are Vague And Unclear" (-½ to -1) are also appropriate Limitations for Precognition.

Some forms of Precognition (and Retrocognition) which have Required Skill Rolls may use the Time Chart to simulate "Range Modifiers." For every step on the Time Chart away from the present that a particular event will occur, there is a -2 "Range Modifier" to the Required Skill Roll. This makes it much harder to view "distant" events. This is a -½ Limitation.

Precognitive Clairvoyance ordinarily allows a character to use both ordinary Clairvoyance and Precognition. If the character only wants to use Precognition, he may take a -1 Limitation.

Precognition And Retrocognition:

Length Of Time Scanned

Precognition and Retrocognition cannot be used to scan large chunks of time rapidly without losing some clarity of view (any more than, say, Clairvoyance can be rapidly moved from one viewpoint to another without creating a "blurring" effect).

It is generally presumed that the slowest speed a character can watch with Precognition and Retrocognition is 1 Segment/1 Segment (i.e., each Segment watched takes 1 Segment of "real time" to watch). If the character watches more quickly than this, he suffers PER Roll penalties to spot the particular person, item, or event he is looking for, as follows:

Length of Time Viewed per Segment	PER Roll Penalty
1 Turn	-2
1 Minute	-4
5 Minutes	-6
1 Hour	-8
5 Hours	-10
1 Day	-12

and so on, following the Time Chart.

Characters cannot view in "slow-mo" to increase their chances of spotting whatever they're looking for. The slowest speed at which they can watch other time periods is 1 Segment per Segment.

On the other hand, events that last for a long time grant the character a PER Roll bonus. The bonus is equal to the negative modifier listed on the chart above: +2 to spot an event lasting an entire Turn, +4 for an event lasting a Minute, and so on. This makes spotting long-lasting events, such as a battle or the construction of a building, fairly easy even at fast viewing speeds.

Precognition And Retrocognition:

Places And Objects

Generally, Precognition and Retrocognition can be used in one of two ways. First, the character can focus his viewpoint on a particular place, and watch what happens to/in that place during the time period viewed. Second, the character can focus his viewpoint on a particular object or person, and follow what that object/person does during the time period viewed, *provided* that the viewed object/person stays within the range (Active Points x 5") of the character's Power. As soon as the viewed object/person moves beyond that range (whether on foot, flying, Teleporting, or what have you), the character loses track of it/him entirely. Furthermore, when using the second option, the character cannot "switch" from the viewed subject to another object/person the viewed subject interacts with.



Retrocognition: Psychometry

Some mentalists can read the mental or emotional traces, signatures, or residues that cling to objects or places. This ability is known as *psychometry*. Sometimes psychometric readings are only feelings or impressions; at other times they are full-blown visions of some past event.

Telepathy can also be used to simulate psychometry, but in a much more limited way. For example, using psychometric Retrocognition on a bloody dagger used to kill someone would give the mentalist a vision of a knifing murder, whereas Telepathy would only detect the traces of the extreme hatred and fear associated with the act. In other words, Retrocognition provides both a more extensive and a clearer psychometric “picture” than Telepathy.

It is important to remember that objects may have differing “psychometric value.” For example, a mirror broken during a murder may hold traces some of the fear or hatred associated with the killing, but it will simply be “fear” or “hatred”—what caused that fear or hatred will not be apparent, since the object was only indirectly involved in the act in question. On the other hand, the murder weapon will contain strong traces of the emotions involved, and will probably even grant the character a vision of what happened during the murder—as the instrumentality of the killing, the weapon is so central to the event and its emotions that it carries traces of everything that happened.

In some cases psychometric Retrocognition powers will also allow a mentalist to gain information about a person by examining an object which is important to that person or which he has handled or used frequently (for example, a favorite piece of jewelry, a car, a favored weapon).

Since psychometric Retrocognition requires access to particular places and/or objects in order to function, and only provides visions of certain persons and/or events associated with those places and/or objects, it should be bought with a Limitation: $-\frac{1}{2}$ is usually appropriate, but in some cases or campaigns -1 or -2 might be acceptable.

Cyberkinesis



Also known as telemechanics or psychomechanics, Cyberkinesis is the ability to use mental power to control computers and some other types of electronic machinery. It cannot normally be used to control non-electronic machinery, such as hydraulics or automobile engines; for that, Telekinesis could be used.

Cyberkinesis is simulated by purchasing various Mental Powers (and sometimes other Powers) and defining the default class of minds that those Powers affect as Machines. Some uses for the various Powers include:

***Mental Illusions:** Cyberillusions are used to plant false images in sensors.*

***Mind Control:** Cyberkinetic Control makes computers and other machines do things they ordinarily wouldn't—the cyberkinetic can override programming, shut off security systems or other subsystems controlled by the computer, and so forth.*

***Telepathy:** Cyberpathy allows a character to read the data in a computer (uncovering one fact per Phase, per standard Telepathy), “talk” to the computer, send e-mail (“m-mail,” if you will), upload or input information into a computer, or download information to a computer disk or into the cyberkinetic's mind.*

***Mental Transform:** Cybertransform allows a character to change, rearrange, delete, or corrupt computer data. It can be used to erase all data from a machine, or to simply “burn out” the machine, leaving it an unusable wreck.*

Most cyberkinetics will also possess low-STR Telekinesis with the -1 Limitation, “Only To Press Keys And Switches.” This allows them to type from a distances, throw switches, and so forth. Some may possess better forms of Telekinesis that allow them to control engines, hydraulics, and the like.

When a cyberkinetic attempts to use his powers on an AI, the ECV Attack Roll and Effect Roll are versus the AI's EGO Characteristic. In the case of non-intelligent computers, the ECV Attack Roll and Effect Roll are versus the computer's INT (calculate CV as $\text{INT}/3$). A cyberkinetic power that only works against non-intelligent computers (i.e., only against machines with no EGO, only INT), the power takes a $-\frac{1}{2}$ Limitation. A cyberkinetic power that only works against machines with EGO takes a -1 Limitation.

In some cases, computers will have psionic countermeasures (PCM) software to prevent unauthorized mental intrusion into the computer. PCM programs range from simple programs which shut off the machine and boot the offending cyberkinetic out of the system, to advanced versions which can “back-track” the cyberkinetic power and plant a lethal “psivirus” in the cyberkinetic's mind. *Caveat cyberkinetic.*



Ego Attack

Here is the text of the rule on Ego Attack, from the *HERO System Rulebook*, page 65; it has been rewritten slightly for clarity.

EGO ATTACK

A character with this Mental Power can directly attack another character's mind. After making an ECV Attack Roll, the attacker rolls 1d6 of damage for every 10 Character Points in Ego Attack. The target subtracts his Mental Defense (if any) and takes the remaining damage as STUN. Ego Attacks are STUN only, have no effect on inanimate objects, and do no Knockback.

Ego Attack Cost: 10 Character Points for every 1d6 damage, minimum cost 10 Character Points. Ego Attack has no Range Modifier, and requires Line of Sight.

Implications, Clarifications, And Options

BODY Damage

Normally, Ego Attacks do not do BODY damage. "Does BODY" is a +1 Advantage for Ego Attacks. GM permission is required to purchase this Advantage, since it can be very powerful. Ego Attacks which do BODY are still defended against with Mental Defense; they are not considered Killing Damage attacks, so the Mental Defense does not have to be resistant to stop the BODY damage. Ego Attacks which do BODY still can only be used against beings with minds; they will not work against inanimate objects such as walls or vehicles.

EGO Damage

As an optional rule, the GM might decide that Ego Attacks do damage to the target's EGO, just as if EGO were BODY: a roll of 1 is 0 EGO done, a roll of 2-5 is 1 EGO, and a roll of 6 is 2 EGO. Mental Defense protects against this damage the same way that PD and ED protect against BODY damage from ordinary attacks.

Ego Attacks which do EGO damage can have a real effect on mental combat, since they are reducing the Characteristic used to attack and defend mentally (unlike normal attacks, which do not affect a character's DEX, only his BODY). At the GM's option, Ego Attacks which do EGO damage do not affect a character's EGO for combat purposes, only for other purposes (Skill Rolls, Susceptibility to Mental Powers, and so forth). If a character's EGO is reduced to 0 or below, there will be undesirable consequences; the GM should consult *The HERO System Almanac 1*, page 15, for information on the effects of negative EGO scores.

Special Effects For Ego Attacks

There are a number of "standard" special effects used for Ego Attacks. These include: induced pain; induced sleepiness; induced extreme euphoria (too much pleasure for the mind to handle!); forcing Psychological Limitations or painful memories to traumatically "feed back" into the target; and similar effects. Induced pain is probably the most common effect, but it is certainly not the only one. In some cases (for example, induced euphoria), the Ego Attack may not exactly feel like an "attack"; if, in the GM's opinion, the special effect of the Ego Attack might hide its nature as an attack, he may require the mentalist to buy a +1/4 or +1/2 Advantage for the Ego Attack to reflect its "invisible" or "camouflaged" nature.

If a character's Ego Attack simulates his ability to make a target's traumatic memories and Psychological Limitations "feed back" into the target, the Ego Attack can be bought with a -1/4 Limitation. If the target does not have any appropriate Psychological Limitations or memories for the mentalist to manipulate (a relatively rare occurrence), this form of Ego Attack will not work.

The Talent "Resistance" provides no protection against Ego Attacks defined as pain induction.

Spreading Ego Attacks

At the GM's option, the rule on Spreading Energy Blasts (*HERO System Rulebook*, page 151) can be used for Ego Attacks: for every 1d6 the mentalist subtracts from his Ego Attack, he may gain +1 OECV or "widen" the path of his Ego Attack to attack one additional mind. In the latter case, the additional mind must be within 3" of any other mind being attacked, and a separate ECV Attack Roll must be made against each target. END is paid for all dice, even though some of them are not doing damage.

Mental Defense

Mental Defense is, of course, the standard defense against Mental Powers. There are several aspects of this Power that players and GMs should consider when designing characters. *These aspects are optional rules, but are strongly recommended.*

First, Mental Defense is not resistant. It offers no protection against, for example, a Ranged Killing Attack Based On Ego Combat Value (BOECV) which Does BODY (a total +2 Advantage, since BOECV attacks, even Killing Attacks, do not ordinarily do BODY). Characters may make their Mental Defense resistant using Damage Resistance.

Second, unlike PD and ED, Mental Defense is not "Always On." Characters have to think about "turning it on," so to speak; keeping Mental Defense "on" costs no END, but it can block potential friendly contacts and therefore is not kept on at all times. Thus, characters who are attacked from surprise by Mental Powers and have no reason to expect such an attack do not get to apply their Mental Defense



against the attack. Characters can, if they choose, take the Advantage “Persistent” and the Limitation “Always On” to signify that they cannot drop their Mental Defense at all (not even for friendly contact). In some campaigns, such as psionics campaigns, the GM may rule that Mental Defense is, in fact, “always on,” like PD and ED.

Third, in some campaigns, the GM might want to make Mental Defense a Figured Characteristic based on EGO, rather than a Power. If so, all characters will naturally possess EGO/5 points of Mental Defense (MD), similar to their PD and ED. A character who does not want to have the additional Mental Defense derived from EGO can take a -½ Limitation on his EGO, “No Figured Mental Defense.” (The same Limitation can be taken on Mental Defense by characters who must purchase Mental Defense but do not, for some reason, want the base Mental Defense derived from EGO.) Having MD as a Characteristic also allows characters to avoid the minimum purchase requirements for MD as a Power.

Fourth, Mental Defense can have several special effects. Ordinarily it presents itself as a “mental barrier,” a solid protection against mental attacks. However, it could also operate by “clouding” its possessor’s mind, making it difficult for an attacker to find; could generate “mental static” to interfere with incoming attacks; or could make its possessor’s mind “blend in” with nearby minds, thus “hiding” the mind from mental attack. Lastly, Mental Defense can simulate a mind which is so fractured, warped, bizarre, bestial, or savage that mentalists have a hard time “grasping” it, comprehending it, or successfully attacking it.

Sometimes non-mentalist characters have been trained by a mentalist to have some Mental Defense (such as, for example, Marvel Comics’ X-Men, who have received such training from their psionic mentor, Professor X). This sort of Mental Defense might be bought with Limitations to reflect its nature; examples include “Requires An EGO Roll,” “Extra Time (Full Phase),” “Costs END,” and so forth.

For ideas on other forms of defense against mental attacks, refer to “Damage Reduction” and “Force Field And Force Wall,” below.

Mental Illusions

Here is the text of the rule on Mental Illusions, from the *HERO System Rulebook*, pages 76-77. Changes have been made for the sake of clarity and to make the text consistent with other changes made by this book.

MENTAL ILLUSIONS

A character with this Mental Power can project illusions directly into an opponent’s mind. After making an ECV Attack Roll based on Ego Combat Value (see *Mental Combat*), the character defines what illusion he wants the target to see. The character then makes a standard Effect Roll, comparing the result to the Mental Illusions Effects Table.

If the Effect Roll is not sufficient to reach the desired level, the attack has no effect, but it does alert the target. If the attacker rolls enough to achieve the desired effect, then the illusion is established in the target’s mind; the target will not be aware that he is experiencing an illusion until he makes a Breakout Roll.

Starting the target’s Phase after a Mental Illusion is established, the target may attempt to see through or “disbelieve” it by making a Breakout Roll in the standard fashion. The target will remain under the influence of the illusion (at the given level) until he makes a Breakout Roll.

The target of a Mental Illusion will receive a chance to make another Breakout Roll (with a bonus to the roll) if the illusion performs in a way that does not meet the target’s expectations (for example, if an illusory loved one did not recognize the character). At the GM’s discretion, the character could get additional bonuses to his roll if his friends are trying to “snap him out of it.”

MENTAL ILLUSIONS EFFECTS TABLE

Total rolled on Mental Illusion dice - Mental DEF is:	Effect
Greater than EGO	Cosmetic changes to setting
EGO + 10	Major changes to setting
EGO + 20	Completely alters setting
EGO + 30	Character no longer interacts with real environment
Modifiers (can be applied at any level)	
+10	Victim can take STUN from illusory attacks
+20	Victim can take STUN and BODY from illusory attacks

Cosmetic changes in the environment include: colors that change; friends that look like enemies (but don’t act like enemies); and so forth.

Major changes to setting include: walls that appear where there are none; friends that look and act like enemies; the number of opponents that a character is fighting is doubled; pits that open in front of the character; and so forth.

Completely altering the setting can include: a street could be made to appear as a jungle grove or a windswept desert; all objects appear to be three feet to the left of where they really are; and so forth.



For all of these Mental Illusions, the target still interacts with the real world: although a car might appear to be a horse, the character will still bump into it as a car. Similarly, he will not fall into an illusory pit unless a pit actually exists. At the GM's option, such "mistakes" in the illusion may give the character another chance to make his modified EGO Roll to disbelieve the illusion.

If the Mental Illusion achieves EGO +30, then the character no longer interacts with his environment: the illusions are completely "in his head." In this case the character will only think he is, for example, walking forward or striking an opponent; he will not actually perform these actions. In fact, in most situations he will simply stand still. Characters in this state will usually be ½ DCV.

Harmful Mental Illusions

It is also possible for a character to take damage from a Mental Illusion. If the Effect Roll is declared at +10, then the character can take STUN from illusory attacks; if +20, then the character can take BODY and STUN. The maximum Active Points that can be in an illusory attack is equal to the Effect Roll achieved with the Mental Illusions dice or the Active Points in the Mental Illusions power, whichever is less.

Example: A mentalist has 9d6 Mental Illusions (45 Active Points). On a particular Effect Roll, he rolls 53 points of effect. Since 53 is greater than 45, the illusion can only do 45 Active Points' worth of damage.

An illusory attack cannot inflict more damage than it could do logically—a .44 Magnum pistol could not do 20d6 damage, regardless of how many points the mentalist had spent on Mental Illusions. Illusory attacks can never have Advantages; they do straightforward damage.

A character under the effects of injurious Mental Illusions will only take damage on the Phases indicated by the attacker's SPD (a SPD 3 mentalist who created a Mental Illusion would only be able to use it to inflict damage on Phases 4, 8, and 12). However, damage from Mental Illusions is applied instantly, before the target has the chance to make a Breakout Roll, and does not "vanish" if the Breakout Roll is, in fact, made thereafter.

Example: Mental Marauder has decided to harass Jaguar (EGO 10) while the shaggy hero is patrolling the streets. Mental Marauder decides to create the image of a tropical jungle, along with a large tiger, who will be able to inflict both STUN and BODY upon Jaguar.

This Illusion requires a base EGO +20 Effect Roll, since it will completely alter the setting. Additionally, it requires a +20 effect because the Illusion is able to inflict both STUN and BODY. Thus, Mental Marauder must make an EGO +40 Effect Roll to succeed. After making his ECV Attack Roll, Mental Marauder rolls his 11d6 of Mental Illusions. His Effect Roll totals 37, which is not enough to achieve the desired effect. The attack does, however, grab Jaguar's attention.

As Jaguar charges with claws out, the Marauder decides it's time to be a little less ambitious. He creates the Illusion that he pulls out an energy pistol, fires, and hits Jaguar. This is an EGO +10 effect, +10 more because Marauder wants the attack to do STUN. After making his ECV Attack Roll, Marauder rolls 40 on his Effect Roll. Since this is greater than Jaguar's EGO +20, it is enough to establish the desired Illusion. Before Jaguar has a chance to make a Breakout Roll, he takes 40 (the points of effect rolled on the dice)/5 = 8d6 STUN damage against his Energy Defense. This barely slows Jaguar down.

With Jaguar about to pounce, Marauder chooses to create the Illusion of a bus coming around the corner about to run over a small child. Since this doesn't need to do either STUN or BODY, it is a simple EGO +10 effect. After making another ECV Attack Roll, Marauder rolls his 11d6 Effect Roll, and rolls 42. This is greater than Jaguar's EGO +10, so it is enough to establish the desired Illusion. Jaguar has EGO 10, for a base Ego Roll of 11-. Since the Marauder's Effect Roll was 20 points over the minimum level necessary to achieve the desired effect, Jaguar's Breakout Roll is at -4 (20/5 = 4), for a final roll of 7-. When his next available Phase comes around, Jaguar rolls his Breakout Roll and gets an 8, which fails the Breakout Roll by one. Being a true hero, he veers away from the Mental Marauder and bounds off to save the illusory child.

Mental Illusions Cost: 5 Character Points for 1d6 Mental Illusions, minimum cost 10 Character Points. Range is Line of Sight, no Range Modifier.

Implications, Clarifications, And Options

Levels Of Effect

At the "Greater Than EGO" level, mentalists can make "cosmetic changes" to the setting or objects in it. This means that they could change the color or features of objects (i.e., make a Coca-Cola sign yellow, paint a mustache on the Mona Lisa), create an illusory disguise for someone, make friends look like (but not act like) enemies, and so forth. They can also make objects or sensory phenomena of minor importance appear or disappear. At this level, changes should generally be confined to the same "class" of objects involved: a handgun can be made to look like another type of handgun, or maybe even another type of weapon, but not like a snake, or an apple.





Minor sensory changes are also possible, but are similarly limited: a Beethoven symphony could be changed to sound like some other kind of music, but not like a plane taking off.

At the “EGO +10” level, the character can make “major changes” to the setting. At this level, the character can make friends look and act like enemies, can make objects appear to be something other than their “class” (i.e., a gun can turn into an apple), and can make major sensory changes (a Beethoven symphony could sound like dogs barking). Important objects and sensory phenomena, such as weapons, vehicles, and explosions, can be made to “vanish” or can appear out of thin air. Changes in the weather are possible at this level of effect.

At the “EGO +20” level of effect, complete alterations of the environment are possible—city streets turn into jungles, trees change into rocket ships and fly away, you name it. Major important objects, like planets and buildings, can be made to vanish or appear.

At the “EGO +30” level of effect, the victim no longer interacts with the real world; the effects of this are described in the text of the rule and are discussed in further detail below, under “The Existence And Tangibility Of Mental Illusions.”

Causing Damage

The text of the rule states that by adding +10 or +20 to the required roll on the Mental Illusion Table, the attacking mentalist can do STUN or STUN and BODY, respectively, to the target of the illusion. The Active Points’ worth of damage done by a particular Mental Illusion attack is equal to the Effect Roll or the Active Points in the Mental Illusions power, whichever is less. For example, a mentalist with 10d6 of Mental Illusions (50 Active Points) might roll 46 points of effect; this translates to 9d6 (45 Active Points) Normal Damage. Since 46 is less than 50, the Mental Illusion can only do 9d6 of damage, even though there are 50 Active Points in the power.

Generally, Mental Illusions can only do Normal Damage, and there can be no Advantages on that damage. They cannot do Killing Damage or NND Damage, even if the illusion is of, for example, a Killing Damage weapon. This inconsistency may provide the target of a Mental Illusion with a chance to roll to break out of the illusion. If a character wants his Mental Illusions to do the appropriate type of damage (Killing Damage for guns, knives, and the like; NND Damage for knockout gas and the like), then he must pay for a +½ Advantage, “Illusions Do Appropriate Damage.” The character is still limited to doing damage based on the Damage Class equivalent of the total rolled on his Mental Illusions dice or the Active Points in the power, whichever is less; refer to “Determining Damage” on pages 158-161 of the *HERO System Rulebook* to determine how many dice of Killing or NND Damage are available. Using the above example, a mentalist with a 10d6 Mental Illusions Effect Roll of 46 and the “Illusions Do Appropriate Damage” Advantage could do 9d6 Normal Damage, 3d6 Killing Damage, or 4 ½d6 NND Damage, depending upon the type of illusory attack.

(Alternately, the GM may dispense with the “Illusions Do Appropriate Damage” Advantage and simply establish a house rule that illusions always do the appropriate type of damage.)

Illusory attacks never do Knockback, regardless of the type of damage involved.

The defense against damage from a Mental Illusion is the appropriate defense for the illusory attack: PD for an illusory fist, ED for an illusory blaster pistol, resistant defenses for Killing Attacks, and so forth. This is because the target of the Mental Illusion expects that he will be protected by the appropriate defense; if he were not, the inconsistency would be an important clue that he was trapped in an illusion and would give him a chance to roll to break free. At the GM’s discretion, a character may be allowed to add his Mental Defense to the appropriate defense, or even to substitute it for that defense.

Because it can become very easy for a mentalist to establish a Greater Than EGO-level illusion that can do damage, at the GM’s option, Mental Illusions can only do damage if they are established at the EGO +10 level or greater.

The Existence And Tangibility Of Mental Illusions

Remember that, unlike Images, Mental Illusions exist only in the target's head. Other characters cannot see them, they can only see the target's reaction to them. Using Telepathy on the target character will show the telepath the Mental Illusion (refer to "Telepathy," below, for details).

A Mental Illusion works on all of the target's senses—he can see, hear, feel, smell, and taste the illusion. He would, for example, feel illusory pain from an illusory fall, but the pain would not actually affect him (i.e., it would not decrease his STUN or BODY) (unless the mentalist is trying to damage him and has rolled high enough on the dice to do so). If an enemy "hits" a Mental Illusion, he will feel the force of the impact and think that he connected (but if the illusion does not suffer the appropriate damage, he may become suspicious and get another Breakout Roll).

Up to the EGO +30 level, a character under the influence of a Mental Illusion will move and react appropriately. For example, if the illusion is of a combat situation, the character will run, dodge, and fight back in the appropriate manner. This may be dangerous to himself, his friends, innocent bystanders, or even the mentalist attacking him. For this reason, mentalists tend to avoid using combative Mental Illusions on characters with grenade launchers, tanks, or access to nuclear weapons.

Similarly, the character will "go along" with the illusion. For example, if the illusion is of the character being run over by a bus, the character will fall flat on the ground. If the character sees an illusory pit, he can crawl up to the edge of it and reach into it, and it will feel real to him. He can even "fall into" the pit, although he will not take damage from the fall (unless the mentalist is trying to damage him and has rolled high enough on the dice to do so). A character trapped in this sort of illusory pit will fall flat on the ground; as he tries to "climb out" of the illusory pit, onlookers will see him miming climbing actions, pulling out and using his grapnel or line-gun, and so forth. The character spends END when taking these actions, since he is "mentally exhausting himself."

A character under the effect of an EGO +30 Mental Illusion will not move and react; the illusion is entirely "in his head," and so are any actions he takes. Generally a character affected by this sort of illusion will stand (or sit) almost stock-still as the illusion plays itself out in his mind, almost as if he were in a trance. A character in this situation will be at $\frac{1}{2}$ DCV (or possibly even at 0 DCV). If the illusion is of something that would require excessive movement, such as a combat scene, then the character may still move around slightly, and, at the GM's discretion, may have his full DCV (or at least a lesser penalty to it).

How The Illusion Reacts

The mentalist using Mental Illusions knows what is going on in the illusion. But this does not mean that he is directing the action himself, although he may be. To a certain extent, a Mental Illusion is "pre-programmed" and will keep running on its own in a reasonable fashion until the target breaks free of it. Thus, the mentalist can ignore the target character and move on to attack other characters or do other things. However, there is a penalty for doing this, since the illusion, if left to itself, will accumulate inconsistencies and illogical occurrences more quickly than a controlled illusion. Targets trying to break out of "unsupervised" illusions receive an additional +1 to their modified EGO Rolls to break free for each step on the Time Chart. Thus, they would roll at +2 after one Turn, +4 after one minute, and so forth.

If, on the other hand, the mentalist concentrates on the illusion and keeps it running himself, inconsistencies and illogical occurrences are minimized. This requires spending END to maintain the illusion at its present level of effectiveness, as described in the text of the rules for Mental Powers. Of course, it is still possible for the illusion to react inappropriately. For example, the mentalist might unknowingly include in the illusion someone who is in love with the target, and when this illusory person did not react to the character appropriately, the character would begin to suspect that something was going on. He might then receive another roll to break free of the illusion, as described in the text of the rule.

Illusory Time

At the GM's discretion, Mental Illusions are not necessarily limited to the "real-world" time frame. In other words, an action that takes an hour in real life might be the subject of an illusion lasting only one Turn. The character will *feel* like he's been doing something for an hour, even though it's only been twelve seconds. A character could be forced to live an entire illusory lifetime in the space of an hour. Similarly, a Mental Illusion could be used to make a character think that a given time frame is much shorter than it actually is (a good way to sit quietly through long, boring journeys or lectures). The exception to this is illusions of combat situations, which should generally correspond to the real world on a Phase-by-Phase basis.

The GM is the final arbiter of the exact temporal correspondence between illusion and reality. The GM might rule, for example, that an illusion that is supposed to simulate three days of "real life" must last for three Turns of game time. If the character breaks out of the illusion before three Turns have passed, the effect automatically fails.

If the GM allows illusions to distort time in this manner, then he may either allow it "for free," or he may require a mentalist to achieve +10 points of effect on the Mental Illusion roll to create gross distortions of time.



Limitations For Mental Illusions

The following Limitations are appropriate for Mental Illusions:

Limited By Senses (varies): This Limitation represents a Mental Illusions power which for some reason cannot affect certain senses. Inability to affect the Sight Group is a $-\frac{1}{2}$ Limitation; inability to affect the Hearing, Touch, and Smell/Taste Sense Groups is worth a $-\frac{1}{4}$ Limitation per Sense Group.

No Conscious Control (-1): Among other things, this Limitation simulates a mentalist who has the power to pull dreams, memories, a person's greatest fear, and similar things out of a target's mind and make him relive or experience them.. Since the mentalist has no idea what he's going to get—he just activates his Mental Illusion power and lets it “search” in the target's mind for a memory or dream to replay—he has no control over the illusion. However, since the mentalist can control when he turns the power on and off, the Limitation value has been reduced from its usual -2 to -1.

Self Only (-1): This simulates a form of Mental Illusions which can only be used to change the character's outward appearance (perhaps making him look like the target's beloved, like a celebrity, and so forth).

Mental Illusions And Invisibility

It is possible to use Mental Illusions as a form of Invisibility; i.e., by creating the illusion that the mentalist (or some other character) is not present. This has some advantages over ordinary Invisibility—it covers all senses, and can cover up tracks and other things Invisibility ordinarily doesn't—but it has drawbacks as well. One drawback is that Mental Illusions invisibility can only affect one person at a time, and requires a successful ECV Attack Roll. Another is that the mentalist has to achieve a sufficiently high Effect Roll to render himself unseen. The exact level of effect needed depends on how interested the target is in discovering the mentalist, and the nature of the activities the mentalist is undertaking while invisible (it is easier to create an illusion that one is not present if one is not moving around much; if the mentalist is attacking, jumping up and down, or trying to sneak up on someone, it becomes much harder). At a minimum, EGO +10 is required; if the mentalist is moving around a lot, EGO +20 is needed to hide himself; if the mentalist is attacking, sneaking up on someone, taking lots of overt actions, or is actively being sought by the person he is trying to hide from, EGO +30 may be required.

Mental Illusions And Presence

A mentalist can create an illusion which is intended to be particularly impressive, thus granting the mentalist a bonus to his PRE for the purposes of making Presence Attacks. In order to do this the mentalist must declare his intention to create an impressive

illusion in advance and then achieve a +10 modifier on his Effect Roll (similar to creating an illusion which can do STUN to a target). If he succeeds, the mentalist may roll a number of dice of PRE Aid equal to the points in the Effect Roll or the Active Points in the Mental Illusions power, whichever is less (again, similar to rolling to do STUN to a target). The added PRE can only be used to make appropriate Presence Attacks. For example, if a mentalist wanted to create an impressive illusion of a dragon working for him, and rolled 55 points of effect with his 12d6 Mental Illusions, he could add +11d6 Presence.

Of course, the illusion must be of something that would make the mentalist appear impressive; if the illusion is not appropriate for these purposes, the GM should not grant the mentalist the PRE bonus.

Mental Illusions And Unusual Effects



At the GM's option, mentalists may achieve some effects other than damage or PRE Aid with certain illusions, if they make a +20 modifier to their Effect Roll. If he succeeds, the mentalist may achieve an effect equal in points to the points in the Effect Roll or the Active Points in the Mental Illusions power, whichever is less (similar to rolling to do STUN to a target).

If the Power that the mentalist wants to use to achieve his unusual effect is a Constant Power, he must maintain the illusion by continually paying END for it; this END is in addition to any END the character wants to spend to keep the illusion from deteriorating. If the mentalist's LOS is interrupted, or if he switches to a different Multipower slot (other than the one in which Mental Illusions power is in), the unusual effect will vanish at once.

Some examples of unusual effects include:

Change Environment (illusions of altered weather and similar phenomenon)

Darkness (illusions of fog, blinding rain, a total eclipse)

Running Drain or DEX Drain (illusions of slippery ice or marshy ground underfoot)

Entangle (illusions of quicksand, Obsidian grabbing the target, magical chains appearing from nowhere)

Flash (illusions of a bag over your head, a bright light, a handful of sand thrown in the eyes)

Telekinesis (illusions of enlarging an object so that other characters cannot pick it up)

If an unusual effect would do STUN or BODY damage to a target, the mentalist must achieve the necessary +10 or +20 effect in addition to the +20 he must achieve to create the unusual effect.

The mentalist's ability to create unusual effects, and the exact effect of them, is *always* up to the GM. Using this rule can have the effect of turning Mental Illusions into a miniature Variable Power Pool, so it must be monitored carefully. The GM may even prefer to have illusionists buy a VPP with the Limitation, “Can Only Be Used To Simulate Effects With A Mental Illusions +20 Effect Roll” (-1).



Psychological Limitations

Illusions which agree with a target's Psychological Limitations may be harder for the target to disbelieve; conversely, those which contradict a target's Psychological Limitations are usually easier for him to resist. On the average, an illusion which agrees with a target's Psychological Limitation requires 10 less points of effect; one which contradicts his Psychological Limitations requires +10 points of effect. This bonus/penalty can vary depending upon the strength of the Psychological Limitation.

Example: Mighty Man is deeply in love with his wife (20 point Psychological Limitation). Hypnos creates an illusion of Mighty Man's wife asking Mighty Man to follow her (Hypnos plans to lead his archenemy into a deathtrap). Because the illusion agrees with Mighty Man's Psychological Limitation, Hypnos requires -10 points on his Effect Roll to succeed with his illusion. On the other hand, had Hypnos tried to create an illusion in which Mighty Man's wife attacks him, Hypnos might be required to achieve +10 worth of effect, since Mighty Man knows that his wife has no reason to attack him (not as long as he remembers to take the garbage out, anyway).

Remembering The Illusion

In the same way that it is possible for a mentalist using Mind Control to make his target think that his Controlled actions were natural, a mentalist with Mental Illusions can make a character believe that his illusory experience was real after the illusion dissipates. This requires +10 points of effect, as indicated on the Expanded Mental Illusion Effects Table, below.

However, this effect is not automatic even if the necessary point total is rolled on the dice. It only works if the illusion is of an experience that the target would realistically remember and consider real; more importantly, the illusion has to end of its own accord, not because the target sees through it.

Example: Hypnos wants to wreck Mighty Man's life. He kidnaps Mighty Man's wife and then attacks the hero with an illusion of his wife divorcing him. This is a "major change to setting," so Hypnos needs to roll EGO +10, with another +10 to make Mighty Man think that the illusion "really happened," for a total of EGO +20. Mighty Man has a 13 EGO and no Mental Defense, and Hypnos rolls 48, more than sufficient to achieve his wicked objective. The GM rules that the illusion must last for two Turns in order to simulate the proper passage of time. Mighty Man fails his Breakout Rolls during the two Turns, primarily because Hypnos is paying END to maintain the effectiveness of the illusion, and after the illusion "ends" he is convinced that his wife has divorced him and does not look for her. (Eventually he might think to look for the divorce papers, and unless Hypnos has planted a set of fake papers in Mighty Man's house, Mighty Man's failure to find any records of the

divorce will probably break the effect of the illusion.) Had Mighty Man made even one of his rolls, he would have seen through the illusion and Hypnos's plot would have failed.

Suggestibility

It is possible for a mentalist to make a target more susceptible to the effects of a Mental Illusion. For example, suppose that the character carries around a .44 Magnum handgun, and makes sure that people know that he carries it (this could be reflected with a Reputation, for example). It might even be a fake pistol, but people think that he carries a real gun. In combat, the mentalist might use his Mental Illusions to make his target think that he has just pulled out the pistol and shot him. Since the target is already predisposed to think that the mentalist has a gun, this illusion is more believable than the "average" illusion.

In a situation such as this, the GM might grant the mentalist a bonus of +5 or more on his roll on the Mental Illusions Effects Table; in some cases, this bonus would only be applied to achieving a high enough effect to do damage to the target. However, the GM might make this bonus contingent on the target character making an INT Roll or Reputation roll to realize who the mentalist is.



EXPANDED MENTAL ILLUSIONS EFFECTS TABLE

Total rolled on Mental Illusion dice - Mental Defense: Greater than EGO	Effect Cosmetic changes to setting —Changed colors —Friends that look like enemies (but don't act like them) —Minor changes to a person's or an object's appearance (an illusory disguise; a mustache on the Mona Lisa; a wound appears that isn't really there; a handgun looks like a different model handgun) —Minor sensory changes (a dry object feels wet; a Mozart symphony sounds like a Beethoven symphony; a steak smells like fish) —Minor sensory effects can be created (simple music appears out of nowhere, the walls begin to talk) —Minor objects (decorative items, non-dangerous or non-valuable objects) appear where there are none, or vanish if they are present
EGO +10	Major changes to setting —Important objects (enemies, walls, pits, moving vehicles, weapons) appear where there are none, or vanish if present —Friends that look and act like enemies —Doubling the number of opponents a character is fighting —Major changes to a person's or an object's appearance (a human appears to be a non-humanoid alien; a handgun turns into a serpent) —Changes in the weather (but not the overall environment or setting) —Major sensory changes (a Mozart symphony sounds like two old women talking; a whole object feels broken; a steak smells like dung) —Major sensory effects can be created (explosions, complex music)
EGO +20	Completely alters setting —Environment completely changes (city streets become moonscapes, jungles, deserts, and so forth) —The character appears to be nowhere at all (in the middle of some blank, featureless area) —All sensory input vanishes or is radically changed (a battlefield appears to be a peaceful meadow, the target's sense of balance, direction, and so forth may be changed) —Major important objects (entire buildings, an army, a planet) vanish, or appear where they do not exist
EGO +30	Character no longer interacts with his environment
Modifiers (can be applied at any level)	
-10	Order matches target's Psychological Limitations
+10	Order contradicts target's Psychological Limitations
+10	Target will remember the illusion as being "real" after it has ended
+10	Illusion can distort time (GM's option)
+10	Target takes STUN damage from illusory attacks
+10	Illusion is impressive; mentalist gains PRE Aid for purposes of making appropriate Presence Attacks
+20	Target takes BODY and STUN from illusory attacks
+20	Target suffers unusual effect other than damage from illusion (GM's option)



Mental Invulnerability

This new Power is the equivalent of Lack Of Weakness for Mental Defense. It serves to protect a character against another character's Find Weakness with his mental powers.

Mental Invulnerability costs 1 point for every -1 the attacker suffers on his Find Weakness roll. It does not cost END, and is considered to be "Always On."

Mental Senses And Sense-Affecting Powers

The Mental Sense Group

The Mental Sense Group, as described on page 66 of the *HERO System Rulebook*, includes just a couple of Powers: Mental Awareness, Mind Scan, and any Detects, Spatial Awareness, or other Unusual Senses based primarily upon mental powers (this should include sense-oriented Talents, such as Danger Sense, which are bought with a "mentalism" special effect). As discussed below, this group needs to be expanded slightly.

(Author's note: to the extent that the material in this book conflicts with my article "Senses & Sense Powers" in *The HERO System Almanac 2*, this material is correct and overrules that article.)

Astral Awareness

Astral Awareness is a new Enhanced Sense. It allows a character to see astral forms (and, at the GM's option, to see other aspects of the "Astral Plane"), communicate with them, and so on.

Astral Awareness costs 3 Character Points. It is part of the Unusual Senses Group. It works in 360 Degrees. It is not a Targeting Sense.

Clairsentience As A Mental Sense

Clairsentience (primarily Clairvoyance, Precognition, and Retrocognition) may also be considered a Mental Sense in the campaign. Refer to "Clairsentience," above, for more information.

Detect

The number and type of Detects that could be possessed by or used against mentalists is extensive. Examples include Detect Mind, Detect Mental Powers, Detect Psychic Powers (a specific class of Mental Powers), Detect Lie, and so forth.

Perhaps the most common Detect for mentalist characters to buy is Detect Mind—the ability to sense the mental "emanations" of another mind. Detect Mind will simply detect the presence and vague location of another mind; it tells the character nothing about the mind's precise location, or the mind itself (whether it is human, alien, animal, or what have you; whether it is a strong mind or a weak mind; whether it possesses mental powers) unless Discriminatory is bought. Discriminatory Detect Mind will detect exactly where other minds are, what species they are, and what their level of power is. Detect Mind

is often bought as a Sense, with Telescopic to increase its range. Detect Mind cannot be used to target Mental Powers unless Targeting Sense is bought for it. (Note: GMs should be wary of characters buying Telescopic Discriminatory Detect Mind as a Targeting Sense as a cheap way of buying Mind Scan.)

In fact, GMs should be careful not to let Detects take the place of any Mental Power. For example, a character might want to buy Detect Emotions with Discriminatory, so that he could tell what a given person was feeling. However, this is more properly simulated with the Power "Telepathy," so it should not be allowed as a Detect unless it is limited in some way. A Detect Emotions which merely indicated that some emotions were present but told the user nothing else would probably be acceptable.

Another interesting Detect is Detect Lie. This is in essence a limited form of Telepathy that detects falsehoods. However, it is certainly not foolproof. If a character believes something it will not register as a lie, even though it is not true. If a character tells a half-truth, it may or may not register as a "lie," depending on the situation (Discriminatory Detect Lie, on the other hand, would describe a half-truth precisely).

Mental Awareness

Mental Awareness allows a character to sense the use of Mental Powers and to "see" the user and target of any Mental Powers in the character's vicinity. It is available free to anyone who has a Mental Power, since people with mental powers can detect the use of others' mental abilities. Mental Awareness does not allow a character to detect what type of Mental Power is being used, only that one is being used (and, depending on the situation, who's using it). Mental Awareness also does not allow the user to detect that someone is under the effect of a continuing-effect Mental Power, unless a mentalist is continuing to feed the power END or otherwise maintaining mental contact with the target (for example, so that he can monitor and direct a Mental Illusion).

Mental Awareness is a 360 Degree sense, but it is not a Targeting Sense or Discriminatory. Those capabilities can, of course, be purchased for it. Targeting Mental Awareness allows a mentalist to establish Line Of Sight on either the user or target of mental powers. Discriminatory Mental Awareness will allow the mentalist to determine the specific Mental Power being used, the level of power (i.e., the Active Points, plus or minus 10%), and whether the power is being used grossly or subtly, if the mentalist makes a PER Roll.

In some instances, a character with Mental Powers should not have Mental Awareness, based upon the power's special effect. If the character in question has only one or two Mental Powers, he should take a -½ Limitation, "Does Not Provide Mental Awareness," on those Powers. If the character has more than one or two Mental Powers, he should either take that Limitation on all of the Powers, or take it on the base cost of any Power Framework that he has those Powers in. Alternately, he can take a 3-point Physical



Limitation (even though the loss of Mental Awareness is Slightly Impairing and the impairment occurs Infrequently, which would normally be worth 5 points, the Power itself only costs 3 points, so its loss should only be worth 3 points as a Physical Limitation). The GM should choose between these options and inform the players.

Mind Scan

Mind Scan (which is discussed in further detail below) is the ability to sense minds which are not in the character's Line Of Sight. Mind Scan operates in 360 Degrees and is a Targeting Sense for other Mental Powers. Refer to the discussion of Mind Scan, below, for more details on this Power.

Telepathy And Mind Link As Mental Senses

Mind Scan, Mental Awareness, and a few other miscellaneous senses should not be the limits of the Mental Sense Group. There are two other senses to be considered: Telepathy; and its more limited form, Mind Link. Both of these Powers have two functions: first, they allow a character to mentally contact someone and "read" his thoughts, using Telepathy as a form of "mental hearing;" second, a character can mentally contact someone and "send" thoughts to him, using Telepathy as a form of "mental voice." The telepathic option for Mind Control (a +¼ Advantage for that Power) is also a form of mental voice. Accordingly, Telepathy, Mind Link, and telepathic Mind Control should be considered as part of the Mental Sense Group to the extent they are used to "hear" and "speak." This has important implications for the use of Flash and Darkness (see below).

Sense-Affecting Powers

Darkness And Flash

The Mental Sense Group is affected by Flash and Darkness somewhat differently than most other Sense Groups. This is because Mental Powers can be targeted two ways: through Targeting Senses (primarily eyesight), or through Mind Scan.

A Darkness versus the Mental Sense Group will prevent any use of Mental Awareness, Mind Scan, and other Mental Senses by affected characters. It will also prevent the use of Telepathy and Mind Link, since it affects both the "mental hearing" and the "mental voice" aspects of those Powers (similarly, a Darkness versus Hearing Group affects both hearing and speech).

A Flash versus the Mental Sense Group is another story. It "blinds" Mental Awareness and Mind Scan, but it only Flashes the "mental hearing" aspect of Telepathy and Mind Link. The "mental voice" aspect of those Powers will still function (similarly, a character suffering from a Hearing Group Flash can still talk). Since the character's Mind Scan is Flashed, he can only target his Telepathy or Mind Link through LOS. The mentalist cannot read the thoughts of

anyone he can establish LOS on—his "mental hearing" has been "deafened"—but he can send his thoughts to them. If he already has a Mind Link established when the Flash goes off, the "mental voice" aspects continue to function, but the "mental hearing" aspects are cut off.

Depending upon how the GM prefers to run things, the defense versus a Flash of the Mental Sense Group might be Mental Sense Group Flash Defense, Mental Defense, both of these, or the character buying the Flash must choose when he defines the power what the defense is. It is recommended that Mental Sense Group Flash Defense be the defense in most cases. Since Mental Sense Group Flash Defense will ordinarily be less common than Mental Defense, the GM might grant a -¼ Limitation to a Mental Sense Group Flash that is affected by Mental Defense.

(Of course, the use of Mental Powers may be influenced by sense-affecting Powers which affect ordinary senses used to establish LOS. If a mentalist character does not have Mind Scan and his Sight (or other Targeting Sense) is blocked by Darkness or Flash, he is effectively unable to use his mental powers (or can only use them at reduced OECV at best; refer to the discussion of Line Of Sight earlier in this chapter). If any mental effects are in existence when the Darkness or Flash is used against him, such as Mental Illusions or Mind Control, his control over those powers is cut off, but they will remain in effect at whatever level they were when cut off and will deteriorate as per the rules from that point.)

The effects of Flash and Darkness on Clairsentience are discussed under "Clairsentience," above.

Images

Images to the Mental Sense Group can be employed in many interesting ways. For example, they can: make a person's "mental signature" appear to be different (or even look like someone else's); make the detectable power effects of a Mental Power (detectable by someone with Mental Awareness, that is) look different; make it appear as if a character who has no Mental Powers actually has some; change or disguise the "thoughts" that a character tries to read with Telepathy; create false "mental presences" to be detected by Mind Scan or Telepathy; and so forth. It is up to the GM to adjudicate the exact effects of and PER Roll Modifiers for any given use of Images versus the Mental Sense Group.

Another interesting possibility is Images against a character's Danger Sense. This would create false impressions of danger, making the target constantly edgy and alert.

Given the nature of the Images Power, fake mental signatures and the like will probably fade quickly; for longer-lasting changes, use either some of the new Skills described in this book (see above), Transform (see below), or buy the Images as Zero END, Uncontrolled (this requires GM permission; such Images should also be bought BOECV).



Invisibility

Invisibility to the Mental Sense Group makes a character invisible to Mind Scan, to the “mental hearing” aspects of Telepathy and Mind Link, to Mental Clairsentience, and to any unusual senses or Detects which are included in the Mental Sense Group. An invisible character can only be located with Mind Scan (or other Mental Senses) if the mentalist makes a Mind Scan Attack Roll at OECV 0 (or at ½ OECV if the mentalist is within 1" of the target and makes a PER Roll to spot the fringe [if any]). If a Mind Scan lock-on is established, the Invisibility has no further effect against the Mind Scanning character (unless the lock-on is broken somehow). The Invisibility would still apply to other mentalists, although they would probably be able to use their Mental Awareness to trace the first mentalist's use of Mind Scan and see where the target is.

Invisibility to the Mental Sense Group does not affect Mental Awareness, since that sense only detects the use of Mental Powers, not the mere possession of them by an individual. If a character who is Invisible to the Mental Sense Group uses a Mental Power, a character with Mental Awareness can detect the use of that Power though he could not if the Power took the Advantage “Invisible To Mental Sense Group” (see “Power Advantages,” below).

A character can also purchase Invisibility to Sight Group with the -1 Limitation, “Only To Protect Against Mental Attacks.” A character with this power can be seen by mentalists (and everyone else), but for some reason the mentalist has trouble “locking on” to him with mental attacks. This power is similar to Desolidification “Only To Protect Against Mental Powers,” and like that power, should be regarded as a “Stop Sign” power that can only be taken with GM permission.

Mind Control

Here is the text of the rule on Mind Control, from the *HERO System Rulebook*, pages 78-79. Changes have been made for the sake of clarity and to make the text consistent with other changes made by this book.

MIND CONTROL

A character with this Mental Power can take control of another character's mind, and thereby his actions. The character buys 1d6 of Mind Control for 5 Character Points.

To use Mind Control, the mentalist makes an ECV Attack Roll. If he hits, he gives the target an order. The GM secretly determines what level of Mind Control this order will require, based on how agreeable the target is to the command (see the *Mind Control Effects Table*, below).

The mentalist then makes an Effect Roll in the usual fashion. If the resulting total is greater than or equal to the required level, then the target must follow the order until he breaks the Mind Control. Note that the attacker must have some way to communicate with his target; otherwise there is no way to give orders.

Breakout Rolls; Changing Circumstances

The target may make Breakout Rolls, as normal; he will remain under the command of the attacking mentalist until he makes such a roll. The character receives a bonus of +1 to +3 and a chance to make another Breakout Roll if he is forced to perform an action prohibited by his Psychological Limitations. At the GM's discretion, the character could get additional bonuses to his roll if his friends are trying to “snap him out of it.”

If a character is put under Mind Control at a given level, and the situation later changes to require a higher level of Mind Control, then the character gets the chance to make another Breakout Roll with a +2 bonus to his EGO Roll per level change on the table. Thus, if a character was issued a command which only requires an EGO +10 effect, and the situation changed such that it now required a +30 effect, then the character would receive a +4 bonus to his EGO Roll.

Example: Mind Slayer sneaks up behind Mighty Man and shouts, “Freeze!” Since Mighty Man is a brick and wouldn't really mind standing still, the GM determines that this is only an EGO +10 level of effect. Mind Slayer's Effect Roll is high enough to achieve this effect. However, if Mind Slayer then pulled out a .44 Magnum and shot at Mighty Man's DNPC, this would require a higher level of control (EGO +30, the GM decides). This is two levels down the Mind Control Effects Table, and would give Mighty Man the chance to make another Breakout Roll, at +4.

Communicating Orders

Mind Control requires the mentalist to communicate with the target. Mind Control which doesn't require verbal communication (i.e., which has telepathic contact built in) is purchased with a +¼ Advantage. This only allows communication of the command; the character cannot read the target's mind. Mind Control which only allows a single command is purchased with a -½ Limitation. This command must still be spoken (unless the telepathic option is purchased, as above).



MIND CONTROL EFFECTS TABLE

Total rolled on Mind
Control dice - Mental
DEF is:

Greater than EGO

Effect

Target will perform
actions he is
inclined to perform
anyway

EGO +10

Target will perform
actions he wouldn't
mind doing

EGO +20

Target will perform
actions he is
normally against
doing

EGO +30

Target will perform
actions he is
violently opposed
to doing

Modifiers (can be applied at any level)

-5

Order is worded in
an exceptionally
convincing
manner

+5

Order is poorly
conceived or
contradictory

+10

Target will not
remember actions
performed while
Mind Controlled

+20

Target will
remember actions
and think they
were natural

The four basic levels of Mind Control are self-explanatory and are based on the orders being given. The Mind Control can be made easier if the orders seem reasonable, and harder if the orders are poorly worded. The Mind Control rules make it fairly easy to set up small Mind Control effects, and more difficult to set up more sweeping ones. It is also easier to create a long-lasting, but inconsequential, Mind Control than a more comprehensive one.

To put the victim in a trance, so that he can't remember his own actions, requires +10 points of effect.

Victims of Mind Control may or may not know that they are being Mind Controlled while the Control is taking place; this is up to the mentalist (some sadistic mentalists like for their victims to know that they are being Controlled). To make the victim believe after the Control ends that the decisions were his own requires +20 points of effect. (Unless the mentalist achieves this effect, when the Control ends the target will know that he was the victim

of Mind Control—though he may think that he shook it off and that his actions were his own idea.) Other characters can convince the victim that he was Mind Controlled, of course.

Example: The arch-fiend Hypnos is trying to use his Mind Control on his nemesis Mighty Man. Hypnos makes his ECV Attack Roll, and orders his foe to attack a small puppy. The GM decides that this is an action that Mighty Man is violently opposed to performing, and the Mind Control will thus require an EGO +30 level of effect. Hypnos rolls his 12d6 Effect Roll, achieving 48 points' worth of Mind Control; Mighty Man has no Mental Defense and an EGO of 13, so this is enough to achieve the desired effect.

On his next Phase (before he has to attack the puppy), Mighty Man tries to break out. Because Hypnos exceeded the level of effect needed to successfully Mind Control Mighty Man by 5 points, the hero's Breakout Roll is at -1, making it an 11-. Mighty Man's Breakout Roll is a 9, so he succeeds in breaking free of the Mind Control. Mighty Man then uses his Phase to dispose of two of Hypnos's henchmen who are bent on causing the puppy harm.

Hypnos decides that he just wants to influence Mighty Man to beat up some more of his hired thugs, thereby allowing Hypnos to escape. Hypnos also wants Mighty Man to think that this was his own idea. Since Mighty Man just wants to bust some skulls and save the puppy, the GM determines that this is an EGO +10 level of effect, +20 points to make Mighty Man think that he was acting of his own free will. After a successful ECV Attack Roll, Hypnos rolls 53 on his Effect Roll, making the necessary level with 10 points to spare. On his next Phase, Mighty Man must make his Breakout Roll at -2 (10/5 = -2 penalty to the roll). Rolling an 11, Mighty Man fails, so he will obey Hypnos's command to "attack Guido and his men." Assuming that nothing else happens to help snap him out of Hypnos's Mind Control, Mighty Man will get another Breakout Roll one Turn (12 Segments) later, at -1 (-2 penalty with a +1 bonus for the passage of time). Mighty Man spends the next Turn pounding Guido and friends into the pavement while Hypnos sneaks out the back door. When the police arrive, Mighty Man explains that he decided it would be best to capture the thugs and let Hypnos get away. The puppy, fortunately, is unharmed.

Mind Control Cost: 5 Character Points for 1d6 of Mind Control, minimum cost 10 Character Points. Range is Line of Sight, no Range Modifier.



Implications, Clarifications, And Options

Communicating Orders

Unless the mentalist has purchased the +¼ “telepathic option” for Mind Control, he must communicate his orders to the target through the target’s normal senses. Usually this means speaking the orders to him, but in some circumstances a mentalist might be able to communicate orders (of a crude sort) with gestures, sign language, or by some other means.

If the situation is noisy or otherwise makes communication of the orders difficult, the target may have to make a PER Roll to hear the orders. If he makes the roll, he hears them and can be affected by the Mind Control normally; if he fails, then he has not heard the orders and the Mind Control does not affect him at all. However, the mentalist still has a “lock” on his mind as long as he pays END, and if he can communicate orders in a later Phase the target will be affected by the Mind Control.

If a mentalist wants to use Mind Control through a Mind Scan lock-on, he *must* purchase the telepathic option, simultaneously use Telepathy through the lock-on, or use some form of long-distance communication such as radio. Ordinarily the distances involved when using Mind Scan preclude the use of the mentalist’s unaided voice or other normal means of communication to give orders.

GMs for some campaigns, particularly psionics campaigns, may want to consider dropping the “Telepathic” (+¼) Advantage and assume that Mind Control is automatically telepathic. If this variant is used, Mind Control which requires spoken commands takes a -¼ Limitation.

If a character has purchased the “Telepathic” Advantage for his Mind Control, he can still communicate orders verbally as well. Some forms of Mind Control may only be usable telepathically; this is worth a -¼ Limitation on the Mind Control.

If an order is incomprehensible to a character, he will simply stand there, confused and unable to act at all. For example, in the above example, if Hypnos ordered Mighty Man to “Attack Guido!” and Mighty Man did not know or it was not obvious who Guido was, Mighty Man wouldn’t do anything—he would just stand there confused, waiting for Hypnos (or someone else) to clarify who Guido is.

Doing Damage With Mind Control

There are two ways to damage someone with Mind Control. The first is to order them to hurt or kill themselves. This obviously requires at least an EGO +30 roll (unless the character is, for some reason, less than violently opposed to hurting or killing himself).

Alternately, and at the GM’s option, the mentalist can simply order the character to “Die!” The typical special effect in this situation is that the Mind Control is so strong that the character’s autonomic bodily functions, such as heartbeat and breathing, cease to function. For +10 points of effect, this will cause the target to take STUN damage. The amount of damage done is based on the amount of dice in Mind Control the mentalist has: he rolls 1d6 Normal Damage for every 5 points of effect rolled on his Mind Control dice, or for every 5 Active Points in his Mind Control power, whichever is less. (This is just like the method used to determine how much damage a mentalist can do with Mental Illusions.) For +20 points of effect, the target will take both STUN and BODY. In either case, this damage is applied to the target’s Mental Defense—which means that this tactic can be quite lethal against many characters.

Empathic Mind Control

Empathic Mind Control may only be used to control emotions (but not to detect or read emotions; empathic Telepathy is needed for that [see below]). This is taken as a -½ Limitation on the Mind Control, or -1 if Empathic Mind Control is limited to a *single* emotion (fear, awe, or what have you). The GM is free to alter these Limitation values to suit the balance of his campaign.

The chart that follows gives some idea of the effect of empathic control. These charts can, of course, be used with normal Mind Control as well. Empathic Mind Control commands which match or contradict the character’s Psychological Limitations are entitled to the usual bonuses or penalties.



Emotional Intensity	Mind Control Roll Needed
Weak	Greater than EGO
Basic	EGO +10
Strong	EGO +20
Extreme	EGO +30
Anger	Mind Control Roll Needed
Annoyed/Frustrated	Greater than EGO: Attack people/objects the character would attack anyway; automatically trigger appropriate Berserks/Enrageds; if attempting to calm a Berserk/Enraged character, target rolls to break free from his Berserk/Enraged when this level of control is achieved
Angry	EGO +10: Attack people/objects the character dislikes; Berserk/Enraged characters can be automatically calmed down.
Furious	EGO +20: Attack people/objects the character likes
Berserk	EGO +30: Attack people/objects the character loves
Anger: Control of anger is used to make a target so angry at something or someone that he will attack it (or to remove anger the character is presently feeling). At lower levels of anger, he will only attack to hurt or damage; at higher levels, he will attack to kill or destroy (the GM's judgment should be used in this situation). The mentalist may direct the character's anger at something general ("Aren't cars annoying?") or something specific ("Your girlfriend has been cheating on you with Defender! Doesn't that make you really angry at him?").	
An Anger command directed at something the character would normally go Berserk or Enraged over will automatically trigger that Disadvantage if Greater Than EGO is achieved.	
With some modification in terms and effects, this chart can also be used for Hatred.	
Fear	Mind Control Roll Needed
Apprehensive/Uneasy	Greater than EGO: Ego Roll at +5 to maintain composure; if failed, character will avoid the situation or phenomenon causing the fear. Danger Sense is automatically triggered.
Fearful	EGO +10: As Greater than EGO, but the EGO Roll is unmodified
Terrified	EGO +20: As Greater than EGO, but the EGO Roll is at -5
Blind Panic	EGO +30: Character will move away from feared object or phenomenon as fast as possible
Fear: Victims who fail their EGO Roll will normally flee, though they may be paralyzed with fear or may lash out at the feared object or phenomenon in panic. In combat, they will not usually attack the feared object/phenomenon, they will only Dodge it. If trapped and unable to flee, they will become paralyzed with fear or act in whatever way the GM feels is appropriate. If subjected to interrogation, they will answer questions willingly (the GM may allow a separate EGO Roll to resist particularly damaging questions).	
If the target of a successful Fear attack has Danger Sense, his Danger Sense will automatically be triggered.	
Depression	Mind Control Roll Needed
Pensive	Greater than EGO: Ego Roll at +5 to maintain composure; if failed, character will become listless and apathetic regarding life and will have difficulty acting
Sad	EGO +10: As EGO +0, but the EGO Roll is unmodified
Despairing	EGO +20: As EGO +0, but the EGO Roll is at -5
Depressed	EGO +30: Character will become totally listless and apathetic; will seriously consider suicide or other extreme "solutions"
Depression: The effects of depression are difficult to adjudicate in a game setting. The GM should use his best judgment. In general an affected character will become listless and apathetic, unwilling to act or take control of a situation. This may extend to his entire life, or to certain situations (for example, a particular battle or mission).	
Love	Mind Control Roll Needed
Sympathetic	Greater than EGO: Character is attracted to people he likes already; will be inclined to do what they ask of him and will generally try to please them
Loving	EGO +10: Character is attracted to people he feels neutral about
Passionate	EGO +20: Character is attracted to people he does not like
Crazed/ HeadOver Heels	EGO +30: Character is attracted to people that he hates or that repulse him
Love: If the character is already favorably inclined towards a person or persons, using Empathic Mind Control can make him love that person or persons. A minor crush can thus become full-blown, heartfelt love.	

GMs can create charts for other emotions, such as Envy/Jealousy, Lust, Happiness, Greed/Selfishness, and many more.

Hypnosis

Hypnosis is a limited form of Mind Control. It usually has a low number of dice of effect (6-8d6 is about right), and takes the following Limitations: Hypnosis Only (-½), OIF* (any watch, pen, or other object for the subject to focus upon, -½), No Range (-½), Extra Time (1 minute, -1 ½), Concentrate (0 DCV, -½), Gestures* (the use of a swinging pendulum or some shiny object to focus the subject's attention, -¼), Incantations* ("You are feeling sleepy...", -¼), Requires Eye Contact* (-½), and Requires A PS: Hypnotist [or SC: Hypnotism] Roll* (-½). Limitations marked with a "*" are not required; skilled or powerful hypnotists may not need to take them.

The "Hypnosis Only" Limitation signifies the fact that hypnosis cannot achieve all of the effects that ordinary Mind Control can; it is simply not as powerful, or as easily used. The sort of affects that are usually achieved with hypnosis include anesthesia (the ability to withstand pain), sensory distortions and hallucinations (these effects may require Images or Mental Illusions to achieve fully), a decreased level of inhibition, and so forth.

Another possible Limitation for hypnosis is "Willing Subject Required" (-1). This presents many interesting story possibilities—evil masterminds tricking PCs into giving their permission to be hypnotized; characters agreeing to be hypnotized so that they can "fake it" and give the enemy false information; and so forth.

Orders And The Speed Chart

Even though a mentalist gives Mind Control orders on his own Phases, the target can only act on those orders on the target's Phases. Therefore, since a character gets his initial Breakout Roll in his first Phase after he is attacked with Mind Control, he will automatically get a roll to break out before taking any Controlled actions, since he cannot begin to act on his orders until his own Phase.

When Mind Controlled, a character must use all of his available Phases unless ordered otherwise. He cannot voluntarily reduce his SPD to 1 to frustrate the mentalist.

"Post-hypnotic" Suggestions

Sometimes a mentalist will want to use Mind Control to implant a suggestion in another character's mind to make that character do something at some point in the future—for example, "When you see the President ride by, shoot him with this gun." Usually there will be a specific phenomenon that will trigger this effect.

This ability is simulated by purchasing the Advantage "Trigger" (+½) for the mentalist's Mind Control. When setting the Trigger, the mentalist declares what the suggestion will be (i.e., gives his order), then rolls his Mind Control dice and notes the total. When the Trigger goes off, the total is compared to the target's EGO at that time, and the appropriate level of effect is determined by the GM based on the situation. (For example, a post-hypnotic suggestion to

"Take a nap" might only require EGO +10 ordinarily, but if the mentalist attempts to trigger it when the target is in combat, it probably requires an EGO +30 effect.) If an appropriate level of control is achieved, the target follows the suggestion; if not, the suggestion has no effect.

Post-hypnotic suggestions can also be used to simulate long-term Mind Control effects, such as, "Meet me at Joe's Cafe tomorrow at noon." In this case, the Mind Control will be Triggered by the passage of a certain amount of time.

Psychological Limitations

Mind Control commands which agree with a target's Psychological Limitations are harder for the target to resist; conversely, those which contradict a target's Psychological Limitations are easier for him to resist. On the average, an order which agrees with a target's Psychological Limitation requires 10 less points of effect; one which contradicts his Psychological Limitations requires +10 points of effect. This bonus/penalty can vary depending upon the strength of the Psychological Limitation.

Set Commands

According to the text of the rule, Mind Control which can only be used for a set command (for example, "fall in love with me") is worth a -½ Limitation. However, there may be set commands which are so limiting that they are worth more than that. Examples include:

Emotions Only = -½

Any single emotion only = -1

"Go home" Only = -½

"Go home" Only in a Particular Situation = -1

The GM has the final say on how limiting a set command is; most of them will still be worth -½.

Snapping The Target Out Of Mind Control

As stated in the text of the rule, a Mind Controlled character's friends may try to "snap him out of" the Mind Control, thus giving him bonuses to his rolls to break free. Depending upon the exact nature of the situation and the character involved, possible actions to snap a character out of Mind Control might include:

Slapping him in the face

Splashing water on him, or throwing him into a body of water

Showing him pictures of his loved ones

Triggering one of his Berserks/Enrageds (although this can potentially be dangerous)

Exposing him to smelling salts or other extremely foul odors

Tackling him

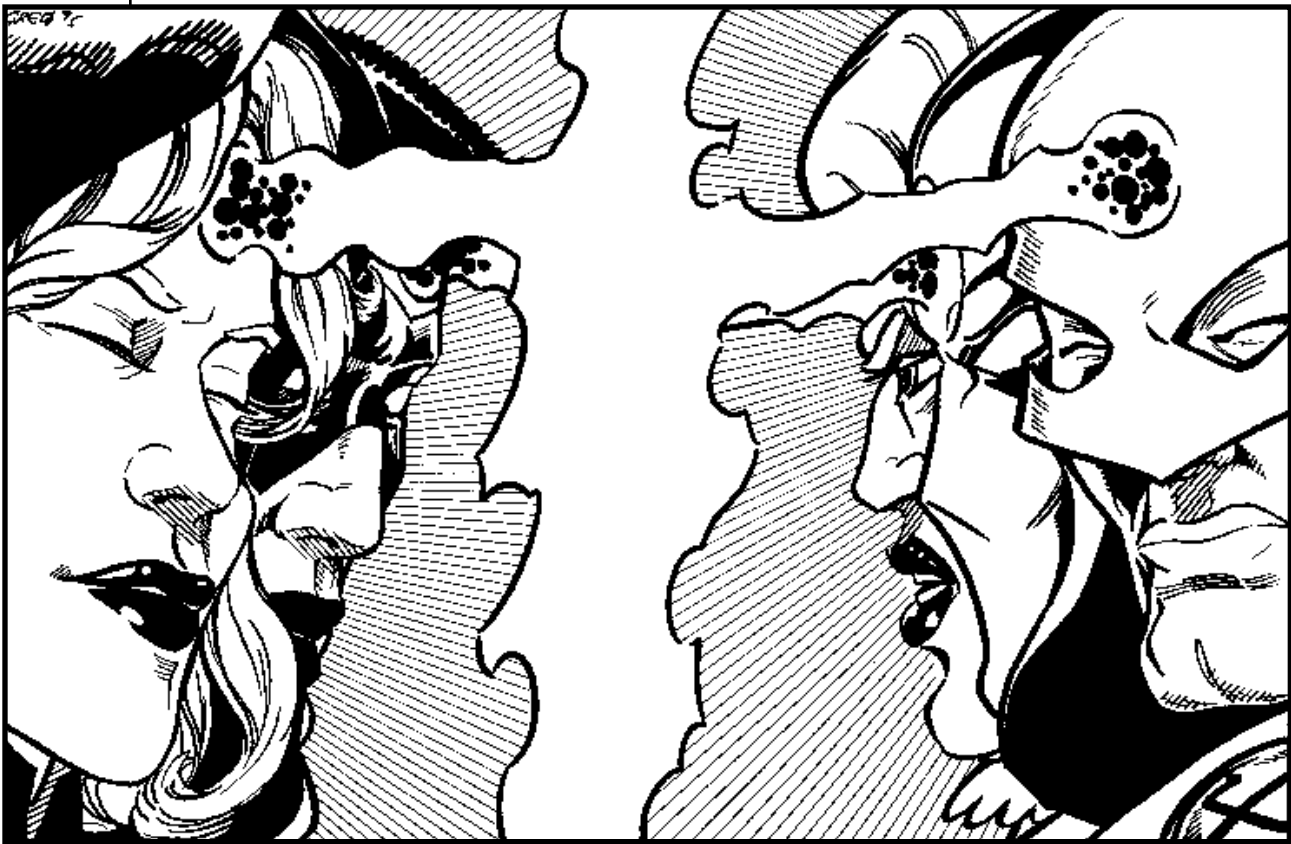


Expanded Mind Control Effects Table

Here is an expanded Mind Control Table for easy reference. Some of the entries in this table are taken from Matthew Lewis's article "Molding Minds For Fun And Profit" in *Adventurers' Club* #20.

EXPANDED MIND CONTROL EFFECTS TABLE

Total rolled on Mind Control dice	Effect
- Mental Defense: Greater than EGO	Target will perform actions he is inclined to perform anyway. Target believes any statement that does not contradict prior knowledge
EGO +10	Target will perform actions he wouldn't mind doing. Subject will believe any statement that does not contradict reality under direct observation
EGO +20	Target will perform actions he is normally against doing. Subject will believe any statement that does not contradict strongly held personal beliefs or principles (such as Psychological Limitations)
EGO +30	Target will perform actions he is violently opposed to doing. Subject will believe statements that contradict strongly held personal beliefs or principles (including Psychological Limitations) or which contradict reality under direct observation.
Modifiers (can be applied at any level)	
-5	Order is worded in an exceptionally convincing manner
+5	Order is poorly conceived or contradictory
-10	Order matches target's Psychological Limitations
+10	Order contradicts target's Psychological Limitations
+10	Target will not remember actions
+20	Target will remember actions and think they were natural
+10	Target will take STUN if ordered to "Die!"
+20	Target will take BODY and STUN if ordered to "Die!"



Mind Link

Here is the text of the rule on Mind Link, from the *HERO System Rulebook*, page 79. Changes have been made for the sake of clarity and to make the text consistent with other changes made by this book.

MIND LINK

With this Special Power, a variation of Telepathy, the character can set up a specific link with a receptive (willing) mind, thereby allowing instant mental communication. (Characters who want to be able to read minds or communicate with unwilling subjects should buy Telepathy.)

To establish a Mind Link, the character must have Line Of Sight on the target; he must make an ECV Attack Roll to set up the Link. The target must be completely willing (ECV 0), otherwise the Link will fail outright.

Once established, Mind Link does not require Line Of Sight, and is only broken when either party wants to “hang up.” A character can use Mental Powers through a Mind Link; such attacks do not require an ECV Attack Roll. Of course, since the Mind Link must be voluntarily accepted by the target, such “attacks” are rarely violent (unless the subject was tricked into accepting the Mind Link).

It costs 5 Character Points to be able to establish a link with one specific mind. This individual must be chosen when the Mind Link is bought, and can be anyone—a human, an animal, a sentient computer, and so on. The ability to establish a Mind Link with a specific group of people (like a family or a pantheon) costs +5 points. The ability to establish a Mind Link with any willing target costs an additional +5 points. Mind Link can usually only be maintained with one person at a time; the number of minds can be doubled for an additional +5 points. Mind Link is usually limited to a single planet; if it can travel any distance, it costs an additional +5 points; if it can travel through any dimension it costs an additional +5 points. Finally, if the Link can only be maintained with a subject who has also purchased Mind Link, then the entire Power is bought with a -1 Limitation.

Example: The supervillain Talon has established a Mind Link with his pet falcon. Since the falcon is a single individual, the Mind Link costs 5 points.

The eight members of the Vlandry family can all communicate with each other, regardless of distance or what plane of existence they are on. The total cost of this Mind Link for each member is 10 points (for a specific group), +15 points (for eight targets), +10 points (to work across any distance or dimension), for a total of 35 Active Points. How-

ever, since the Link will only work with family members who have Mind Link themselves, a -1 Limitation is applied, for a final Real Point cost of 17 points to each Vlandry.

Mind Link Cost: 5 points for one specific mind, +5 points for a related group of minds one at a time, +5 points for any one mind, +5 points per 2x the number of minds, +5 points for any distance, +5 points for any dimension, -1 Limitation for “Only Others Who Have Mind Link.” Minimum cost 5 points.

Implications, Clarifications, And Options

Mind Link As A Mental Power

Mind Link is listed as a Standard Power. This is because it has many uses (such as creating closed radio links) that have nothing to do with mental powers. However, in a mentalist campaign, or when purchased by a mentalist character, Mind Link should obviously be classed as a Mental Power. This will allow it to be affected as part of the Mental Sense Group (see above).

Feedback

At the GM’s option, a mentalist can buy Mind Link with the -1 Limitation, “Feedback.” This is similar to the Limitation for Force Walls; it signifies that whatever pain is felt by anyone the mentalist is Mind Linked with, the mentalist will feel also. In game terms, the damage done to a mind in a Mind Link will feed back through the Link and affect the mentalist. This is limited to STUN damage only; the mentalist cannot take BODY. The mentalist’s Mental Defense applies against the Feedback damage.

Example: Mindstorm, who bought his Mind Link with the “Feedback” Limitation, has established a Mind Link with Mighty Man. Mighty Man goes into battle and is hit by a laser bazooka blast for 57 STUN and 16 BODY. Mindstorm suffers a 57 STUN feedback as he experiences the pain and impact of the blast just like Mighty Man does. The BODY Mighty Man took does not feed back through the Mind Link. Even though Mighty Man’s defenses are strong enough that he can shrug most of the blow off himself, the force of the blow feeds back through the Link in full, so Mindstorm will take 57 STUN minus his Mental Defense.

Players should note that the “Feedback” Limitation is of greatest use for expensive Mind Link powers; low-level ones (say, 5-10 point Mind Links) may not generate enough of a point savings to make taking the Limitation worthwhile. In that case, the GM might allow the mentalist to take some sort of Susceptibility or Physical Limitation that reflects the “feedback” effect.



Maintaining A Mind Link

Players should remember that Mind Link is a Persistent Power; it only “turns off” when one of the Linked characters wants to turn it off. Thus, if a mentalist establishes a Link between himself and four other people, and he is then knocked out, the four other people remain Linked until they voluntarily “hang up.” Once the mentalist awakens, he can automatically “rejoin” the Link, since he never voluntarily turned it off.

Mind Link And Mind Scan

If a mentalist has established a “circuit” with another character using Mind Scan, and either of them are Mind Linked to other characters, all of the characters are now Linked together, and each of them can make use of the Mind Scan circuit the same way either of the original two characters could: they can make mental attacks (or be attacked), communicate, locate the person(s) at the other end of the circuit, and so forth. Attacks made across a Link/Scan in this fashion do not have to go through each person in the “chain”; instead, they can bypass as many persons as necessary to attack the intended target directly.

Example: Solitaire has established a Mind Link with the rest of the Champions. She then decides to use her Mind Scan to locate Psimon of PSI. After considerable searching, she finds him; it so happens that he is Mind Linked with the rest of PSI at that moment. All of the Champions and PSI are now Mind Linked to each other and can communicate if they wish. They can also attack one another across the Mind Scan circuit with mental attacks. Mind Slayer decides to take that pesky Jaguar out of the picture and launches an Ego Attack at him. She can attack him directly; her attack does not affect Psimon, Solitaire, or anyone else in either Link.

Psychic Bonds

It is possible for a character with Mind Link to establish a permanent Mind Link, known as a Psychic Bond, with another person. In fiction, this is particularly popular for characters who are siblings, who are married to one another, or who are “blood brothers” or have some other special tie.

A Psychic Bond allows the bonded characters to communicate with each other telepathically at any time, regardless of whether the two are within Line Of Sight. The effective range of the Bond is the same as that of Mind Scan (i.e., it is usually limited to planetary distances, but may be greater in some genres). The “Feedback” Limitation may be taken on a Psychic Bond, signifying that each member of the Bond will take any damage that any other members take (a dangerous Limitation indeed).

A Psychic Bond with a single person costs +5 points to Mind Link (so, at a minimum, it costs the person who creates the Bond 10 points to have one—5 points for a basic Mind Link, and +5 points to turn that Mind Link into a Psychic Bond). All participants in the Bond must pay the +5 points, but only the creator has to pay for the base Mind Link power. The Bond is permanent and cannot be severed except with Psionic Surgery or similar methods.

A “floating Psychic Bond” that can be established with anyone and changed during or between adventures costs +10 points (plus the cost of Mind Link). Changing a floating Bond requires one Turn of telepathic rapport with the subject to be linked with. When a floating Bond is changed, the previous Bond is completely destroyed and must be reestablished in the normal fashion.

The Range Of Mind Link

The text of the rule states that Mind Link is ordinarily limited to planetary distances, and specifies the points that must be paid to make it work at other distances. In some genres, such as science fiction, GMs may wish to consider increasing the basic range of Mind Link to solar systems or even galaxies, depending upon the nature of the campaign.

Senses And Mind Link

A character who is Mind Linked with another character (the “subject”) does not use the subject’s senses. He receives the mental impressions of those senses—he knows that the character is seeing a particular building, or smelling the odor of gasoline—but he does not himself see the building or smell gasoline. If a mentalist wants to be able to use a subject’s senses this way, he should buy Clairvoyance, Clairaudience, and so forth Linked to his Mind Link, with the -1 Limitation, “Only To Use Subject’s Senses.”

Mind Scan

Here is the text of the rule on Mind Scan, from the *HERO System Rulebook*, pages 80-81. Changes have been made for the sake of clarity and to make the text consistent with other changes made by this book.

MIND SCAN

A character with this Mental Power can search an area in order to find another mind. 1d6 of Mind Scan costs 5 points, and +1 on the ECV Attack Roll costs 2 points. Mind Scan is a Sense; it belongs to the Mental Sense Group and is a Targeting Sense.

To use Mind Scan, the character defines the area he wishes to scan (this area can be of any size). He then makes an ECV Attack Roll versus the DECV of the target mind. However, the attacker’s OECV suffers a penalty based on the number of minds in the search area. The modifier is listed on the Mind Scanning Modifiers Table.



MIND SCANNING MODIFIERS TABLE

Number of People	Modifier
1 (Freelance Game Writer)	0
10 (Small Gaming Company)	-2
100 (Theater)	-4
1,000 (Apartment Building; Gaming Convention)	-6
10,000 (Small Town)	-8
100,000 (Large Town; Super Bowl)	-10
1,000,000 (Major Metropolis)	-12
10,000,000 (State)	-14
100,000,000 (Large Country)	-16
1,000,000,000 (Continent)	-18
10,000,000,000 (Large Planet)	-20

and so forth.

The character should receive a bonus (+1 to +5) if he is searching for a familiar mind. Conversely, the character should receive a penalty (-1 to -5) if he is searching for the mind of a complete stranger, or for a very alien mind. If the roll is unsuccessful, then the character is unable to make any contact with the target. If the roll succeeds, then the mentalist has determined the general location and presence of the target.

After a successful Attack Roll, the character declares the desired Mind Scan level and makes a standard Effect Roll, using the Mind Scan Effects Table. If the Effect Roll is not enough to reach the desired level, the Mind Scan has no effect—the character cannot be contacted mentally, and no “lock-on” is established, but the target is aware that someone is trying to mentally scan for him. If the Effect Roll is enough to achieve the desired effect, then he has “locked on” to the target with Mind Scan. The target is entitled to make Breakout Rolls in the usual manner.

Even though Mind Scan is a Constant Power, it does not cost END to maintain; a character with Mind Scan only has to pay END when he makes an ECV Attack Roll with his Mind Scan. However, since Mind Scan is Constant, the attacking mentalist must keep it “turned on”—for instance, if it is in a Multipower, he cannot switch the slots. If the Mind Scan is turned off then the lock-on is broken.

It is important to note that, once established, a Mind Scan lock-on is a two-way circuit. If the mentalist is able to mentally attack his target, then his target can mentally attack him; if he knows where his target is, then his target knows where he is. It is entirely possible for two mentalists to carry on a long-distance mental duel through Mind Scan.

MIND SCAN EFFECTS TABLE

Total rolled on Mind Scan dice - Mental DEF is Greater than EGO	Effect
	Mentalist can establish Mind Link or use first level of Telepathy (communication). He also knows in which direction the target is located.
EGO +10	Mentalist can use all Mental Powers on target, and can estimate the general distance to the target.
EGO +20	Mentalist knows the exact location of the target. He can attack with all attacks. If he wishes to attack the target with a non-mental Power, the attack must be able to reach the target.

Mind Scan Cost: 5 Character Points for 1d6 Mind Scan, minimum cost 10 Character Points. +1 to Attack Roll for every 2 Character Points. Line of Sight is not necessary, and there is no Range Modifier.

Implications, Clarifications, And Options

Determining The Target's Location

When a mentalist makes an ECV Attack Roll with Mind Scan, he knows the “general location and presence” of the target mind. This simply means that he has confirmed that it is in the target area; he cannot gain more precise information on the target's location without making his Effect Roll. Knowing the target's general location and presence can, however, make subsequent Mind Scan rolls easier; refer to “Repeated Mind Scan Rolls,” below.

At the EGO +10 level of effect, a mentalist can “estimate the general distance to the target.” The exact effect of this is up to the GM, and may depend on the circumstances, but a general rule that the mentalist's estimation may be inaccurate by as much as 20% is a good rule of thumb. The GM can have the mentalist make an EGO Roll, at +1 for every 5 points by which his Effect Roll exceeded the required level of effect, and use that roll to estimate the accuracy of the Mind Scan: the more the roll is made by, the more accurate the estimate; the more it is missed by, the greater the inaccuracy. Once the mentalist arrives at that general location, he may make another Effect Roll (assuming he has maintained the lock-on) to pinpoint the target's location precisely.



At the EGO +20 level of effect, the mentalist knows “the exact location” of the target. This does not mean that he can provide the target’s address, know which floor of a building he is on, and so forth. Instead, it is an exact measure of distance, perhaps with some further vague information—”He’s 5,315 feet to the north, guys, and he’s above street level.” Once the mentalist arrives at that general location, he may make an unmodified EGO Roll (assuming he has maintained the Mind Scan lock-on) to pinpoint the target’s location precisely—”There! He’s on the 15th floor of that building, in the office on the west corner!”

At the EGO +10 and +20 levels of effect, the mentalist will have enough of an idea of the target’s location that he could, if he were in telepathic contact with the target, give him “directions” to find the mentalist—in other words, he could “talk him in” until the two of them met. How easy this will be depends on how accurate the mentalist’s knowledge of the target’s location is.

Familiar And Unfamiliar Minds

The text of the rule states that characters get bonuses to their ECV Attack Rolls when searching for familiar minds, and penalties when searching for unfamiliar minds.

Familiar minds include: anyone with whom the mentalist has previously had contact via Mind Con-

trol, Mind Link, Mind Scan, or Telepathy, no matter how brief that contact was; persons to whom the mentalist is emotionally close (friends, family members, and so forth); and persons with whom the mentalist has frequent association (co-workers and the like). The bonus to the ECV Attack Roll can range from +1 to +5, depending upon the level of familiarity: a parent (or any close family member) or spouse would probably be +5; a distant relative seen only once or twice a year might be +2 - +3; an old girlfriend or boyfriend the character hasn’t seen in years might be +1 - +3.

Unfamiliar minds include anyone with whom the character has never had mental contact or lengthy physical association (no matter how well that person is described or how much the character knows about him), and particularly alien or strange minds. The penalty to the Attack Roll can range from -1 to -5, depending upon circumstances.

GMs should note, however, that minds which “stand out,” such as some alien minds, may grant the character a bonus instead of a penalty (see below).

Leaving The Scanned Area

Sometimes the target of a Mind Scan will leave the area being searched after the lock-on is established. The best example of this is a character who teleports a long distance away as soon as he realizes that he is being mentally scanned. In this situation the attacking mentalist must make an unmodified EGO Roll; if he makes it, the lock-on is maintained (unless the target teleports beyond the “range” of his Mind Scan; see below); if he fails the roll, the lock-on is broken and the mentalist has no idea where the target is now (at the GM’s option, a second EGO Roll, if made, might give the mentalist a vague idea about where to pick up the search).

Mental Powers Used Through A Lock-On

GMs may want to consider limiting the amount of power that can be used through a Mind Scan lock-on. The limitation would be based on how powerful the lock-on is: a mentalist can only achieve an effect with a Mental Power used through a Mind Scan lock-on equal to or less than the effect of the Mind Scan roll. Thus, if a mentalist establishes a Mind Scan lock-on at the +20 level, any Mental Powers used to attack the target through that Mind Scan are limited to a +20 level of effect maximum.

To use Mind Control through a lock-on, it must be purchased with the “Telepathic” (+¼) Advantage—otherwise, the mentalist has no way to communicate orders to the target.

Number Of Minds In The Area

The Mind Scan Modifiers are based on the number of minds in the target area. Interpreted literally, this would make Mind Scan almost useless, since pets, wildlife, and the like all have minds that would interfere with the roll. Generally, the GM should only count the number of *sentient* minds when determining the number of minds in the target area.



Of course, a character could use Mind Scan to search for little Billy's lost puppy if he so desired; in this case, the GM should count only the minds of dogs and dog-like creatures (i.e., any non-sentient mammal up to Great Dane size) when determining the number of minds in the target area.

Similarly, a mentalist can normally ignore the minds of sleeping individuals if he is searching for an awake mind (and vice-versa). In this case, GMs should only count the number of awake minds in the target area. (Note: players should not be allowed to take advantage of this rule by trying to decrease the number of human minds to search through by claiming that they are only searching for "female minds" or something similar. There should be some limits on this sort of bonus; it should only be granted for extreme differences between types of minds.)

With the GM's permission, a mentalist can also limit the number of minds he has to sift through by limiting the "height" of his search area—for example, "I'll only scan minds at street level," "I'll only scan minds in the subways," or "I'll only scan minds above the 10th floor on this block." A character can even define his search area as "the corner west apartment on the fifth floor of the building on E. Madison Avenue" if he *really* wants to narrow down the search. At the GM's option, limits may be placed on this ability; for example, perhaps the mentalist has to actually be looking at the building in question to search so precise an area as a single apartment, or the mentalist must have visited that location previously (or have once been in substantial mental contact with someone who had.) However, the area to be Scanned must be defined by some geographic reference; a mentalist cannot scan "my car" when he doesn't know where the car is, or "the room on the other end of the phone line I'm talking on" if he doesn't know where that room physically is.

A mentalist can use Mind Scan simply to determine the number of sentient minds in an area, without Scanning for any particular mind. To do this, the character declares his target area and makes a Mind Scan ECV Attack Roll against DECV 3 (including modifiers for the number of people in the target area). If the roll succeeds, the character knows how many sentient minds (or canine minds, or whatever he is looking for) are in that area, plus or minus 10%. If the roll fails, the GM should give the character incorrect (possibly wildly incorrect) information about the number of minds in that area.

The Range Of Mind Scan

Mind Scan has no "range" per se, and no Range Modifiers when it is used. However, Mind Scan's range is not actually unlimited. In general Mind Scan should be limited to planetary ranges—a character on Earth can Mind Scan anywhere on Earth, but not on the Moon or Mars. (Of course, in some genres, such as science fiction, Mind Scan of greater range may be allowed.) Mind Scan operates in "360 Degrees" (in the sense that it searches an entire area at once) and is a Targeting Sense for other Mental Powers.

In genres such as science fiction where Mind Scan operates over vast, even stellar, distances, it works at the "speed of thought"—i.e., it provides the character information immediately. It is not limited to the "speed of light" or any other physical phenomenon.

Repeated Mind Scan Rolls

If a character makes his Mind Scan Attack Roll, he has determined the "general location and presence" of the target according to the text of the rule. However, if he then fails his Effect Roll, he has not locked on to that mind. The target will sense that he has been unsuccessfully attacked.

The character may make Mind Scan ECV Attack Rolls in later Phases to once again try to establish a lock-on; since he now knows the "general location and presence" of the target mind, he is subject to the modifier two steps better on the Mind Scanning Modifiers chart (assuming that the target has not moved out of that general area).

Example: Mindmaster is using Mind Scan to try to locate Brainchylde somewhere in New York City. New York comes closest to the modifier for 10,000,000 people, which is -14. Mindmaster manages to roll a 5 and succeeds in ascertaining Brainchylde's general location and presence (i.e., he confirms that Brainchylde is, in fact, in New York). Mindmaster declares that he wants to achieve a level of EGO +20 on his Mind Scan roll, but he fails to achieve this level on his Effect Roll, so he does not establish a lock on Brainchylde's mind. Since Mindmaster knows Brainchylde's general location and presence now, if he wants to try again, he will only be subject to the -10 modifier (two steps better on the Mind Scanning Modifiers table). However, if Brainchylde uses a Teleportation Belt to leave the city entirely, Mindmaster will not be able to locate him at all by searching that area.

If the mentalist keeps making his ECV Attack Rolls and missing his Effect Rolls, this bonus is cumulative.

Sensory Impressions

At the GM's option, Mind Scan might give the Scanner some very general hints about the nature of the mind he is Scanning: "bestial," for example, or "vicious," "totally inhuman," "extremely strong," and so forth.



Special Effects For Mind Scan

Mentalists can use whatever special effects they want for their Mind Scan, subject of course to GM approval. Some examples include: the mentalist can hear the “mental voices” or see the “mental presences” of everyone in the target area; the mentalist receives a “download” of information about the target and his location, as if he were using some sort of satellite link; and the mentalist receives a brief vision of the target, including information on how to find him (this is most appropriate for Mind Scan that is Linked to, or used by someone who possesses, Clairvoyance).

Strange, Powerful, Or Unique Minds

Some minds “stand out” against the background of “mental static” that the mentalist searches through better than others. The mentalist should receive a bonus of +1 to +5 when searching for these minds. Minds which create this bonus include:

The minds of other mentalists, which are of course extremely powerful. The GM should make a rough calculation of how many Active Points the target character has in Mental Powers and grant the searching character a bonus of +1 per 20 Active Points. For example, Menton (*Classic Enemies*, pages 78-79) is so mentally powerful that he stands out like a beacon to anyone searching for him with Mind Scan (unless, of course, he is using his Invisibility to the Mental Sense Group).

A mentalist character may consciously dampen his powers so that he does not stand out in this way. This costs END—1 END per 10 points of EGO—and must be done constantly. If the character uses his mental powers or does anything else to attract “mental attention,” then the dampening effect is negated.

Particularly strange, weird, or alien minds. The GM should be stingy with this bonus and only award it to especially unusual minds; “average” unusual minds are harder to find because the mentalist is not quite sure what he is looking for (see above). Examples of minds that would probably grant a bonus would be those of powerful demons or the Kings of Edom (see *Creatures Of The Night: Horror Enemies*), the Infinite Man (see *Alien Enemies*), or any creature from a “group mind” race.

The minds of beings rich in occult power, such as The Demonologist or Archimago (see *Creatures Of The Night: Horror Enemies*) or Dark Seraph (see *Classic Enemies*). Again, be stingy with this bonus; not every mystic character stands out this way.

Telepathic Aspects Of Mind Scan

Mind Scan has certain telepathic aspects, since it allows a character to search for certain minds. A character can declare that he is looking for, say, “Joe Smith,” or “Anyone thinking about robbing the First National Bank last Friday.” The more precisely a player can describe the thought-patterns he is looking for, the better his chances are of finding those

patterns. If the GM judges that the description is sufficiently precise, then no penalty will be imposed to the Attack Roll. However, if the description is too vague or broad, the GM may impose penalties of -1 to -5 due to this imprecision. Also, keep in mind that the mentalist cannot use this telepathic aspect to read the target’s mind once a lock-on is established.

Penalties may also be imposed if the character is searching for someone who does not exist. Suppose that a mentalist recently encountered the vigilante Sniper in disguise as a drunken bum named Moe. The mentalist now wants to find “Moe,” so he begins Mind Scanning for that person—but “Moe” does not exist. Depending upon the specifics of the situation, the GM might impose a substantial penalty (-3 to -8, or more) on the Mind Scan Attack Roll (in which case a successful roll would locate Sniper’s mind and allow the Mind Scanning character to know that “Moe” is really Sniper). Alternately, the GM might rule that locating “Moe” with Mind Scan is impossible, no matter how well the mentalist character rolls or how much he narrows his search. Of course, failure to locate “Moe” may provide a clue as to “his” true nature....

The Two-Way Circuit

As noted in the text of the rule, once a character establishes a Mind Scan “circuit” with someone, that circuit is two-way: the Mind Scanning character’s location is known to the target, and the target can use Mental Powers to attack the Mind Scanning character. Characters who want their Mind Scan to be only a “one-way” circuit, so that neither can their location be sensed nor can they be attacked by their target, must pay for a +1 Advantage, “Link Is One-Way Only,” on their Mind Scan. This Advantage can make mentalist characters extremely powerful and may unbalance the game; GMs should carefully consider its implications before allowing it to be used in their campaigns.

Alternately, a mentalist may not be able to make mental attacks through his Mind Scan circuit. This is worth a -1 Limitation if neither the mentalist nor his target can attack through the circuit; it’s a -1 ½ if the target can attack him through the circuit even though the mentalist cannot attack.

Undetectable Mind Scan

Sometimes a mentalist may not want his target to know that he is Mind Scanning him. This cannot be accomplished with the Advantage “Invisible Power Effects,” since that Advantage only masks the source of an attack, not the target’s awareness that he is suffering the effects of an attack. If a mentalist wishes to use Mind Scan without his target being at all aware that he is being Scanned, he must achieve a +20 level of effect on his Effect Roll.

Medium

A medium is a person who can contact the spirit world, converse with spirits, and sometimes even have spirits manifest themselves in the real world in



some fashion. A medium should buy Mind Scan Affects Spirits (+½ Advantage) in order to go looking for spirits; this is bought with the following Limitations: Concentration DCV 0 (-1), Extra Time (variable depending on the power of the medium, but usually 1 hour; -2 ½), Limited Power: Only Works On Spirits (-1 ½), and Side Effects (Failure to make the Mind Scan Roll brings the wrong spirit, -1). Additionally, the medium should buy some Telepathy (at least the minimum cost of 10, and usually more) in order to converse with the spirit; the Telepathy is purchased with all the same modifiers listed for Mind Scan, with the addition of Linked and without the Side Effects.

A medium may require that a seance be held, where a number of people gather in a darkened room with the medium and hold hands in order to help the medium's efforts to contact the spirit world. Requiring this setting is an additional -1 Limitation to the Mind Scan and Telepathy powers. The GM should apply modifiers to the Mind Scan roll; +1 to +3 for appropriate conditions (quiet, darkened room, believers present) or -1 to -3 for poor conditions (noisy, skeptics present).

The cost of being a medium varies depending on the power of the medium.

EXPANDED MIND SCAN EFFECTS TABLE

Total rolled on Mind Scan dice - Mental DEF is:	Effect
Greater than EGO	Mentalist can establish Mind Link or use first level of Telepathy (communication). He also knows in which direction the target is located.
EGO +10	Mentalist can use all Mental Powers on target, and can estimate the general distance to the target.
EGO +20	Mentalist knows the exact location of the target. He can attack with all attacks. If he wishes to attack the target with a non-mental Power, the attack must be able to reach the target.
Modifiers (can be applied at any level)	
+20	Mind Scan is undetectable by target

Telekinesis

Telekinesis, abbreviated "TK" or "teke" and also known as psychokinesis, is the power to move physical objects at a distance, without physically touching them. In the *HERO System*, it is listed as a Standard Power.

Psychokinesis: Telekinesis As A Mental Power

However, Telekinesis is also a classic mental power, and therefore rules are presented here on how to convert Telekinesis to a Mental Power. Telekinesis as a Mental Power is referred to as "Psychokinesis." If the GM prefers not to make Telekinesis a Mental Power automatically, he may use the rules provided below to describe the effects of Telekinesis bought BOECV.

Basic Guidelines

Psychokinesis works on LOS and has no Range Modifiers for purposes of grabbing or hitting targets (though it is subject to Range Modifiers when used to throw things; the range is calculated from the point at which the object is picked up and thrown, not the point at which the mentalist is located). Unlike other Mental Powers, Psychokinesis is visible; characters may purchase the "Invisible Power Effects" Advantage for it as they would for most Powers. Psychokinesis is detectable with Mental Awareness.



Characters grabbed with Psychokinesis use their STR to break out, just like with normal Telekinesis. For a +½ Advantage, victims will have to use their EGO to break out, instead of their STR (1d6 of EGO “damage” per 5 points of EGO); when used this way, EGO costs END, can be Pushed, and so forth. Mental Defense does not add to a character’s EGO for purposes of breaking out of this form of Psychokinesis. (Note: in some campaigns, replacing STR with EGO may actually be a Limitation; refer to “Transform” and “Entangle,” below, for details.)

Targeting Psychokinesis

There are some difficulties involved with making Telekinesis a Mental Power. The primary one is how to target the Power. Mental Powers are targeted using EGO, but Psychokinesis is used to pick up physical objects, which have no EGO. Even if the GM assumes that all objects have ECV 0, the question of how a mentalist picks up an object and then hits someone with that object is left unresolved—is the to-hit roll based on EGO or DEX?

It is recommended that Psychokinesis be the only Mental Power targeted by substituting the mentalist’s ECV for his DEX-based CV, but treating “PK ECV” the same as DEX-based CV. This solves the problems inherent in using EGO to target the Power. Also, if the psychokinetic’s EGO is higher than his DEX, he may act on his EGO when using Psychokinesis during combat. If a Characteristic Roll is necessary (for example, to perform fine work which does not require Fine Manipulation), then the psychokinetic should use his EGO Roll.

Example: Mindstorm, a mentalist with EGO 30 and DEX 20, has Psychokinesis. He uses his Psychokinesis to attack Ogre (DEX 18), who is 20" away from him. His CV for this attack is 10, since Psychokinesis derives its CV from his EGO, not his DEX. Mindstorm uses his EGO to determine when he uses his Psychokinesis during a Phase. If he tries to grab Ogre or telekinetically “punch” him, he has to roll a 15- (11 + 10 - 6), and he suffers no Range Modifiers; if he tries to pick up a car that is 12" away from Ogre and throw it at him, the throw suffers the usual Range Modifiers (in this case, -4—the range is calculated by the distance from where the car is picked up, not from where Mindstorm is standing). However, if Ogre ducks behind a wall, Mindstorm can no longer see him, and therefore cannot use Psychokinesis to grab or punch him (though he could pick up the car and throw it towards the area where he thinks Ogre is hiding).

Indirect

Psychokinesis has Indirect-like effects *by default*—in other words, characters do not have to pay for the “Indirect” Advantage for it, but it can be used to, for example, attack something that the character can see through a window without breaking the window. Psychokinesis is still limited by LOS, of course. Fur-

thermore, unlike many Indirect attacks, it will always be obvious that a psychokinetic attack is originating from the psychokinetic character (even if, for example, he hits someone from behind while facing them). The “Indirect” effect cannot be used to bypass a character’s personal defenses (such as by reaching into his suit of armor to hurt him, thus denying him the protection of his armor). Psychokinesis will work through ordinary Force Walls (provided they are not opaque, which would block LOS), but cannot penetrate a Mental Shield (Mental Defense Force Wall).

Characters may still purchase the “Indirect” Advantage for their Psychokinesis, at the +½ level. This has several useful effects. First, it severs the “link” between the character and the effect he causes, so targets will not necessarily know that the power is originating from the character (but Psychokinesis is still visible). Second, fully Indirect Psychokinesis can bypass Mental Shields. Third, fully Indirect Psychokinesis can, if the GM allows, be used to telekinetically manipulate the inside parts of an object without touching the outer parts—for example, to telekinetically attack a person inside a suit of armor without damaging the armor itself. In this sense, Indirect is used to partially “bypass” the LOS requirement of Psychokinesis. However, this is an extremely powerful effect, and the GM should monitor it accordingly.

Implications, Clarifications, And Options

General Notes On How Telekinesis Works

Telekinesis is, in essence, a form of STR which can be used at range. Thus, telekinetic characters may use Telekinesis in generally the same ways that the STR Characteristic can be used. These include:

Grabbing characters or things. Telekinetic Grabs work the same as ordinary Grabs: they grab two limbs; they are broken out of using one’s STR; they can be used to damage the Grabbed character by squeezing him or throwing him. A telekinetic Grab requires a half Phase, just like a normal Grab. Further uses for and definitions of the Grab maneuver can be found in *The Ultimate Martial Artist*, pages 172-176. However, regarding the CVs of the Grabbing and Grabbed character, Telekinesis has one important advantage over ordinary STR: the Grabbing character does not suffer the CV penalties described in *The Ultimate Martial Artist*, but the Grabbed character does suffer the appropriate penalties. A character with Telekinesis can grab three or more limbs if he purchases the “Area Of Effect: One Hex” Advantage for the power.

“Punch” things. This gives Telekinesis a sort of Energy Blast-style aspect; however, telekinetics cannot Spread or Bounce their telekinetic punches, nor can a character Haymaker a telekinetic punch. On the other hand, a telekinetic punch can be used with a sort of “Indirect” effect, to knock someone towards you or to the side, instead of just away from you. This does not grant any bonuses



for “attacking from behind,” though—for that, a character would have to buy the actual “Indirect” Advantage for his Telekinesis (and probably “Invisible Power Effects” as well).

Moving, throwing, and manipulating objects (though sometimes the latter requires Fine Manipulation; see below).

As usual, the GM has the final say about whether a particular use of Telekinesis is valid, and what effects it has.

Damage From Telekinesis

The damage done by Psychokinesis applies versus Physical Defense, not Mental Defense.

Escaping From Telekinetic Grabs

Characters who have been Grabbed with Telekinesis use their STR to break out, just as if it were an ordinary Grab. Assuming that the arms are the two limbs Grabbed (and they almost always will be), the Grabbed character probably cannot use any of his Accessible Foci.

Bonuses for Martial Escape maneuvers can be applied to breaking out of telekinetic Grabs.

At the GM’s option, some Movement Powers may be used to help the character escape. Flight (or Swimming, if the character is underwater) will add 1 point of STR for every 2” of movement. Running will not normally work this way (but may in some circumstances), nor will Tunneling. Teleportation, of course, allows for instantaneous escapes.

As described above, psychokinetics may purchase a +½ Advantage, “Use EGO, Not STR, To Escape” for their Psychokinesis.

Fine Manipulation

Ordinary Telekinesis is crude. It can be used to pick things up, hit things, and throw things, but it cannot be used for delicate tasks or tasks which require precise movement. In order to use Telekinesis this way, a character must pay +10 points for “Fine Manipulation.”

A good basic test for whether Fine Manipulation is required to do something is this: if you can pick up the object or perform the task with a large, infinitely thin paddle, then Fine Manipulation is not required. For example, this imaginary paddle can be slid underneath just about any object to pick that object up; therefore, Fine Manipulation is not ordinarily required just to pick up objects. The paddle could also be used to flip a light switch, so Fine Manipulation is not required for that, either.

Fine Manipulation is required to perform any DEX-based Skill with Telekinesis (for example, Lockpicking, Combat Driving, or PS: Typist). Fine Manipulation is also required to manipulate any very small object or perform any particularly delicate task. Fine work which does not require a Skill, like hitting a single key on a keyboard, may require the character to make a DEX Roll (or EGO Roll, for Psychokinesis)

to perform successfully. Just picking up an object, no matter how small or delicate, does not normally require Fine Manipulation (but see “Picking Up Objects,” below).

In noncombat situations, the GM may, if he chooses, ignore the Fine Manipulation rules and allow any telekinetic to type or perform other delicate tasks—if there are no distractions or no pressing need for speed, the telekinetic can concentrate on the task at hand and perform it without Fine Manipulation (much in the same way a normal person who cannot type can “hunt and peck” a document, given enough time). If it would be particularly heroic or dramatic, the GM might even allow the telekinetic to do this in a combat situation, providing that he drops his DCV to 0 to simulate how hard he is concentrating.

Fine Manipulation is not required for most everyday tasks (for example, opening a jar, making a sandwich, turning a key, or picking up a rock).

Levitation

A telekinetic cannot ordinarily use his Telekinesis to pick himself up or “fly.” He can, however, buy Flight and define it as “telekinetic flight.” If the character only wants to be able to levitate (i.e., raise and lower himself through the air, without any lateral movement), then he may buy his Flight with a -1 Limitation. Other Movement Powers can also be bought as “Telekinesis tricks.”

At the GM’s option, characters with Telekinesis can use it to fly if they purchase a +½ Advantage, “Flight-Capable,” for their Telekinesis. Telekinetic Flight allows a character to move as many inches in a Phase as he could make a “Standing Throw” of himself (Strength Chart, *HERO System Rulebook*, page 174) with his Telekinesis. The character cannot fly faster than this (i.e., there is no “non-combat movement”), but can make Half Moves with his “flight.”

Limitations For Telekinesis

“Affects Whole Object (No Squeezing)” is a -¼ Limitation for Telekinesis, as is “No Punches.”

Telekinesis which can only affect a particular object or class of objects may take a -¼ to -2 Limitation, depending upon the usefulness of the object(s) and how frequently it (they) are encountered during the game.

Line Of Sight

A character cannot “lock on” his Telekinesis (mentalism-based or otherwise) beyond his Line Of Sight. However, once he grabs hold of an object, he can continue to manipulate it even when it passes out of his LOS. If he moves an object behind something that he cannot see through, or if he moves it beyond the range of his eyesight, his hold on the object remains (though he may have difficulty knowing where to move it or what he can do with it, of course).

Characters who want to have “sensory feedback” with their Telekinesis, so that they will know what is happening near objects that they are telekinetically manipulating beyond their LOS, should Link Clairvoyance to their Telekinesis.



Liquids, Gases, And Energy

Characters cannot ordinarily use Telekinesis to pick up liquids. However, they can telekinetically pick up liquids if they purchase the modifier “Affects Porous” for their Telekinesis for +10 points. The amount of liquid that can be picked up depends on the character’s telekinetic STR. The character may use Affects Porous Telekinesis to shape the liquid into crude forms (such as squares, spheres, or humanoid shapes); to actually sculpt the water requires Fine Manipulation and PS: Sculptor.

Gases and smokes are a slightly different matter—Affects Porous Telekinesis can affect them, but only if it is bought with the Advantage “Area Of Effect” (gases and smokes are too dispersed to be affected by Area Of Effect Telekinesis unless it has this Advantage). This grants Telekinesis some Dispel-like effects, since gases and smokes are usually built with a Power—Change Environment, Darkness, and NND EB being perhaps the most common. If you find this abusive, disallow this use of Telekinesis, and require your characters to buy Dispel (and similar Powers) for use against gases and smokes.

Some telekinetics can actually use their power to affect forms of energy. Usually this is limited to a particular form of energy, such as a pyrokinetic’s ability to move and shape masses of fire. Since energy is weightless, the STR of the Telekinesis reflects how great an amount of energy the character can pick up: 1 Damage Class worth of energy (usually Killing Damage) for every 5 points of telekinetic STR. This also provides a convenient method by which the GM can determine the damage done to characters touched with the energy. Energy picked up with Telekinesis in this fashion is self-sustaining (it does not “burn out” or dissipate) until used to damage someone (in which case it will be “extinguished”). Once let go, the energy will dissipate, unless placed on something it can “attach” itself to (i.e., fire would be placed on something flammable, where it would keep burning; electricity would be placed into an electrical outlet or cable, and so forth).

Ordinary Telekinesis cannot be used to pick up energy; this ability must be reflected with an appropriate Limitation (“Only Works On Fire,” for example). Typically, this is a -1 Limitation, but it may be less. “Energy Telekinesis” can also be used to crudely shape the energy being held (to, for example, create a fiery phoenix out of flame).

Picking Up Objects

The GM should remember that small objects have high DCVs based on their sizes, and therefore may be hard to grasp in a combat situation. The Shrinking Table, *HERO System Rulebook*, page 84, should be used to figure out what an object’s DCV is. Out of combat a character should have no trouble picking up nonresisting objects that he could pick up with his hands without difficulty (i.e., extremely tiny objects may still be a problem).

The GM should use the STR Table on page 173 of the *HERO System Rulebook* to determine the weight limit of a character’s telekinetic STR.

Puppeteering

Telekinesis can be used to “take control” of a target’s body and make him do things he doesn’t want to do—sort of an Entangle that forces the target to move. Each Phase in which the telekinetic retains control of the target, he may make that target take one physical action—walk, run, pick things up, pull a trigger, and so on. He cannot force the target to take actions which are mental or which are not based on physical movement (he could not, for example, force the target to fire an innate Energy Blast or use a Mental Power). If the puppet is made to take hand-to-hand offensive actions against another character, the attack is at ½ of the mentalist’s OCV (or OECV if using Psychokinesis); the damage done is determined by the mentalist’s telekinetic STR, not by the puppet’s STR. The puppet cannot perform fine actions unless the Telekinesis is bought with Fine Manipulation.

If two telekinetics try to use the same person as a puppet at the same time, a STR versus STR contest will determine who wins control.

The “Sledgehammer Maneuver”

This combat tactic, a favorite of many telekinetic PCs, involves picking up one enemy and hitting another enemy with him, thus killing two birds with one stone (so to speak). (Bricks also like to use this maneuver, but that’s a subject for another *Ultimate* book.) This is potentially abusive, so GMs should keep two things in mind.

First, to hit the second object, the telekinetic must make a to-hit roll against it, which may be difficult. Depending upon how much the Grabbed character is squirming around and other factors, an OCV penalty of -1 to -3 may be appropriate.

Second, the telekinetic will have to move the “sledgehammer” from where it is Grabbed to where his second target is, and this may take up more than the half Phase he has left after performing the Grab (assuming he hasn’t already made some other Half Move, of course). The telekinetic can move the object no more than half of the distance he could move it in a Phase (refer to “The Speed Of Moved Objects,” below) without using up his remaining Half Move.

Of course, the telekinetic may still Throw a Grabbed character or object the normal distance based on his STR—but then he has to let the Grabbed character go.

Example: Mindstorm is fighting a group of Terror, Inc. agents. He decides to use a “sledgehammer maneuver” to get rid of two of them. The GM is agreeable, since Mindstorm’s player does not abuse this potentially unbalancing maneuver by using it frequently. Mindstorm makes a to-hit roll and manages to Grab the first agent. He now has a half Phase remaining in which to act. He has 30 STR Telekinesis, giving him +20 STR over what he needs



to pick up a normal human. The GM consults the Throwing Table on page 174 of the HERO System Rulebook and discovers that Mindstorm could move the agent 8" in a full Phase. Therefore, he may perform the rest of his sledgehammer maneuver on any agent within 4" of where the Grabbed agent was standing; any agents 5" or more beyond cannot be hit. Mindstorm could, if he wished, Throw the agent up to 8" and hit another agent, but then he would lose the use of the Grabbed agent as his "sledgehammer" and would have to spend a half Phase picking up another one on his next Phase.

The Speed Of Moved Objects

A telekinetic can telekinetically move an object at relatively high rates of speed. The GM should determine the object's weight and then consult the Throwing Table on page 174 of the *HERO System Rulebook*. The telekinetic can move the object as many inches in a Phase as he could making a "Standing Throw" of that object. Characters may not increase this rate of movement (unless they buy extra Telekinesis with the Limitation "Only To Increase The Speed Of Moved Objects," -½).

Except in unusual situations, the damage that a character takes from being telekinetically thrown or slammed into a solid object should be derived from the STR of the Telekinesis, not the speed at which the subject is being moved.

"Spreading" Telekinesis

Telekinetic characters sometimes try to pick up an entire layer of soil from a field, or all of the water out of a pool, or something similar. Even if they have the STR to lift the object in question, ordinarily this should not be allowed. The "arm span" of a character's Telekinesis should be the same as his regular STR, i.e., about the span of his arms. The telekinetic thus can pick up with his Telekinesis as much soil (or whatever) as he could encompass with his arms. If the character wants to use his Telekinesis over a broader area, he should buy the "Area Of Effect" Advantage for it.

However, the limited "span" of Telekinesis does not necessarily limit its uses to those that could be performed with the arms. Consider an automobile engine. A character with a normal arm span can spread his arms and reach across most of the engine. However, he cannot stop the pistons from pumping or the belts from moving. A telekinetic, on the other hand, usually *can* stop the parts of the engine from moving (at least, the visible parts). This is one of the many advantages that Telekinesis has over ordinary STR.

Alternately, the GM could allow telekinetics to "spread" their telekinesis, in a similar fashion to the way Energy Blasts are spread. For every 5 points of STR the character sacrifices, he may "spread" the reach of his Telekinesis by +1". The reach of Telekinesis is assumed to be 1" at its base level, about the same as a person's arm span. However, characters should not be allowed to Spread their Telekinesis when they use it to "punch" targets.

Telekinesis Tricks

Just like the STR Characteristic, Telekinesis grants a character a wide range of possible combat tactics. The most inventive of these are sometimes referred to as "tricks" (or, in the case of regular STR, "power moves"). For example, a telekinetic can blind a character by throwing dust in his eyes or holding his eyelids shut, mute him by holding his mouth shut, choke him by squeezing his throat, or kill him by squeezing and tearing important internal organs. Another trick would be to pick up small objects and hurl them at a target so fast that they become the equivalent of bullets.

This presents major problems in many games, since it can give Telekinesis an effectiveness far out of proportion to its point cost. The actions described above would normally require various forms of Flash, Darkness, NND EB, and RKA to accomplish. At the same time, to simply forbid a telekinetic to perform actions like this seems to be robbing him of some of the abilities of his power.

The recommended solution is for the GM to compare Telekinesis with ordinary STR. Would the GM allow a "brick" character to scoop up an armful of sand and dust and throw it in an enemy's eyes to blind him? If so, a character using Telekinesis should be able to do the same thing. Could a "brick" squeeze someone's throat until he passed out? In that case, the GM might require the brick to buy some form of NND, defined as a "choke hold." A telekinetic would be required to purchase the same sort of power.

As a general guideline, characters should normally pay extra points for "tricks" or other non-standard applications of their Characteristics and Powers (particularly if they want to use the "trick" frequently). If the GM thinks that this would become prohibitively expensive for Telekinesis, he should consider charging the character +10 or +20 points to the cost of his Telekinesis to be able to do "tricks" (similar to the way that Fine Manipulation costs extra).

Throwing Objects

The GM should use the Throwing Table for a "Running Throw," *HERO System Rulebook*, page 174, to determine how far a character can throw an object using Telekinesis. Depending upon the shape of the thrown object, how much it is moving on its own (if alive), and other factors, the GM may impose OCV (or OECV) penalties of -1 to -3 on the mentalist's to-hit roll. Don't forget that to throw an object, the telekinetic has to let go of it.



Telepathy

Telepathy is the Mental Power used to read minds, project thoughts into minds, and generally rummage around in peoples' brains. Some of the implications of these activities are discussed below.

The rule for Telepathy is reprinted below from the *HERO System Rulebook*, page 86. Changes have been made for the sake of clarity and to make the text consistent with other changes made by this book.

TELEPATHY

A character with this Mental Power can read or send thoughts. Each 1d6 of Telepathy costs 5 points.

To use Telepathy, the character makes an ECV Attack Roll. If successful, the character declares the desired Telepathy level and makes a standard Effect Roll using the Telepathy Effects Table. If the desired level of effect has been achieved, mental contact has been established with the target, who may make standard Breakout Rolls. If the Breakout Roll is made, then the Telepathy fails, but the target has been alerted to the attempt. If the Breakout Roll is not made, each Phase thereafter the telepath can search for one fact, or get the answer to one question.

TELEPATHY EFFECTS TABLE

Total rolled on Telepathy dice - Mental DEF is: Greater than EGO	Effect
	The telepath can read or send surface thoughts
EGO +10	The telepath can read deep, hidden thoughts
EGO +20	The telepath can read into the target's memory
EGO +30	The telepath can read into the target's subconscious

Telepathy Cost: 5 Character Points for 1d6 of Telepathy, minimum cost 10 Character Points. Range is Line of Sight, no Range Modifier.

Implications, Clarifications, And Options

Broadcast And Receptive Telepathy

Characters who want to buy "broadcast-only" Telepathy (i.e., Telepathy which can only be used to converse mentally, not to read peoples' thoughts, detect mental signatures, and so forth) may buy their Telepathy with a -1/2 Limitation, "Broadcast Telepathy."

The ability to read or receive thoughts but not to send them is also worth a -1/2 Limitation, "Receptive Telepathy."

The ability only to send and receive thoughts, but not to read peoples' minds against their will, known as "Communicative Telepathy," is worth a -1/4 Limitation.

Emotions And Telepathy: Empathy

Telepathy can be used to sense a character's emotions. Emotions currently felt can be detected as surface "thoughts." Other emotions may be deep and hidden, subconscious, or memories. A telepath who can *only* detect a target's emotions (usually referred to as an "empath") should buy his Telepathy ("Empathy") with a -1/2 Limitation (or a -1 Limitation if the character can only sense one specific emotion).

Note that Empathy only allows a character to *read* a target's emotions. He cannot project emotions into the target's mind or change the target's emotions; for that, empathic Mind Control (see above) is necessary.

Falsehoods

Obviously, a character can normally use Telepathy to detect whether a person is telling the truth (but see "Hiding From Telepathy," below). Of course, "truth" can be relative—a person may believe that something is true even though it isn't, or may disbelieve in something that is, in fact, true. Refer to the discussion of Detect Lie, under "Mental Senses," above, for more details.

Telepathy will not reveal the lies told by a target with the Psychological Limitation, "Pathological Liar," nor will it necessarily see through intensive brainwashing. In appropriate situations the GM should grant the telepath an EGO Roll to determine if he can discern that the thoughts he is reading are real, or the result of brainwashing or some similar effect.

A telepath is able to "tell" a lie when "talking" to another mind with Telepathy.

Hiding From Telepathy

It is possible for a character with the Facade or Acting Skills to hide or mask his surface thoughts from Telepathy. The character should make a Skill Roll versus the EGO Roll of the mentalist using Telepathy on him; if successful, he may disguise his surface thoughts as he wishes. Deep, hidden thoughts and subconscious thoughts cannot be hidden this way.

Implanting Psychic Messages, Impressions, And Traps

Telepathy can be used to implant "psychic messages" in places or objects. The messages can only be short, and in fact are usually confined to particular "feelings" or emotions—that an object is dangerous, that it would be pleasant to keep the object, and so forth. These implanted messages can be read by characters with Telepathy (they are considered "surface thoughts" in most cases) or Retrocognition (see above); Retrocognition will provide much stronger readings of the message.



Especially strong emotional or psychic events, such as murders, battles, romantic proposals of marriage, and the like, will also leave psychic messages or impressions. These, too, can be read with Telepathy or Retrocognition, as specified above.

To implant a message or emotion, the telepath should roll his Effect Roll and count the “BODY” on the roll. For each “BODY” rolled, the message or emotion will last for one step on the Time Chart beyond one Turn (i.e., all implanted messages or emotions last a minimum of one Turn). In other words, the more power a telepath uses, the clearer and longer-lived his message will be.

Mental “traps” can also be implanted in a mind or an object by using Telepathy and another Mental Power with a Trigger (+¼ or +½ Advantage). The telepath must roll enough on his Telepathy dice to read surface thoughts and then make a successful EGO Roll. Then he rolls the dice for the other Mental Power and sets the Trigger (example Triggers include picking up the trapped object, achieving EGO +10 with Telepathy, or any successful use of Mind Control). The telepath then makes a second Effect Roll and counts the “BODY” to determine how long the trap will remain in effect, as outlined above.

A mental trap can be defined as attacking anyone who “reads” the trap or the thing/person who “carries” the trap. Examples include a trap which subjects the reader to a Mental Illusion or Mind Control, or a trap which Mind Controls the person in whom it is planted to commit suicide if anyone tries to use Telepathy on him.

Mental traps are normally visible to anyone using Telepathy on the person or thing carrying the trap. They can be hidden by means of Invisible Power Effects or the Veil Skill.

The Language Barrier

Telepathy can be regarded as language-dependent (i.e., people think in languages, and the Telepath has to know a language to understand thoughts in that language or project thoughts into the mind of someone who thinks in that language) or language-exclusive (i.e., Telepathy ignores language differences). In the *HERO System*, Telepathy is considered to be language-exclusive; thoughts may be communicated and read from mind to mind by a telepath regardless of whether he speaks the native language(s) of the person he is mentally communicating with. Characters who want their Telepathy to be language-specific may take a -½ Limitation on it. In some cases, such as particularly alien minds, the GM might rule that the mentalist has to achieve +10 points of effect to communicate clearly, despite the lack of a language barrier.

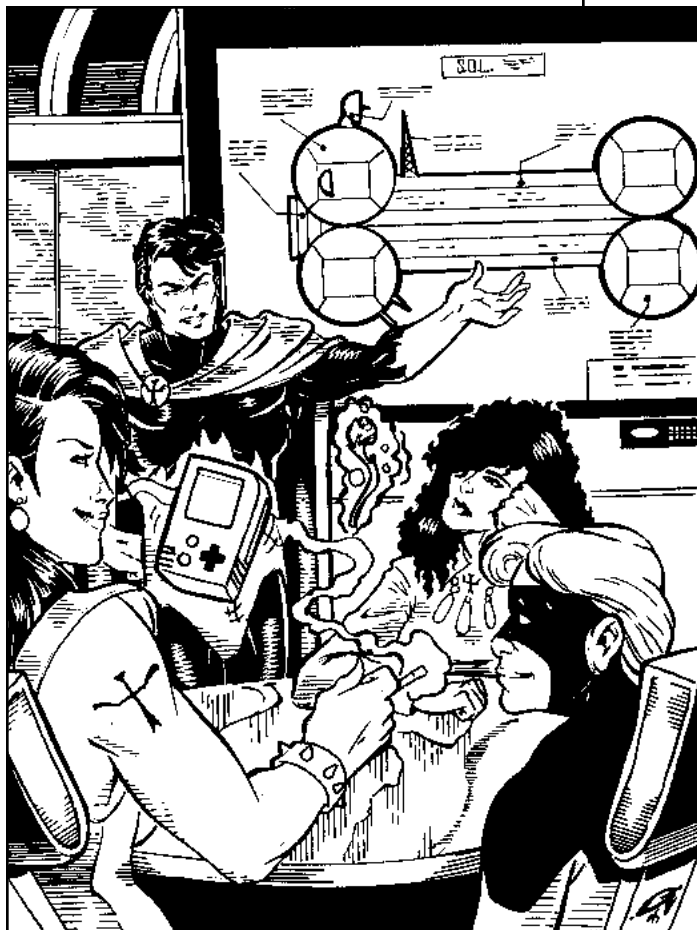
Some GMs may prefer to make Telepathy language-specific in their campaigns. In that case, characters should be allowed to buy a +½ Advantage on their Telepathy to make it language-exclusive.

Levels Of Communication And Contact

Surface thoughts include anything that the target is currently thinking about. Thus, Telepathy can sometimes be easier if the subject that the telepath wishes to gain information on can be suggested to the target right before the telepath begins making his rolls. Hearing the subject spoken of will often put it in the forefront of the target’s mind, i.e. his surface thoughts, although it may not stay there for more than a few Phases.

Extremely important personal facts (the target’s name, who he is married to, the facts that are “central” to his vision of himself) are usually considered surface thoughts. This may include some high-level Psychological Limitations (usually those worth 20 points or more).

“Surface thoughts” also include the character’s current sensory impressions (what he is seeing, smelling, touching, and so forth). However, this does not mean that the telepath can “use” the target’s senses himself. A telepath who is reading the mind of a person smelling and looking at a steak does not himself see and smell the steak; instead, he reads in the person’s mind that “I’m smelling and seeing a steak.” The sensory impressions register as data, they are not experienced by the telepath.



Deep, hidden thoughts include any thoughts that are currently in the target's head, but which are not on the "surface" of his mind. Examples usually include most Psychological Limitations; the "to-do lists" that most people have in the back of their minds; the target's birthday; secrets that the character knows; unexpressed emotions or emotions not currently in the forefront of the mind (such as a man's love for his wife); and, perhaps most horrible of all for superheroic PCs, Secret Identities. (Since Secret Identities are such valuable information, the GM may rule that they actually count as "memories"). The target's greatest fears and desires also are usually considered deep, hidden thoughts.

In the source literature, it often happens that a mentalist who is probing someone deep enough to read "deep, hidden thoughts" or "subconscious thoughts" gets caught up in a miniature psychodrama within the target's mind. Rather than being represented as dry thoughts, the target's mental processes become a sensory world where the telepath encounters all sorts of objects, people, and creatures, many or most of whom have some symbolic meaning that the mentalist must interpret (this is particularly true at the level of the subconscious). A good example of this sort of phenomenon occurs in *Day of the Destroyer*, pages 5-6. In some cases, the target mind is so strong (or so deranged) that the mentalist becomes trapped in this "mental world," and must solve some problem or cure the target's madness before he can get out again.

Memories are just that—sensory impressions of past events and feelings "recorded" in the character's mind. At the GM's option, it may be more difficult to locate a memory the older it gets (PER Rolls may be required to locate desired memories, for example, using the Time Chart as a "Range Modifier," as described above under "Precognition"). Also, it is important to remember that memories are not always clear. People tend to forget things over time, so older memories may be fragmentary. Some memories may even be false—the perspective of time may make someone misremember something or view it through rose-colored glasses. Lastly, various states of mental existence may make reading memories easier or harder: reading the memories of a senile person or someone with Alzheimer's Disease may yield unconnected jumbles of fragmented memories; reading the mind of someone with Eidetic Memory might be like scrolling through a comprehensive, well-organized index. The GM may impose penalties or bonuses (such as requiring PER Rolls, making the telepath take more or less time to locate particular facts, and so forth) based on these situations.

The target's *subconscious* includes thoughts and memories repressed below the level of deep, hidden thoughts. Memories of horrible abuse experienced by the target might be one example. An amnesiac's forgotten experiences or a multiple personality's "other" personalities would also be considered "subconscious" in most cases.

At the GM's option, a mentalist who achieves EGO +40 or greater on a target may read into the target's *collective unconscious*, or racial memory. This level is entirely symbolic and archetypal, with the symbols relating to the target's species and culture (an American's collective unconscious includes Uncle Sam; a Scandinavian's includes the Norse gods; any male human's mind would contain a Madonna/whore image of Woman, and so on). This is not only an interesting storytelling tool, but can give a character some clues as to the mores and motivations of strange cultures, aliens, and the like.

Mental Tags

A mentalist may use Telepathy to place a "mental tag" on someone, making it easy to locate them later with Mind Scan. To place a tag, the mentalist must achieve an EGO +10 Telepathy Effect Roll and make an unmodified EGO Roll. Until the tag is removed, any mentalist who is searching for the tagged individual receives +10 to his ECV Attack Rolls when using Mind Scan to locate the tagged person—the tag is like a "mental beacon" that draws the attention of mentalists who are looking for it. The tagged person knows that he has been tagged (unless undetectable Telepathy is used to implant the tag; see below).

The "life span" of a mental tag is determined as per the rule for implanting messages, emotions, and mental traps—count the "BODY" on the Telepathy dice and count one step down the Time Chart beyond one Turn for each "BODY" rolled. A mental tag can be removed with Telepathy or Psionic Surgery (a form of Transform). It is obvious to anyone with Mental Awareness or who uses Telepathy on the tagged person.

Nonhuman Thoughts

Telepathy is not limited to human minds. It can be used on the minds of animals, aliens, and the like; refer to the discussion of "Classes Of Minds," above, for details on buying Telepathy for use on non-humans; here are a few additional guidelines.

Telepathy is easy to use on animals, who tend to have low EGO scores; this sort of power is known as "theriokinesis." However, animals do not generally "think" in the same way that humans do. Their thoughts are sensory impressions and instincts, not the sort of sentience displayed by humans. Telepaths can mentally "talk" to animals, but their "speech" should be kept simple and straightforward. At the GM's option, some types of animals, such as cetaceans or apes, may experience actual sentient thoughts, or thoughts more advanced than the "standard" animal thoughts. Alternately, a GM might rule that animals communicate with full human intelligence when contacted mentally; thinking and/or talking animals are a staple of some types of fiction.



Alien minds may be difficult for a telepath to use Telepathy on. Since Telepathy crosses the language barrier, mentalists can understand alien minds at a crude level, but the thought processes may be so, well, *alien* that the telepath can't achieve full understanding of them. They may even cause psychic trauma (see below)!

Psionic Surgery

"Psionic surgery" is a mentalist slang term for making permanent changes to a person's thought processes, memories, or personality. In *HERO System* terms, this means altering memories or changing Psychological Limitations. In the short term this can be accomplished with Mind Control or Mental Illusions (see above). However, for permanent or long-term changes, neither those Powers or Telepathy are adequate; Transform must be used. Refer to "Transform," below, for details.

Psychic Trauma

Sometimes a telepath is inside a target's mind during particularly stressful or unusual occasions. At the GM's option, this may cause "psychic trauma," a form of feedback which can damage or inconvenience the mentalist.

Psychic trauma can occur in the following situations:

When the telepath is in the mind of someone who is injured. The telepath may take a portion of the damage as STUN-only damage.

When the telepath is in the mind of someone who dies (particularly when the death is violent). In this case the telepath may take damage (including BODY), may black out for 1d6 Segments, or may suffer some other appropriate effect. In extreme cases, the telepath might die as well.

When the telepath enters the mind of someone caught in the grip of a Mental Illusion. Normally the telepath is able to view the illusion dispassionately, knowing it for what it is, and in fact may be able to help the victim break out of the illusion by mentally telling him what is happening (see above under "Mental Powers: Their General Nature"). However, particularly vivid, unusual, or strong illusions (for example, any illusion at the +30 level) may draw the telepath into them, subjecting him to their effects. In this case the Mental Illusions roll should be compared to the telepath's own EGO to determine how strongly he is affected by the illusion; the telepath may make Breakout Rolls as normal.

This rule can also be used for experiencing a target's dreams, which can be considered a form of "illusion." Usually a telepath can simply "observe" the dream, and even enter it or manipulate it if he wishes, but in the case of some dreams (i.e., vivid nightmares) could experience difficulties. Refer to "Unconsciousness And Sleep," below, for details.

When the telepath encounters particularly horrible or terrifying memories. Examples might include memories of a serial killer's or murderer's activities and feelings; memories of child abuse, rape, or other extremely unpleasant situations; memories of circumstances that have spawned phobias; and memories of particularly dangerous situations. In this case the telepath might take minor amounts of damage, or might reflexively "eject" himself from the target mind.

When the telepath enters the mind of a deeply insane person. In this case the telepath might take minor amounts of damage, might reflexively "eject" himself from the target mind, or might get trapped within the target's bizarre, twisted mindscape.

The GM may use psychic trauma in several ways. First, it could be a "house rule" for mentalists. Second, if psychic trauma is not a house rule, telepaths could take a -1 Limitation, "Will Experience Psychic Trauma," on their Telepathy. Third, characters whose minds may cause psychic trauma could buy Mental Damage Shields to reflect this "power."

Sending Thoughts

Telepathy can be used to send thoughts as well as read them. Thoughts can usually only be sent to the "surface thoughts" level of a target's mind—in other words, the telepath is mentally "talking" with the target. Sending thoughts into the target's deep, hidden thoughts, memory, or subconscious is akin to making permanent changes, which requires Psionic Surgery (a form of Transform). However, at the GM's option, telepaths may be able to send thoughts to levels of a target's mind deeper than surface thoughts; this depends on the telepath's power and the situation.

Simultaneous Telepathy

Two telepaths reading or communicating with the same mind at the same time will automatically be aware of each other's presence, absent the use of Invisible Power Effects or the Cloak Skill.

Touching The Subject

At the GM's option, a telepath may have a bonus of +5 (or greater) to his Telepathy Effect Roll when he is in skin-to-skin contact with the person he is using Telepathy on. More intimate forms of contact could bring even greater bonuses (this is known as the "Avellone Effect," after its discoverer). This bonus does not apply if the Telepathy is bought with the Limitation, "Skin Contact Required" (-1).

Unconsciousness And Sleep

Telepathy can be used on the mind of someone who is unconscious. However, an unconscious target has no surface thoughts or deep, hidden thoughts; the telepath can only read the target's memories or subconscious thoughts.





OTHER POWERS

This subsection deals with abilities that mentalists might possess outside of the realm of “pure” Mental Powers. These abilities are not generally considered “Mental Powers,” though they may be if the GM so desires.

Adjustment Powers

Adjustment Powers can be used to simulate certain mentalist powers. For example:

Absorption

Absorption can be defined as working against mental attacks instead of physical or energy attacks. To determine the strength of a mental attack, calculate the “BODY” rolled on the dice in the normal manner. Mental Defense can be “linked” to this sort of power, as described in the *HERO System Rulebook*, page 58. Mental Absorption does not have to be bought BOECV; it simply has to be defined as working against mental attacks.

If the mentalist also wants to Absorb physical or energy attacks which are not EGO-based but which are defined as “mental powers,” he can buy physical or energy Absorption with the Limitation, “Only Against Mental Special Effects” (-½). (Note that this Limitation and special effect can be used for defensive powers and similar abilities as well.) For purposes of Absorption, telekinetic force blasts and similar attacks are regarded as either physical or energy attacks (as defined by the character possessing the power), they are not “mental attacks.”

If the points Absorbed through a Mental Absorption go to EGO, the increased EGO will not help a character to resist the effects of the attack that he is Absorbing, but they may increase his EGO Roll for purposes of breaking out of that attack.

Example: Solitaire buys 3d6 Absorption versus mental attacks; the Absorbed points go to her EGO. She is later attacked with a 10d6 Mind Control. The GM counts the “BODY” on the Mind Control dice and has 9. Solitaire rolls her dice and gets a 13, allowing her to absorb all 9 “BODY” from the Mind Control. Her EGO is increased by 4. Although this won’t help her to resist the effects of the Mind Control (i.e., her base EGO is still used to determine the level of effect achieved by the Mind Control roll and to calculate her Mental Defense), she will have +1 to her Breakout Roll when trying to break free from the Mind Control.

Sleeping minds are a slightly different matter. Sleepers’ surface thoughts are whatever dreams they are currently experiencing. They have no other surface thoughts and no deep, hidden thoughts; their subconsciousnesses and memories can still be read. Telepaths who read a dreamer’s surface thoughts can enter into or manipulate the dreamer’s dream at will.

Sleeping or unconscious minds have an ECV of 0.

Undetectable Telepathy

Sometimes a mentalist may not want his target to know that he is reading his mind. This cannot be accomplished with the Advantage “Invisible Power Effects,” since that Advantage only masks the source of an attack, not the target’s awareness that he is suffering the effects of an attack. If a mentalist wishes to use Telepathy without his target being at all aware that his mind is being read, he must achieve a +20 level of effect on his Effect Roll.

EXPANDED TELEPATHY EFFECTS TABLE

Total rolled on Telepathy dice - Mental DEF is: Greater than EGO	Effect
	The telepath can read or send surface thoughts
EGO +10	The telepath can read deep, hidden thoughts
EGO +20	The telepath can read into the target’s memory
EGO +30	The telepath can read into the target’s subconscious
EGO +40	The telepath can read into the target’s collective unconscious.
Modifiers (can be applied at any level)	
+20	Telepathy cannot be detected by target



Aid

A mentalist might buy Aid for “all Mental Powers And Characteristics” (+2) which “Costs END” (-½) and is “Self Only” (-½) to reflect his ability to boost his powers through concentration and will-power. Specific Characteristics could also be Aided, such as PRE (the mentalist uses a subtle Mind Control to make himself seem more impressive and/or is able to “control” his fear response to make himself less susceptible to most Presence Attacks). A telekinetic might buy a limited form of Healing Aid defined as placing broken bones back together, holding a cut person’s blood and guts together, and so forth.

Another form of Aid sometimes used by mentalists is Empathic Healing. Empathic Healing is like normal Healing, except that the healer takes the subject’s wounds onto himself—in other words, Empathic Healing is Aid (usually the optional “Healing” form) bought with the -1 Limitation, “Healer Suffers BODY Damage Equal To And Corresponding To The Wounds Healed,” and the -½ Limitation, “Cannot Be Used On Self.”

Drain

Drain can be used to weaken a target by reducing his EGO or INT. Other Characteristics or powers can be affected by simply reaching into the target’s mind and “turning off” the appropriate nerve clusters. Unless bought as a type of will-sapping drug or device, this sort of power should be bought BOECV.

If a mentalist wants to buy an EGO Drain Linked to a mental attack power of some sort, then the rule about Drains and Linked attacks applies: the mental attack power affects the target *first*, and then the Drain takes effect. Thus, the mental attack power will work against the target’s full EGO or INT in the Phase in which it is used; only in succeeding Phases will it work against the target’s Drained EGO or INT.

Transfer

A mentalist might be able to Transfer “mental energy” (i.e., EGO or INT) from other persons to himself, increasing his mental prowess. Such Transfers should be bought BOECV. This is sometimes referred to as “Psychic Vampirism” or “Leeching.” Some forms of Psychic Vampirism can only be used on certain types of people (for example, only children, only women, or only the aged); this can be reflected with an appropriate Limitation.

Change Environment

This Power generally isn’t used too much by mentalists; most of the effects they want to create require Darkness or Images. However, there are a few minor effects that Change Environment could be used for. One example is a “Danger Field,” an area which automatically triggers a character’s Danger Sense even though there is nothing dangerous there. Another would be psychokinetic manipulation of the surrounding environment (for example, an electrokinetic or cyberkinetic might be able to make nearby electrical lights and appliances flicker on and off; a pyrokinetic or cryokinetic could affect the temperature of the air near him; and so forth). A mentalist could also purchase a psychometric Change Environment which would alter or obscure psychometric residues present in an area (refer to “Retrocognition,” under “Clairsentience,” above, for more information about psychometry).

Characteristics

The following are just a few of the ways that Characteristics can be used as Powers for mentalist characters:

STR

Some telekinetic characters might be able to focus their Telekinesis through their own bodies such that their telekinetic STR becomes higher than it would be at range. This can be simulated by buying STR with the Limitations “Requires An EGO Roll” (-½) and “No Figured Characteristics” (-½).

EGO

A mentalist might use “mind booster” drugs to temporarily increase his EGO (or INT, or both). These would be bought as extra EGO on a Focus (OAF, Pills) with Continuing Charges lasting for about 1 Turn to 1 minute. The strain that using this drug places on the body could be simulated with a “Costs END” Limitation, or a Side Effect of permanent brain damage after a certain number of uses.

Another possible use for EGO as a Power is EGO which “Only Works Against Mental Powers” (-¼). Known as “defensive EGO,” this type of EGO increases a character’s EGO score only for purposes of resisting Mental Powers that compare the total rolled on the dice to the target’s EGO (such as Mind Control). Defensive EGO also improves a character’s DECV, Mental Defense (if any), and his EGO Roll for Breakout Rolls only. It does not add to his OECV, his normal EGO Roll, or any EGO-based Skill Rolls.





Damage Reduction

Mental Damage Reduction applies against all Mental Powers. It not only reduces the damage done by Ego Attacks, it reduces the effect of Mental Powers which involve Effect Rolls.

Example: Grond has saved up his Experience Points and purchased 50% Mental Damage Reduction. One day while he is on a rampage he is confronted by Mindstorm, who attempts to Mind Control him to "calm down." At present Grond is violently opposed to doing this, so Mindstorm needs to achieve an EGO +30 roll on his 12d6. He rolls 44. Thanks to Grond's Mental Damage Reduction, this is reduced by 50%, to a 22. Mindstorm fails, and now Grond will "pound skinny mental person."

As this example shows, Mental Damage Reduction can be very useful indeed. GMs should be careful not to let characters use it to unbalance the campaign.

The cost for Mental Damage Reduction is the same as that for resistant Damage Reduction, i.e., 15, 30, or 60 points.

Damage Resistance

Damage Resistance can be used to make Mental Defense resistant, as described above under "Mental Defense."

Darkness

The effects of Darkness on the Mental Sense Group are discussed above, under "Mental Senses And Sense-Affecting Powers."

Darkness against the Sight Group can be a very effective weapon against mentalists, since their powers normally require Line Of Sight to function, and LOS is usually established with Sight. A combined Darkness to the Sight and Mental Sense Groups will totally blind most mentalists.

Desolidification



Several aspects of this Power have possible uses for (or against) mentalists.

Astral Form

A mentalist can use the "astral form" type of Desolidification to simulate his ability to project his "mental self" outside of his body. Refer to "Astral Form," above.

Desolidification And Mental Attacks

Normally, desolidified characters are vulnerable to mental attacks—they have to pay extra for immunity to Mental Powers. However, this does not mean that desolidified mentalists can automatically attack solid targets with their mental powers—although that would be logical, it would make Desolidified mentalists far too powerful. If mentalists want to affect the solid world with their mental powers, they must pay for the standard +2 Advantage. At the GM's option, mentalists who have not bought "Immune To Mental Powers" may affect the physical world with their mental powers—sauce for the goose is, after all, sauce for the gander.

Desolidification As A Defense



At the GM's option, characters could buy Desolidification "Only To Protect Against Mental Powers" (-1). This form of Desolidification does not render a character intangible and still allows him to be affected by physical attacks—all it does is offer near-total immunity to Mental Powers for 30 points. Since this is a very powerful ability, GMs should exercise caution before allowing PCs to buy it.

Desolidification As Mind Transference

In some situations it is possible to simulate Mind Transference (see "Transform," below) with Desolidification instead of Transform. This works best when a mentalist's mental self is trying to return to its real body after having somehow been separated from it. Desolidification which "Can Only Be Used For Mind Transfers" is worth a -1 Limitation.

Example: *Satori, a mentalist, is assaulted by several minions of the Mind-Master Complex (see Creatures Of The Night: Horror Enemies, pages 24-29). He awakens to find that his mind has been separated from his body and placed into a robotic body which the Mind-Master Complex believes it can control. After several harrowing adventures, the robotic Satori finally manages to break into the secret base where his real body is being kept in suspended animation. He finds his body, but it is imprisoned in an unbreakable Plexiglas tube—and Satori doesn't know enough about electronics to use the nearby machinery to open the tube. Instead, he switches his Mentalism Power Pool to Desolidification, "Can Only Be Used For Mind Transfers" (-1). Then, his mind "walks through" the Plexiglas tube and re-enters his real body. He will now be able to wake up the body and get out of the tube on his own.*

Detect

Aura Vision

This is the ability to see auras around living beings and objects. An aura is a brightly colored radiance that extends for several inches about a person, with colors that have meaning to those experienced in perceiving auras. (See the Aura Color table for details.)

All objects have a basic blue-white aura; living things have more variation in their aura colors (though objects that are magical or otherwise unusual are an exception to this). Creatures and monsters also have auras. It's important to remember that it is impossible to "disguise" your aura; this could be handy when you're trying to figure out who is a werewolf in disguise, for instance. Auras are not very specific (it's not as if each person has a unique pattern of colors), but a supposedly meek, mild-mannered person with a blazing red aura is not right somehow.

A person's aura is rarely composed of one color; it's normally a mixture of several or many shades, and this mix changes with the current emotional state of the person. The effective range of Aura Vision is only about 3" (6 meters) in dim light, or 1" or less (2 meters) in bright sunlight. The GM should apply modifiers to the Aura Vision roll for ambient conditions, such as bright lights (-1 to -3), many people crowded together (-2), distractions (-1 to -3), and so on.

The GM should use the Aura Color table to good effect in a game; use this creatively to describe the various patterns and colors that a hero sees in an aura. Describing the aura of an evil creature can be particularly chilling. The GM should also feel free to add more colors to the table, and also the meanings of different colors in combinations or patterns. It's more fun when the meanings of colors are ambiguous, and the players must interpret them for themselves.

Aura Color Table

Color	Meaning
Blue-white	The basic aura color; the color of all inanimate objects.
Pink	Compassionate, warm, sociable.
Pale Pink	Psychotic; indicates weakness or confusion.
Rose	Generous, unassuming, motherly.
Red	Energetic, a leader, extroverted; anger, moodiness.
Dark Red	Emotion, desire, sensuality.
Orange	Sincere, open-hearted, a sense of justice, fair play.
Yellow-orange	Friendly, witty, humorous.
Dark Yellow	Cowardice, fear, inferiority.
Yellow	Intellectual, a teacher, deep thinker.
Pale Yellow	Idealistic, humanitarian.
Yellow-green	Greedy, stubborn; also jealous, deceitful, distrusting.
Green	Practical, composed; also indicates a love for nature.
Light Green	Brooding, lonely; often a loner.
Dark Green	Envy, hate, maliciousness.
Blue-green	Psychic or spiritual powers, a seeker after knowledge.
Blue	Peaceful, calm, a strong character.
Light Blue	Creative, spiritual.
Dark Blue	Blind faith, superstitious, fearful.
Lavender	Conservative, sensitive, civilized.
Violet	Excitable, easily swayed by arguments, loves variety.
Purple	Royalty, majesty, calm; a true leader.
White	Purity, innocence, honesty; often found in children.
Gray	Sickness, anxiety, a negative attitude.
Black	Rage, anger, savagery, black magic, extreme illness.
Gold	The color of saints; the highest, most spiritual color



Aura Vision is bought as Detect Aura, Sense, Discriminatory, for a total cost of 10 points. Though Aura Vision has a range, that range is so limited that it's more of a special effect than an added cost. Aura Vision is based on a standard 9 + (INT/5) or less roll, +1 for 2 points.

Dowsing

This is the ability to detect water, minerals, metals, and even caverns by use of a forked stick as a Focus. The character dowses by walking across an area, concentrating on whatever substance she is seeking. Dowsing characters walk at no more than 2" per phase and are DCV 0 (Concentration, -1 Limitation) while dowsing. The GM should apply negative modifiers if the substance being sought is very deep (-1 per 3" down), very small, or otherwise difficult to detect.

Dowsing can be used to find buried treasure, lost graves, hidden tunnels, and similar things of interest to heroes. Dowsing works best on large things, like underground rivers or oil deposits; a lost ring would be very difficult to find (at least -5 and maybe -8 or more). The dowser may specialize in dowsing for specific things, such as water or metal; the Detect that forms the basis of Dowsing would be changed to reflect this specialty.

Dowsing is bought as Detect Underground Objects/Substances, Range, Discriminatory; Concentration (-1); OAF Forked Stick, for a total of 5 points. You may buy +1 to Dowsing for 2 points. Dowsing is based on a standard 9 + (INT/5) roll.

Sensitive

This psychic power allows the user to detect the peculiar "vibrations" of psychic phenomena, whether latent or currently in use. This includes the ability to detect the presence of spirits, though without any idea of direction. The GM should give this sense a bonus for very powerful phenomena; perhaps a +1 for every 10 active points in mental powers being used. The Sensitive takes a -1 to the roll for every 1" distance away from the target, -0 for the first 1". Physical objects between the character and the psychic/magic power tend to block the vibrations, so apply a -1 for every 2 DEF and -1 for every 2 BODY in the intervening objects. Sensitive may be able to tell a little more about an object with a half roll, but not very much; this psychic power isn't usually very discriminating.

Sensitive is bought as a Detect Psychic Phenomena, Sense, for 5 points. Note that this is a different ability than Mental Awareness.

Dispel And Suppress

These two Powers can be used to shut off or decrease the effectiveness of a character's powers (mental or otherwise). The mentalist simply reaches into the target's mind and attacks the portion of the brain which generates or controls the power that he wishes to Dispel/Suppress. This sort of power should be bought BOECV.

Dispel and Suppress normally should not be used to affect a character's memories, Psychological Limitations, and so forth; for that, Psionic Surgery (a type of Mental Transform) is usually needed (see below). However, there may be situations in which one of these powers is more appropriate than Psionic Surgery (or can be considered a form of Psionic Surgery). In those cases, determine the "point costs" of mental "objects" with the following chart. The GM may vary these totals as he sees fit to best simulate what is happening in his game:

Object	Cost
Berserk/Enraged	Cost of Limitation
Fact, very minor importance	3
Fact, minor importance	5
Fact, medium importance	8
Fact, major importance	10
Fact, extremely important	15
Memory, weak	10
Memory, medium strength	15
Memory, strong/important/intense	20
Memory, extremely strong/intense	25
Mental Signature	10
Mental Power	Active Point cost of Power
Mental Tag	15
Mental Trace	10
Mental Trap	Active Point cost of Trap
Psychological Limitation	Cost of Limitation
Psychosomatic Limitation	Cost of Limitation
Skill	17 + Active Point cost of Skill

Duplication

Duplication can be used to simulate "Mental Duplication," the rare and powerful ability to create a mental "second self." A mentalist with this power can project a mental and/or telekinetic "sidekick" which may or may not look like the mentalist. The Mental Duplicate will usually possess the same Mental Powers as the mentalist, or will be a slightly different, more focused version of one or more of those powers. A similar power would be the ability to separate one's "Astral Form" from one's self while remaining conscious and active.



Energy Blast

Energy Blasts are a common “Telekinesis trick” in which the mentalist can project beams of telekinetic force that injure or damage his target. This form of EB does not have to be bought BOECV, and normally works against PD rather than ED.

Entangle: Mental Paralysis

Mentalists can buy Entangles which are a function of their mental powers—in effect, a way to mentally paralyze another character. A “Mental Paralysis” Entangle must be bought with the “Based On ECV” (BOECV) Advantage (usually at the +1 level), and with the Advantages “Transparent To Physical Attacks” (+¼) and “Works Against EGO, Not STR” (+½).

Example: 4d6 Entangle, BOECV (+1), Transparent To Physical Attacks (+¼), Works Against EGO, Not STR (+½). Total cost: 110 points.

“Works Against EGO, Not STR” is ordinarily an Advantage because STR only costs half as much as EGO, and in the average campaign, STR scores tend to be higher—often much higher—than EGO scores. A standard superheroic “brick” character often has a STR ranging from 50-80, and many non-brick characters often have STR scores of 25-40. In contrast, a powerful mentalist usually will have an EGO score of about 24-30 points, and most other characters’ EGO scores will range from 10-18. Thus, it will usually be harder to break out of Mental Paralysis than out of an ordinary Entangle, so an Advantage is necessary. In some campaigns, such as psionics campaigns, where EGO scores are on the average higher than STR scores, this Advantage might actually be a -¼ or -½ Limitation.

A Mental Paralysis Entangle is Transparent to physical attacks, such as bullets, punches, knives, and clubs. However, it can be affected by Ego Attacks and any BOECV attack power that primarily does STUN and/or BODY (for example, a BOECV STUN Drain, Energy Blast, or RKA). If the attack does not already do BODY, it is considered to do BODY for the purposes of affecting the Mental Paralysis; the BODY is counted the way it is for Normal Damage attacks. A mentalist can target the Mental Paralysis without targeting the person trapped in the Entangle. A mentalist may make his Mental Paralysis Transparent to all forms of damage by paying for the usual +½ Advantage.

Characters trapped in Mental Paralysis use their EGO instead of their STR to break out. They roll 1d6 per 5 points of EGO; this costs END (1 END per 10 points of EGO used) and EGO can be Pushed for this purpose (at a cost of 1 END per 1 point of EGO Pushed). Characters may use their “Casual EGO” (half of their EGO score) to break out of weak Mental Paralysis attacks effortlessly, the same way a brick would break out of a weak Entangle with his Casual STR.

Mental Defense does not add to the character’s EGO for purposes of breaking out, or otherwise protect against Mental Paralysis (any more than PD protects against ordinary Entangles). Mentalists may take a -½ Limitation, “Mental Defense Adds To EGO,” in which case MD adds to EGO, point for point, in calculating the EGO a character may exert to break free. (In campaigns where Mental Defense is a Characteristic and not a Power, GMs may ignore this rule if they so choose.)

Example: Menton uses some of his saved Experience Points to buy an 5d6 Mental Paralysis with the “Mental Defense Adds To EGO” Limitation. During a fight with Mindstorm and Satori, he successfully attacks Satori with his Mental Entangle (rolling 6 BODY) and then retreats for his own inscrutable reasons.

Satori has an EGO of 23 and 15 points of Mental Defense. This gives him an EGO of 38 for purposes of breaking out of the Paralysis. He decides to limit himself to 35 EGO to save on END. He rolls 7d6 and scores 6 “BODY,” enough to damage the Mental Paralysis by 1 BODY. This costs Satori 3 END.

Meanwhile, Mindstorm helps out with his 5d6 Ego Attack. He rolls the dice and gets a 6, 6, 5, 4, 3, yielding 7 “BODY.” The Mental Paralysis takes another 2 BODY and is now half-broken.



Satori decides to push his EGO to 45, which will cost him 11 END. He rolls 9d6 and rolls 10 "BODY," doing 5 more points of BODY to the Mental Paralysis, shattering it. Satori is now free.

Extra Limbs

For purposes of this Power, the head counts as a "limb." This allows players to create multi-headed PCs, monsters, and so forth. Having more than one head is a good justification for buying Mental Powers, 360-Degree Vision, and a host of other unusual powers (not to mention Distinctive Features).

Flash

The effects of Flashing the Mental Sense Group are discussed above, under "Mental Senses And Sense-Affecting Powers."

In addition to Flashing the Mental Senses, there are several forms of Flash that mentalists can buy. First, there are several "Telekinesis tricks" that are bought as forms of Flash. Throwing dirt or similar substances in a target's eyes would be a Sight Group Flash. Another Sight Group Flash is achieved simply by telekinetically holding a target's eyelids shut; this Flash should be bought as an NND (the defense is having a STR score at least as strong as the mentalist's telekinetic STR) and Continuous. "Telekinetic Flashes" do not have to be bought BOECV.

A mentalist could also Flash a target by reaching into his brain and "shutting off" the portions of the brain that receive sensory input. This is known as a "Psychic Flash." Any Sense Group can be Flashed this way. This sort of Flash is bought BOECV, and Mental Defense (not Flash Defense) is the defense against it. In the average campaign, this change in the defense should be bought as an "AVLD" Advantage (or, at the GM's option, it may simply be allowed for free). In psionics campaigns and other games where Mental Defense is much more common than Flash Defense, this change may actually be a -1/4 or -1/2 Limitation.

Flight

Flight can be another "Telekinesis trick"—in other words, the character telekinetically "levitates" himself and moves around. If this requires the character's undivided telekinetic power, it should be bought in a Multipower with the character's Telekinesis and other "Telekinesis tricks."

Force Field And Force Wall: Mental Shield

Force Fields and Force Walls are some of the most common "Telekinesis tricks." Telekinetics with this power can create barriers of "telekinetic force" to protect themselves or others from harm.

Mental Defense Force Fields may be purchased if a character so desires; they work the same as PD or ED Force Fields.

Similarly, mentalists can buy Mental Defense Force Walls, known as "Mental Shields." Mental Shields cost the same as PD and ED Force Walls—5 points buys 2 points of resistant MD that covers three hex sides. Mental Shields are not visible to the ordinary senses (only to senses in the Mental Sense Group), and block Pure Mental Powers from both directions (in other words, a mentalist protected by one cannot use his powers, even Psychokinesis, through the Mental Shield, unless he breaks the Shield or buys the "Indirect" Advantage for those powers). A character may buy a Mental Shield that only protects himself by taking the -1/2 Limitation "Self Only" on the Mental Shield; at the GM's option, Self Only may be a "house rule" for Mental Shields, and characters must pay for a +1/2 Advantage to make them protect an area the way an ordinary Force Wall does. Mental Shields can only be made opaque to the Mental Sense Group; they cannot block other Senses. Mental Shield should be considered a "Stop Sign" power.

If a Mental Power is not able to break through a Mental Shield, it has no effect whatsoever on the protected person(s). In order to determine whether a Mental Power can break through the Mental Shield to affect the person behind it, count the "BODY" rolled on the dice in the normal manner and apply them to the MD of the Mental Shield. If the "BODY" total exceeds the Mental Defense, the power breaks through and the Mental Shield falls until rebuilt. If the "BODY" total does not exceed the Mental Defense, the power will not affect the protected target at all. Psychokinesis cannot be used through a Mental Shield without first breaking through it as specified above.

Example: Doctor Destroyer has created a Psiscreen Generator, defined as an 8 MD Mental Shield. Mentalla attacks him with her 8d6 Ego Attack while he is protected by the Psiscreen. She rolls 6, 6, 5, 4, 3, 3, 2, 1, for a total of 30 STUN. Counting the "BODY," she comes up with 9, which is greater than 8. Her Ego Attack breaks through the Psiscreen and affects Destroyer, who will have to "turn on" the Psiscreen again before it will offer him further protection. Had Mentalla only rolled 7 BODY, the entire Ego Attack would have been deflected by the Psiscreen.



Unlike normal Force Walls, a Mental Shield should not be destroyed if it takes more BODY damage than it has in defenses other than Mental Defense. Otherwise, most Force Walls will drop quickly, since few characters will buy a Force Wall protecting against PD, ED, and MD in sufficient strength to allow it to withstand many attacks. It is suggested that Force Walls generally be defined as belonging to one of two classes: “regular” Force Walls (PD and ED) and “exotic” Force Walls (MD, Power Defense, Flash Defense, and so forth). Regular Force Walls will fall if they take more BODY damage than they have in the appropriate defense (thus, a 10 PD/0 ED Force Wall falls if it takes even 1 BODY of energy damage), but are not affected if they take damage from “exotic” attacks. Exotic Force Walls will fall if they take damage from any attack they have defense against, but not if they take damage from any other form of attack (thus, an 8 MD Mental Shield falls if it takes damage from any mental attacks, but not if it is damaged by punches, Flashes, energy bolts, Power Defense-based attacks, and so forth). Otherwise, keeping an exotic Force Wall up would be an almost impossible task.

A character purchasing a Mental Shield or MD Force Field does not get to use his EGO/5 as a “base” MD for the Shield/Wall; he only gets the MD he purchases through the Power. Of course, if the character already has some MD of his own, that MD and the MD from his Force Field/Wall will both defend him against mental attacks.

Images

The effects of Images on Mental Senses are covered above, under “Mental Senses And Sense-Affecting Powers.”

Instant Change

Instant Change may be purchased as a “Telekinesis trick” by powerful mentalists—the character is able to transform the molecules of his clothing into any type of clothing he wishes. This Instant Change power should be bought at the 10-point level.

Invisibility

The effects of Invisibility on Mental Senses are covered above, under “Mental Senses And Sense-Affecting Powers.”

Invisibility can be bought as a form of “illusion” in which the mentalist “clouds men’s minds” to make them think that he is not there. This is known as “Psionic Invisibility.” Of course, this form of Invisibility will only work on beings with minds, and will have no effect against cameras and similar devices (a $-\frac{1}{2}$ Limitation). Also, it will not work against anyone who has any amount of Mental Defense (assuming that Mental Defense is regarded as a Power, not a Characteristic) (a $-\frac{1}{4}$ Limitation, higher in psionics campaigns or other games where Mental Defense is common).

Killing Attack, Ranged

Several types of Ranged Killing Attacks may be purchased by mentalists. They generally fall into two classes.

The first class is telekinetic RKAs. This sort of “Telekinesis trick” involves projecting “spears” of telekinetic energy at the target. A variant on this is to telekinetically strangle a character, or telekinetically causing his internal organs to burst or his heart to stop beating. The latter form of attack should be bought as “Indirect,” since it allows the telekinetic to affect one part of the target’s body without damaging other parts. If used carefully, this sort of telekinetic RKA can be used to commit “the perfect murder,” since there will be no way to tell (short of bringing in a mentalist to examine the body for mental traces or signatures) why the victim’s heart stopped beating, or his lungs stopped working, or whatever.

Instead of using “telekinetic spears,” a character may simply use his Telekinesis to pick up all the sharp or pointed objects in the area and throw them at the target. This sort of RKA takes the $-\frac{1}{2}$ Limitation, “OIF (Sharp/Pointed Objects of Opportunity).”

Another variant on this type of mental RKA is the “kinetic” attack involving a mentalist’s control over a substance such as fire (pyrokinesis), ice (cryokinesis), electricity (electrokinesis), and so forth. Killing Attacks based on control of these substances generally act like normal Killing Attacks.

The second class of mental RKAs is a BOECV attack that simulates a “mental overload” in which the attacking mentalist telepathically assaults the target’s brain, causing it to hemorrhage, thus killing the victim. This sort of RKA can be bought with the Limitation, “Psionic” ($-\frac{1}{2}$) (i.e., it only works on targets with minds). It should be bought BOECV and “Does BODY” (another +1 Advantage) (remember, BOECV attacks, even Killing Attacks, do not ordinarily do BODY; thus, an extra Advantage is needed).

Knockback Resistance

A telekinetic could buy Knockback Resistance as a “Telekinesis trick,” simulating the fact that he can subconsciously use his Telekinesis to “brace” himself. This power should take the Limitation “Only When Conscious” ($-\frac{1}{4}$), since it would not work if the attack which does Knockback has already Knocked Out the mentalist.





Life Support: Psionic Immortality

Psionic Immortality is a form of Life Support which simulates a character whose mental self cannot die, provided that it can transfer out of a dying physical body to another body. If there are no available bodies for the character to transfer into when his body dies, then his mental self will normally die as well (or, in the alternative, it may linger on in the area where the body died, “haunting” that area until a mind comes along that it can possess). In order to transfer his mental self from body to body while living, the character should buy the Mind Transference form of Transform (see below).

Psionic Immortality costs 2 points.

Missile Deflection And Reflection: Mental Deflection

The text of the rule on Missile Deflection states that it cannot be used against attacks which target a character’s EGO, i.e., Mental Powers. However, in psionics campaigns and some other campaigns, the GM may wish to ignore this rule. In those campaigns, Missile Deflection and Reflection can be used against Mental Powers if bought BOECV (usually at the +1 level, for a cost of 40 points). This is known as Mental Deflection (or Reflection).

Mental Deflection/Reflection works only against mental attacks; it has no effect on normal attacks. Mental attacks are deflected/reflected with the character’s OECV versus the OECV of the attacking mentalist. Mental Deflection/Reflection can be used to deflect/reflect Mental Combat Maneuvers in Mind-To-Mind Combat (refer to the “Combat” Chapter, below, for details on MTM Combat). It cannot usually be used against Area Of Effect or Explosion mental powers, or against Mental Paralysis. Also, Mental Deflection cannot be used against attacks which the mentalist cannot perceive.

Mental Deflection requires a half Phase, must be declared before the attacker makes his Attack Roll, and can be Aborted to. Characters may try to deflect more than one mental attack, with each Deflection roll made at a cumulative -2 OECV penalty for each attack deflected after the first (second deflection, -2; third deflection, -4; and so forth).

Characters who wish to be able to deflect/reflect both mental and normal ranged attacks should buy two different types of Missile Deflection/Reflection in a Multipower.

Movement Powers

Any of the Movement Powers can be considered a “Telekinesis trick”; since Telekinesis entails no action/reaction effect, characters have to purchase Movement Powers to use Telekinesis to move themselves. Refer to “Flight,” above, for notes on this.

Shape Shift

A mentalist with powerful illusion abilities can simulate his ability to flawlessly disguise himself by using this power. In most cases this sort of illusion will only work against sentient creatures (a -½ Limitation), not against cameras and the like. The GM may also impose limits on the types of forms that can realistically be assumed (i.e., only humanoid forms), or may declare that this “illusionary disguise” will not work against persons with Mental Defense.

Unless bought to 0 END and Persistent, illusionary Shape Shifts will vanish when a character becomes unconscious.



Psychomorphing

Shape Shift can also be used to create a character who can “psychomorph,” i.e., change his personality and thought patterns. This is a good way for a character to hide from nosy telepaths who might be searching for him. This form of Shape Shift should be purchased separately from ordinary physical shapechanging abilities; it costs 10 points to shift into a single other personality (of your species), 20 points to shift into any personality (of your species), and 30 points to shift into any personality from any sentient species.

In order to simulate a specific personality with Psychomorph, the mentalist must have previously achieved an EGO +20 Telepathy effect on the subject to be imitated, and spent at least 5 minutes exploring his or her psyche (the longer the mentalist takes, the more accurate the “disguise”).

Psychomorphing has no effect on a character’s powers, mental or otherwise, nor does it affect his memories (though it may change his *perception* of those memories). However, if a character with Mental Powers psychomorphs, the powers used by his two “mental forms” will leave different mental signatures.

Psychomorphing only works on one’s self. To alter the personality of another person, the mentalist must perform Psionic Surgery using a Mental Transform (see below).

Psychomorphs (characters who possess this Power) may take the “Accidental Change” Disadvantage if they are unable to control which personality is dominant at any given time. They may also take “Psychomorphic Amnesia” as a Psychological Limitation if their different mental forms cannot access the memories accumulated by their other forms.

Skills

Programmed Skills

It is possible for a mentalist to psionically “implant” Skills into the mind of another character, instantly giving him the ability to pick locks, speak Spanish, and so forth—a sort of “Aid for Skills.” These are usually referred to as “programmed” Skills. Programmed Skills work as follows:

First, a mentalist can only program someone with a Skill that he knows himself on at least an 11- roll. He can only program a Skill at its base level (11- or 9+CHAR/5 or less) (or 2 points’ worth of a Language), and cannot program the Skill at a higher roll than he himself could achieve. For example, if the mentalist has DEX 20 and Lockpicking on a 13-, he can only program Lockpicking at a maximum of 13-, even if his subject has DEX 30. If the programmed character wants to increase the Skill Roll, he can only do so in the future by spending Experience Points.

Second, programmed Skills are not free; characters must pay points for them (unless the GM is allowing the mentalist to program Skills as a “plot

device” to further a particular scenario). Skills programmed into a character before play begins should, of course, be accounted for in the character’s origin (or left mysteriously unexplained as an invitation to the GM). If a Skill is programmed into a character after play begins (i.e., after the initial character creation process), the character must spend Experience Points to buy the Skill; he can later spend more Experience Points to increase the Skill Roll.

Third, programming a Skill cannot be done by just anyone. The mentalist must have the mentalist version of the Power “Transform” and must know the SC: Psionic Surgery Skill. If the Psionic Surgery roll is successful, the Skill has been properly programmed; if not, it may not be programmed at all, or may be programmed improperly. Improper programming is usually reflected with Limitations on the Skill (see below). Once programmed, a Skill can only be removed with extensive Psionic Surgery (i.e., a Mental Transform).

There are several Advantages which may be taken for programmed Skills. Difficult to Dispel and Invisible Power Effects can be used to hide the Skill from other mentalists, or to make it harder for them to be “erased” through Psionic Surgery. Trigger creates a programmed Skill which is unknown to the character until specific conditions are met, at which point the Skill becomes fully known to the character (“I’ve never heard Russian before in my life, but suddenly I can speak it fluently! What gives?”).

Limitations can be used to signify improperly programmed Skills, or they can represent built-in “safety mechanisms” programmed into the Skill by the programming mentalist. Examples include: Ablative (the Skill Roll decreases by 1 every time the Skill is used, until it fades out of the character’s mind completely); Activation (the character has trouble “accessing” the Skill); Concentrate (similar to Activation); Costs END; Incantations (a “mantra” or “verbal access code” that must be used to unlock the Skill); No Conscious Control (knowledge of the Skill fades in and out of the character’s mind unpredictably).

In the case of programmed knowledge of Martial Arts, GMs should automatically require characters with this knowledge to take the Style Disadvantage (whether they get points for it or not; refer to *The Ultimate Martial Artist* for more information on this Disadvantage). This reflects the obviously programmed nature of this form of martial arts skill; programmed martial arts are no substitute for the years of dedication, training, and spiritual development which mark a true martial arts master. KS: Analyze Style rolls made by martial artists who are fighting a “programmed martial artist” will often receive a bonus (the same may also apply to their Find Weakness rolls). For this reason, GMs may grant an extra 5 points for the Style Disadvantage the character takes if they so desire.



Teleport

Teleport is often associated with mentalists, even though it doesn't really have any mental "special effect." One possible exception to this statement is a powerful telekinetic who could break his body down at the atomic level while maintaining his consciousness and then "transport" himself vast distances at the speed of thought, but not all mentalists should be able to perform this little trick. Still, since Teleport (and Extra-Dimensional Movement) is often linked to mental abilities, there is no reason for the GM not to allow mentalist PCs to buy it if they so desire.

Transform

Transform can be used to create a wide range of mental powers which can permanently (or semi-permanently) affect a character's mind, mental health, or brain power.

Transform As A Mental Power

Mental Transforms can be considered Mental Powers if the GM so desires, and treated accordingly for the purposes of Adjustment Powers and the like. A "Mental Transform" is defined as a Transform which:

(a) is bought with the "Based On Ego Combat Value" Advantage (and usually is defined as being defended against with Mental Defense, not Power Defense); and

(b) is bought with the "Works Against EGO, Not BODY" Modifier.

"Works Against EGO, Not BODY" is sometimes a Limitation, and sometimes an Advantage. In most campaigns, where BODY and EGO scores are, on the average, roughly the same, it is a +0 Advantage, since the point cost of the two Characteristics is the same. In a campaign where EGO scores tend to be much higher than BODY scores (i.e., a psionics campaign), it is a -¼ to -½ Limitation, since it makes the Transform harder to use successfully. In campaigns where BODY scores tend to be much higher than EGO scores (i.e., some superheroic campaigns), it is a +¼ to +½ Advantage, since it makes the Transform easier to use successfully.

Mental Transforms "heal" the same way that ordinary Transforms do—either according to some predefined method, or at the rate of REC/month in EGO. A mentalist with a "psionic surgery" Mental Transform can usually reverse the effects of Mental Transforms (remember, a target of a Mental Power can voluntarily lower his EGO to 0 if he wants to be affected, virtually guaranteeing that the psionic surgery will succeed).

Psionic Surgery

Transform is the power used to perform "psionic surgery," i.e., erase, change, or add to a person's memories, personality, Psychological Limitations, Berserks/Enrageds (and other psychologically-oriented or psychosomatic Disadvantages), Mental Powers, and so forth. It is also used to remove mental signatures or traces from a mind or object that has been affected by mental powers.

The type of Transform used for psionic surgery can vary depending upon the strength of the memory or psychological problem to be changed or erased. It is usually a Minor Transform; in some cases (such as removing deep-seated, long-term memories or Psychological Limitations), it may be a Major Transform. Sometimes, such as when a mentalist wants to temporarily alter a character's personality so that he can hide from a telepath, the Transform could even be Cosmetic, but the strength and accuracy of the change will depend on the type of Transform used (i.e., a Cosmetic Transform personality change is more easily detected as being a "disguise" than a Major Transform personality change).

At the GM's option, only simple forms of Psionic Surgery may be performed unless the character knows the Science: Psionic Surgery. If this is the case, either SC: Psionic Surgery can be taken as a Required Skill Roll for the Mental Transform, or the GM can require the mentalist to make an EGO Roll at a substantial penalty to accomplish his surgery successfully if he does not know that Science. If a roll is failed, the Psionic Surgery is botched. This either means that the mentalist did not excise enough of a memory or Psychological Limitation, or, even worse, took away too much (resulting in mental problems of some sort [reduced INT or EGO, additional Psychological Limitations, INT Roll penalties, and so forth] for the subject).

Note: depending upon special effects, various uses of Dispel, Drain, Suppress, and possibly even Telepathy could be considered "psionic surgery."

Mind Transference



Transform is the Power used to simulate the ability to transfer a character's mind from his own body to another person's body. This is a Major Transform. If successful, the mentalist keeps his own EGO, INT, and PRE Characteristics; all INT-, EGO-, and PRE-based Skills; all Skills which are not necessarily based on INT or EGO but which reflect intellectual learning with no physical skills (for example, Languages transfer; TFs, which require some physical abilities, do not); and all of his mental powers, but is in the body of his target (the "host body"). He can use all of the host body's physical Characteristics and abilities (including superpowers, in some instances), but no physical Skills (such as Climbing or Combat Driving). In some cases an EGO Roll may be necessary to make the host body function properly, at least for the first few Turns of use. The mentalist can automatically reverse any Mind Transference he has created.



Meanwhile, the mind that used to inhabit the host body is now trapped in the mentalist's body, which is essentially comatose. If the mentalist's body remains awake and the victim's mind can make full use of its physical capabilities, the mentalist may take a -½ Limitation on his Mind Transference power.

In most cases, it is preferable that Mind Transference not be purchased with the "Cumulative" Advantage—this tends to make the power too effective.

Once the mentalist's mind is in the host body, he can, if he so desires, use Mind Transference again to "jump" from the host body to another host body. The mind of host body #2 would then take up residence in host body #1 (which would become comatose) while the mentalist's mind occupied host body #2. A mentalist can mentally "jump" through an entire crowd of people this way, possibly leaving a mighty confused group of victims in his wake.

If the body into which a mind is transferred is Stunned or Knocked Out, the mind in it is Stunned or Knocked Out as well. However, if that mind is transferred into a conscious or non-Stunned body before the first body recovers, the mind instantly snaps back into consciousness, since it is now in a conscious body.

Mind Transference becomes even trickier in game terms when the SPD Chart is considered. While admittedly part of SPD is the ability to react quickly

to situations (i.e., SPD is partly a "mental" trait), for purposes of Mind Transference, SPD is a physical Characteristic. If a change in SPDs is involved, the GM is encouraged to use the Optional SPD Change rules on page 140 of the *HERO System Rulebook*. If the GM does not use those rules, he should be careful to adjudicate the situation fairly and not cheat either of the characters involved out of any of their Phases.

Mind Transference is a rarely-used power. While it is extremely powerful, it can also be very dangerous to the mentalist—the risk of being trapped outside one's own body is very frightening to most characters. Some extremely powerful mentalists have perfected the ability of "possession" or "mind shunting," in which they project their mind into a host body while ejecting the host mind's body not into the mentalist's body but into some nearby object. Mind Shunting is even rarer than Mind Transference. An equally rare ability is the power to "switch" two characters' minds without transferring one's own mind (Mind Transference, Usable Against Others, x2 targets [+¼]; the attacking mentalist must make a successful ECV Attack Roll against both targets).

Example: Mind Transference: 6d6 Major Transform (mind transference), Based On ECV (+1), Works Against EGO, Not BODY (+0) (180 Active Points); Mentalist's Body Remains Awake And In Victim's Control (-½). Total cost: 120 points.



Example: Brainwave (EGO 27, SPD 6) possesses the 6d6 Mind Transference ability defined above. He is facing Quantum (EGO 14) and Jaguar (EGO 8 in beast form). He decides to attempt a Mind Transference in the hopes of confusing the situation enough that he can make an escape.

He attacks Quantum in Phase 12. He rolls an 8 to hit and is successful. Then he rolls his Transform dice, and rolls 31—enough to Transform Quantum, who has no Mental Defense. Brainwave’s mind (including his INT, EGO, PRE, INT-, EGO-, and PRE-based Skills, and mental powers) are in Quantum’s body; her mind is in his body.

It is now Quantum’s turn in Phase 12. Since Brainwave’s body has no physical capabilities to speak of, and she doesn’t want to hurt her own body by trying to physically attack it, she simply shouts, “Jaguar! He’s reversed our minds! Help me!” and reserves her Phase.

(Note: In this situation, the GM opts not to use the Optional SPD Change rules. Even though Brainwave’s body has, technically, used its SPD this Phase, Quantum should still be allowed to act, in the interests of fairness. Since she and Brainwave both have the same SPD, in Phase 2 they will each be using each other’s SPD Characteristic, and there will be no difference in the number of attacks each one gets to make as compared to the attacks they could make from their own bodies.)

Jaguar, meanwhile, only has an 8 INT in beast form and is terribly confused by the whole situation. He decides to use his HA and attack Brainwave’s body, the “obvious” enemy. He hits Brainwave easily and rolls 47 STUN, enough to knock Brainwave’s body out. “Brainwave” is Knocked Out by the force of the blow; Quantum’s mind, since it was in the body, is now unconscious too.

In Phase 2 Jaguar hesitates, thinking that the battle is over. Brainwave, using Quantum’s body, laughs evilly and turns Quantum’s energy powers upon her teammate. The GM rules that he must make an EGO Roll to do this for the first three Turns in which he controls her body. He easily makes the EGO Roll and fires a Pushed 16d6 EB at Jaguar (Brainwave does not care about spending Quantum’s END this way). Using her 26 DEX (instead of his own body’s paltry 14 DEX), Brainwave rolls a 7 and hits Jaguar. He rolls 62 STUN, Stunning the shaggy superhero. A second blast in Phase 4 finishes the job, Knocking Out Jaguar.

In Phase 6 Seeker (EGO 14) arrives and sees that situation is “under control.” Before he has time to find out what has happened, Brainwave, still using Quantum’s body, attacks Seeker with his (Brainwave’s) 12d6 Mind Control. He hits, and then rolls 57 on his Mind Control dice. Even after subtracting Seeker’s Mental Defense (8 points), this is enough to achieve an EGO +30 affect. Seeker is ordered to climb the nearest building and leap off

the roof to his death. (Seeker knows that he is under mental attack—Brainwave is sadistically allowing him to retain that much awareness—and therefore can deduce that Quantum is “not really Quantum” and resist the order. However, Brainwave has achieved too high a level of control for Seeker to do so successfully.) Brainwave spends Quantum’s END to keep his Mind Control over Seeker from deteriorating.

Brainwave picks up his own unconscious body and carries it away to a safe, secret place, making sure that it is, in fact, extremely unconscious. Then he flies away and locates Quantum’s unconscious mind with Mind Scan. His 12d6 Mind Scan is easily enough to achieve an EGO +10 affect, since he knows exactly where to scan for the target mind. Then he flies high up into the air and begins a “power dive” at the ground. Before hitting bottom he uses his Mind Transference power through the Mind Scan lock-on to switch minds back into his own body. Quantum’s mind is suddenly snapped back into her own, conscious, body just seconds before she’s about to crash into the ground at hundreds of miles an hour! A minute or two later Brainwave’s body, none the worse for wear, awakens with Brainwave’s mind in it.

Telekinetic Transforms

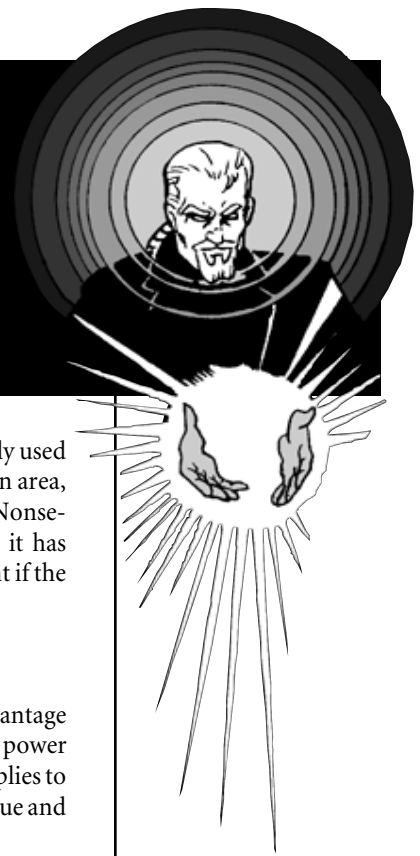
Some comic-book mentalists possess telekinetic transformation and transmutation powers that allow them to mentally alter the very molecules and atoms that make up particular objects. In this fashion plants can be turned into crystal sculptures, lead can be turned into gold, and a Mack truck can be transformed into a sleek limousine. This is a Telekinesis “trick” (see above), and is an ordinary form of Transform. It can be bought BOECV, but it is not a Mental Transform, as defined above.

Tunneling

Tunneling can be another “Telekinesis trick”: the telekinetic uses his powers to burrow through or tear through soil, walls, and the like.



POWER ADVANTAGES



This section discusses Power Advantages and their application to mental powers.

Affects Desolidified

Mentalist characters should remember that Mental Powers ordinarily affect Desolidified characters. If the Desolidified character has paid +20 points to be immune to Mental Powers, the mentalist can still affect him with Mental Powers bought with this Advantage.

Affects Desolidified also has some implications for powers which are Based On EGO Combat Value; see below for further discussion of this subject.

Area Of Effect

Area Of Effect Mental Powers are targeted against DECV 3, similar to Area Of Effect Standard Powers, which are targeted against DCV 3. A mentalist does not need to have Line Of Sight on all possible targets in the Area Of Effect to affect them; he need only have LOS on the target point of the area.

Example: Mindstorm has an Area Of Effect Ego Attack with an 8" radius. He wants to use it on all of the agents in Dr. Destroyer's robotics laboratory, which has a 7" radius. Mindstorm has a clear LOS on the lab itself; however, there are several columns in the lab, and some agents are hiding behind those columns (i.e., Mindstorm does not have a LOS on them). When Mindstorm uses his Area Of Effect Ego Attack on the lab, all of the agents, even those hiding behind the columns, will be affected.

Because of the odd concept of an area having an ECV, this rule may not appeal to all GMs, particularly those who run campaigns where mental powers are an important element. One possible alternative would be to rule that Area Of Effect Mental Powers automatically hit the target area, but that the mentalist must roll to hit each individual mind in that area separately—in essence, requiring all Area Of Effect Mental Powers to be Nonselective or Selective.

In the case of Mental Powers which require a specific command or description of effect from the mentalist, such as Mind Control or Mental Illusions, the command or effect must be the same for everyone in the Area Of Effect—the mentalist cannot attack one agent with an illusion of a dragon, while attacking the agent next to him with the illusion of Mechanon. At the GM's option, the mentalist can be allowed to vary his command or effect if he buys his Area Of Effect as Selective, and/or if he pays for an extra Advantage (say, +½ or +1).

Area Of Effect Telekinesis, which is normally used to pick up or grab every object/target in a given area, should almost always be bought Selective or Nonselective. Any target who enters the area after it has been established can be "grabbed" at that point if the telekinetic makes a to-hit roll on it.

Autofire

Mental Powers with the "Autofire" Advantage must pay an additional +1 Advantage, since the power targets a defense other than PD or ED. This applies to abilities which are Based On EGO Combat Value and can be modified by Mental Defense.

Based On Ego Combat Value

The +1 Advantage "Based On Ego Combat Value" (BOECV) is an extremely important Advantage for mentalists and psionic campaigns. This section discusses the implications of this Advantage and offers ways to "customize" it to suit these types of character.

First, here (with minor changes) is the BOECV rule from the *HERO System Rulebook*, page 93, so that you don't have to look it up in a separate book:

BASED ON EGO COMBAT VALUE

A Power with this Power Advantage makes its Attack Roll based on EGO Combat Value rather than normal Combat Value. Powers based on EGO Combat Value take no Range Modifiers and work on Line Of Sight if Ranged (BOECV does not automatically make a non-Ranged Power Ranged). Powers that would be modified by defenses, such as Energy Blast or Drain, can apply to standard defense or to Mental Defense, at the attacker's option. That choice must be made when the Power is bought, and can't be changed thereafter. All EGO-based attacks should be STUN only, except with special permission from the GM. In order to make an attack, the character must be able to see his target (see *Mental Combat*).

Even though a Power with this Advantage is based on ECV, it is not a Mental Power *per se*. Unlike normal Mental Powers, a Power with this Advantage is automatically visible. Additionally, a character who has a Power with this Advantage cannot automatically detect Mental Powers.

- Based On EGO Combat Value Cost Multiplier: +1



Implications And Clarifications

The Basic Nature Of BOECV

The exact meaning and effects of BOECV may vary depending upon what Power it is applied to. For example, as detailed above under "Telekinesis," BOECV Telekinesis grants that Power certain benefits not covered under the Advantage's description. GMs may wish to make similar changes to other Powers when BOECV is used to modify them, particularly if doing so enhances a campaign's "feel" or is in line with campaign concepts or house rules.

BOECV And Desolidification

Although Mental Powers (powers targeted by ECV) ordinarily affect Desolidified characters, this does not necessarily hold true for powers that are BOECV. BOECV powers that involve the mental manipulation of physical force (for example, a BOECV EB or RKA) will not affect Desolidified characters unless the "Affects Desolidified" Advantage (see above) is taken for the power. BOECV powers that do not involve physical force (for example, most BOECV Drains) probably will affect Desolidified characters in the same way a normal Mental Power does. The GM should examine a BOECV power and determine whether it will affect Desolidified characters or not; in some cases, inability to affect Desolidified characters may be a $-\frac{1}{4}$ Limitation.

BOECV Powers As Mental Powers

BOECV powers can be considered Mental Powers if the GM so desires. This does not affect their range, visibility, and so forth; but it will affect their ability to be bought through certain Variable Power Pools and to be affected by Adjustment Powers.

The Range Of BOECV Powers

Although BOECV powers do not have Range Modifiers, they do not automatically work at range. A Power with no range, such as Drain, which is bought BOECV does not become ranged because it takes the BOECV Advantage. Characters must still pay for the Advantage "Ranged" with such Powers if they want them to work at range; if they do so, then the power has no Range Modifier, as specified in the description of the Advantage.

BOECV powers which are, for whatever reason, Ranged work on a Line Of Sight basis, like standard Mental Powers.

Optional And Variant Rules

The following optional and variant rules, most involving new Advantages or Limitations, can be used to change the nature of a BOECV power. With the GM's permission, these Power Modifiers may, if appropriate, be taken for ordinary Mental Powers.

Power Affected By Both Defenses

This variant reduces the effectiveness of a BOECV power which is modified by defenses (such as Energy Blast, Drain, or Flash). Normally, the player who buys such a power chooses whether the power is modified by Mental Defense or the usual defense (ED, Power Defense, Flash Defense, and so forth) when the power is purchased. Powers with this variant are modified by *both* defenses, with the target choosing which defense to use against a particular attack (obviously the target will choose whichever defense is strongest at that time).

The "Power Affected By Both Defenses" variant reduces the cost of BOECV by $\frac{1}{4}$, making BOECV a $+\frac{3}{4}$ Advantage.

Power Does BODY

Normally, BOECV powers cannot do BODY damage to a target, since, like other Mental Powers, they do not normally cause BODY damage. Thus, Powers such as EBs or RKAs bought BOECV only do STUN damage. If a character wants to do BODY damage with a BOECV attack, he must pay for an additional +1 Advantage, "Does BODY," on the Power, making BOECV a total +2 Advantage. A "Does BODY" power will do Knockback.

Since Mental Defense is not normally resistant, this Advantage can make a BOECV RKA devastatingly powerful; GMs should carefully evaluate any power that takes this Advantage to make sure that they will not unbalance or disrupt the campaign.

This +1 Advantage can also be used for standard Mental Powers which cause STUN damage to the target, such as Ego Attack. However, Mental Powers with this Advantage still can only be used against targets with minds; they will not work against walls, vehicles, and similar objects.

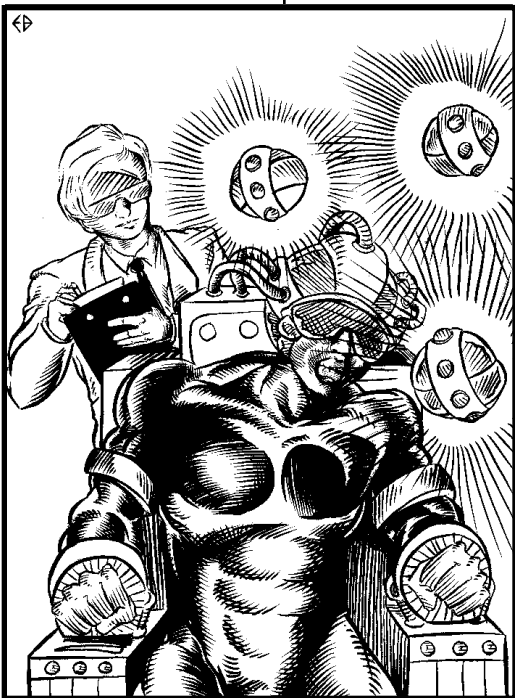
Power Has Normal Range Modifier

This variant reduces the effectiveness of a BOECV power by subjecting it to normal Range Modifiers. The power still works on LOS, however. It may not be taken for BOECV powers which have no range unless that power also takes the "Ranged" Advantage.

The "Power Has Normal Range Modifiers" variant reduces the cost of BOECV by $\frac{1}{4}$, making BOECV a $+\frac{3}{4}$ Advantage.

Power With Variable Defense

This variant increases the effectiveness of a BOECV power which is modified by defenses (such as Energy Blast, Drain, or Flash). It allows the attacker to choose which defense he will use his attack against, Mental Defense or the usual defense against that attack. The attacker can switch from Phase to Phase, so that an



Energy Blast with this variant Advantage could work against Mental Defense one Phase, and against ED the next Phase.

The “Power With Variable Defense” variant increases the cost of BOECV by $\frac{1}{2}$, making BOECV a +1 $\frac{1}{2}$ Advantage.

BOECV Chart

Advantage	Modifier
BOECV (basic Advantage)	+1
BOECV Power Does Not Affect Desolidified	$+\frac{3}{4}$ *
BOECV Nonranged Power Works At Range	+1 $\frac{1}{2}$
BOECV Power Affected By Both Defenses	$+\frac{3}{4}$
BOECV Power Does BODY	+2*
BOECV Power Uses Normal Range Modifiers	$+\frac{3}{4}$
BOECV Power With Variable Defense	+1 $\frac{1}{2}$

*: GM’s option; may depend on circumstances.

Continuous

The “Continuous” Advantage is a good way to simulate mental attacks that a character can “lock on.” For example, some mentalists in the comics can attack a character mentally, causing the target pain, and continue to cause him pain as long as they concentrate on him. In *HERO System* terms, this form of attack is an Ego Attack with the “Continuous” Advantage. GMs should be wary of Continuous mental attacks, though, since they can be very powerful and may unbalance the game if not handled properly.

The “Continuous” Advantage can also be used for those Mental Powers which are already partly continuous. Mental Illusions, Mind Control, and Telepathy are all continuous in the sense that they last until the target makes a Breakout Roll or the mentalist decides to achieve a different level of effect. In order to achieve a different level of effect, he must make another ECV Attack Roll and Effect Roll. At the GM’s option, if the “Continuous” Advantage is purchased for one of these Mental Powers, a mentalist may attempt to achieve a different level of effect without making another ECV Attack Roll—he need only reroll his dice of effect.

Cumulative



Mind Control and other continuing-effect Mental Powers can be bought with the + $\frac{1}{2}$ Advantage “Cumulative.” This allows the character to add successive Effect Rolls to one another, so that a small amount of dice in a power can be used again and again, slowly building up to the point where they achieve enough power to have a real effect on the target.

Each time a Cumulative continuing-effect Mental Power is used against the same target within a discrete time frame (such as one combat, one adventure, or one day), the amount rolled on the Effect Roll is added to the total Effect Roll already rolled. The target’s Mental Defense, if any, applies to each separate Effect Roll. The effect the mentalist wishes to achieve must be declared when the first roll of the dice is made.

The maximum amount of points that can be added to a continuing-effect Mental Power in this fashion is equal to the maximum that could be rolled on the dice. This maximum can be increased by 2 for every +1 Character Point spent.

Example: Mindstorm purchases 2d6 Mind Control with the “Cumulative” Advantage (total cost 15 points). Since this only allows him to accumulate 12 points of effect (the maximum that could be rolled on 2d6), he increases the maximum to 52 (+40 points) by paying +20 Character Points (the total cost of the power is now 35 points). He decides to use this power on Ogre (EGO 10) during a combat. The first time he hits with it, he declares that he is going to command Ogre to “Go to sleep” (a +30 effect in this situation). He rolls 8 on his 2d6. The next hit, he rolls 6, which adds to the 8 for 14. Mindstorm may keep rolling and adding until he achieves his effect, hits his limit of 52 points of effect, or Ogre pounds him into mush.

If Ogre had 5 points of Mental Defense, he could apply it to each of Mindstorm’s Effect Rolls. Thus, the first roll would only total 3 points of effect, and the second 1, for a total of four.

Damage Shield

As described in the *HERO System Rulebook*, page 93, it is possible to buy a Mental Damage Shield. This form of Damage Shield is entirely “in the head”—it can only affect people who mentally attack the character, and has no affect on those who physically touch him. If a character wants to create a Mental Damage Shield that can affect characters who touch him both mentally and physically, he should buy the Damage Shield with an additional +1 Advantage.

Characters with Mental Damage Shields should remember that the Shield is automatically visible to characters with Mental Awareness, which could be dangerous in some campaigns. The “Invisible Power Effects” Advantage will correct this problem. Another important limiting factor is that Damage Shields are Constant—they have to be turned on and maintained in order to function (unless bought with the “0 END” and “Persistent” Advantages and the “Always On” Limitation). A “Damage Shield” that only goes off when a character is attacked can be built using the “Trigger” Advantage.



Difficult To Dispel

This Advantage may be used to protect Mental Powers from being Dispelled, Suppressed, and so forth. It protects persons against Psionic Surgery (a form of Mental Transform, see above). For every level of Difficult To Dispel purchased for a character's EGO, the character's EGO (the "BODY" for the purposes of Psionic Surgery) is doubled only for the purpose of resisting Mental Transforms and similar powers. This protects programmed Skills, Psychological Limitations, memories, and similar mental "objects."

If this protection only applies to a particular mental object (or set of objects), then the Advantage itself may take a Limitation (usually $-\frac{1}{2}$ to -1).

Example: Mindstorm wants to protect himself from psionic surgery attacks. He purchases one level of "Difficult To Dispel" ($+\frac{1}{4}$) for his 20 EGO. This makes his EGO cost 25 points, instead of the 20 it would ordinarily cost. If Mindstorm only wants his "Difficult To Dispel" to protect his memories of his wife, he may take a -1 Limitation on those extra 5 points, for a total cost of 22 points for his EGO.

As an alternative, characters can buy bonuses to their EGO with the $-\frac{1}{2}$ Limitation "Only To Protect Against Psionic Surgery And Similar Attacks."

Explosion

Explosion can be used to create mental powers whose effects tend to decrease the further the target is from the source of the attack. Either the Advantage "Selective" or "Nonselective" (borrowed from "Area Of Effect") must be applied to an Explosive mental power. Often such powers will be bought with "No Range" ($-\frac{1}{2}$) and "Personal Immunity" ($+\frac{1}{4}$) or a "Hole In The Middle" ($+\frac{1}{4}$ to $+\frac{1}{2}$) because the point of origin is the mentalist himself.

An example of this sort of power would be Mind Control that is dependent upon hearing the mentalist speak (the further away from him that you are, the less persuasive he is). Another example is the Mental Illusion power possessed by Minstrel (*Champions Of The North*, pages 60-61)—the illusions are less likely to affect targets that are not near to him (i.e., as dice are subtracted because of the Explosion effect, the chance of achieving a sufficiently high roll to create the desired illusion is gradually reduced to zero).

Explosive Mental Powers are targeted against ECV 3, just like Area Of Effect Mental Powers (see above).

Invisible Power Effects

As stated in the *HERO System Rulebook*, page 96, since Mental Powers are ordinarily invisible (except to the target and to anyone with Mental Awareness), it only takes a $+\frac{1}{2}$ Advantage to make them fully invisible (i.e., invisible to the target and to characters with Mental Awareness). A character who is attacked with an Invisible Mental Power will know that he has been mentally attacked, but he will not know from whom the attack originated (although the nature of the attack may give him a good guess).

To hide the fact that a character is using a continuing-effect Mental Power from the target himself (for example, to read someone's mind without that person being aware that his mind is being read), the character must achieve a $+20$ effect on his Effect Roll (refer to individual Power descriptions for details).

Invisible Power Effects at the $+\frac{1}{2}$ level will not prevent a mental power from leaving mental signatures or mental traces. In order to do that, characters must buy the $+\frac{1}{4}$ Advantage "Invisible Power Effects (No Signature/Trace)." Characters cannot hide the signature or trace associated with a continuing-effect Mental Power by making a higher Effect Roll.

Sticky

As presently described by the rules, "Sticky" cannot be purchased for Mental Powers (unless they are "Based On CON"). At the GM's option, Mental Powers can be purchased with this Advantage, but the "sticky" aspect will be triggered not by physical contact, but by mental contact with the victim.

Example: Jaguar attacked by a 12d6 Mental Illusion which is Sticky. The attacking mentalist has achieved an EGO +30 level of effect, so Jaguar is standing there stock-still, totally absorbed in the illusion. His friend Cygnus, a mentalist, puzzled by what's going on, grabs him by the arm and tries to shake him out of it. Since Jaguar is being affected by a Mental Power, her physical contact with him does not activate the "Sticky" effect. However, Cygnus then uses her Telepathy to determine what's wrong with Jaguar. Since she has now mentally contacted him, the "Sticky" effect activates, and Cygnus is assaulted with a 12d6 Mental Illusion.

Trigger

The "Trigger" Advantage can be used to create "post-hypnotic suggestions" with Mind Control, or to set various "mental traps." Refer to "Mind Control" and "Telepathy," above, for details.

Usable By Others

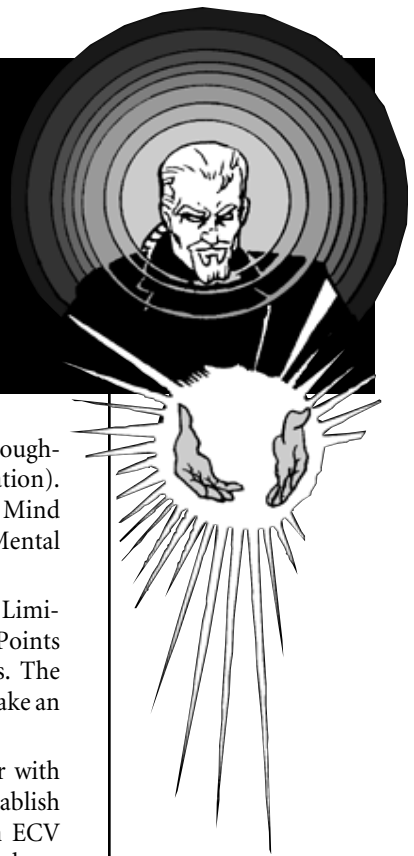
The "Usable By Others" Advantage ("UBO") can be added to Mental Powers to create many interesting powers. For example, a character could buy his Telepathy as UBO. As soon as he establishes the telepathic link, the linked character(s) also gain the ability to use Telepathy. Thus, if the mentalist character is knocked out or the link is otherwise severed, the other characters can continue using it on their own.

UBO can also be used to "feed" a Mental Power to another character through a Mind Link or Telepathy, or to create a "mental gestalt" in which the mentalist gives a Mental Power to several persons, who then combine their mental power to create a particularly powerful effect.

Players should refer to the discussion of "Usable On Others" in the *HERO System Almanac 1* for further ideas on this Advantage.



POWER LIMITATIONS



Endurance Costs For Continuing-Effect Mental Powers

Ordinarily, it costs no END to maintain Mental Powers which can last for long periods of time, such as Mental Illusions, Mind Control, and Telepathy, though those Powers will of course deteriorate over time and eventually “break” or fade away. Characters may buy these Powers with the $-\frac{1}{2}$ Limitation, “Costs END To Maintain.” This sort of continuing-effect Mental Power costs END, but still deteriorates in the normal manner for such Powers. Characters may still pay END to prevent this deterioration, as specified in the rules, but this END will be in addition to the END they are paying simply to maintain the Power.

If a mentalist using a power with this Limitation is Stunned or Knocked Out, the effects of the power immediately dissipate. Similarly, if “mental contact” between the characters is broken (for example, the mentalist switches his Multipower to a different slot), the mentalist can no longer feed END to the power, and its effects immediately vanish.

Limited Power

Here are some examples of miscellaneous Limitations that mentalists might take on their powers:

Continuing-Effect Power Stops Working If Mentalist Is Knocked Out ($-\frac{1}{4}$) or Stunned ($-\frac{1}{2}$): This Limitation is taken on Mental Powers like Mind Control and Mental Illusions which have a continuing effect. Ordinarily the mentalist simply “starts” the proper effect by making an ECV Attack Roll, and then can leave the power to work on its own. Even if he is Knocked Out or Stunned, the Power keeps working. If this Limitation is taken, Knocking Out ($-\frac{1}{4}$) or Stunning ($-\frac{1}{2}$) the mentalist will cause the Power to shut off instantly. This Limitation is not normally the same as the “Concentrate” Limitation; a character may take both Limitations (unless the GM rules otherwise). On the other hand, a character cannot take both this Limitation and the “Costs END To Maintain” Limitation for the same mental power.

Eye Contact Required ($-\frac{1}{2}$): A Mental Power with this Limitation requires the character to establish eye contact in order to make an ECV Attack Roll. Once the ECV Attack Roll is made, the eye contact can be broken without disturbing the effect of the

power (if eye contact must be maintained throughout the use of the power, this is a -1 Limitation). This Limitation is most often taken for Mind Control, but it can be taken for other Mental Powers as well.

Normal Range ($-\frac{1}{2}$): A Mental Power with this Limitation has a normal range (1" per 5 Active Points in the Power), including Range Modifiers. The mentalist must still have Line Of Sight to make an ECV Attack Roll.

Skin Contact Required (-1): A Mental Power with this Limitation requires the character to establish skin-to-skin contact in order to make an ECV Attack Roll. Otherwise it functions similarly to “Eye Contact Required.” A power with this Limitation cannot take the “No Range” Limitation.

“Skin Contact” means just that—contact between the attacker’s skin and the target’s skin. Anything that gets in the way, even a skintight costume, prevents the power from being used. If a character’s clothing reveals only a portion of his skin, then the attacker must make an Attack Roll (with appropriate Hit Location modifiers) to determine if he can hit that unclothed area. Obviously, it’s a lot easier to use a power with this Limitation on someone wearing a bikini than on someone wearing an overcoat.

Mental Powers Based On Characteristics Other Than EGO

Mental Power Based On CON ($-\frac{1}{2}$): This Limitation, which is detailed in the *HERO System Rulebook*, page 109, is most often used to create drugs and similar weapons that are best simulated with Mental Powers, even though they do not work against a target’s EGO. In some cases a character might have normal Mental Powers which are based on CON (for example, a “biokinetic” mentalist whose Mind Control and other powers work against CON even though they are not drugs or weapons, just standard Mental Powers). GMs should remember that this Limitation converts a Mental Power into a “normal” power with a standard range and Range Modifiers, ordinary visibility, and so forth. Such Powers do not provide the character with Mental Awareness, but their use cannot be detected by Mental Awareness, either.





Mental Power Based On INT (-1/2)

Mental Powers with this Limitation may involve manipulating someone through logic and skillful argumentation (Mind Control), convincing the target that his perceptions are wrong (Mental Illusions—"Do you believe me or your own eyes?"), and so forth.

Mental Powers Based On INT are targeted with ECV (or, at the GM's option, with "Intelligence Combat Value," INT/3), and work on a Line Of Sight basis with no Range Modifier. Like normal Mental Powers, they are not visible, but can be detected with Mental Awareness. The standard defense against them is Mental Defense. The Characteristic these Powers are targeted against is INT; Breakout Rolls should be based on the target's INT Roll, not his EGO Roll. Mental Powers Based On INT may only be Deflected with Mental Deflection (see "Powers," above) and do not provide their possessor with Mental Awareness the way standard Mental Powers do.

Mental Power Based On PRE (-1/4)

This Limitation can be used to turn a Mental Power into a superhuman version of various PRE-based Skills (Persuasion as Mind Control, Conversation or Interrogation as Telepathy, and so on), to create Presence Attacks so intense they can stun the target (Ego Attack), and the like.

Mental Powers Based On PRE are targeted with ECV (or, at the GM's option, with "Presence Combat Value," PRE/3), and work on a Line Of Sight basis with no Range Modifier. Like normal Mental Powers, they are not visible, but can be detected with Mental Awareness. The standard defense against them is "Presence Defense" (Presence bought with the -1 Limitation, "Only To Defend Against Presence Attacks"); characters purchasing a Mental Power Based On PRE may choose to make Mental Defense the standard defense instead (this choice is made when the power is bought, and cannot be changed thereafter). The Characteristic these Powers are targeted against is PRE; Breakout Rolls should be based on the target's PRE Roll, not his EGO Roll. Mental Powers Based On PRE may only be Missile Deflected with Mental Deflection (see "Powers," above) and do not provide their possessor with Mental Awareness the way standard Mental Powers do.

Depending upon the nature of a character's powers, Mental Powers that work against other Characteristics can also be created—for ex-

ample, a biokinetic character might have Mental Powers that somehow work against STR, DEX, or BODY. Naturally, the GM must approve all such Powers; their Limitation value (if any) should be based on the cost differential between the targeted Characteristic and EGO, whether the average EGO or the average of the target Characteristic is ordinarily higher in the campaign, the advantages and drawbacks that targeting that particular Characteristic offers, and so forth.

No Conscious Control (-2)

A Mental Power with this Limitation can be dangerous indeed. Not only can the character not consciously turn the power on, but such powers are often prone to "erupt" without warning. This effect is sometimes known as a "mindquake" or "mindstorm;" it is most dangerous with telekinetic powers. In certain instances this sort of power can be a useful plot device when given to an NPC, but PCs should usually stay away from this Limitation. The main exception to this guideline is the Power "Precognition," which is often bought with this Limitation to reflect its unreliability.



Some mental powers may take a variant “No Conscious Control” Limitation, worth only -1. This signifies a power that the character can turn on and off at will, but whose effects he cannot control while the power is on. An example of this type of power include Mental Illusions “Only To Attack Character With His Greatest Fear.”

No Range (-1/2)

Since the range of Mental Powers can be much greater than that of other Powers, with no Range Modifiers applied, the GM might consider making this Limitation worth -3/4 or -1 when applied to Mental Powers. This is not recommended in most situations, but may be appropriate for some campaigns.

Psionic

This is a Limitation for mental powers which is used to simulate powers which only work when minds and/or mental trace energies are present, or which only work on minds. If the power only works when minds are present, this is a -1/2 Limitation; if it works when minds or mental trace energies are present, it is worth -1/4. Powers with this Limitation would not, for example, work on a rock slide, since a rock slide does not have a mind and does not have any mental trace energies associated with it (unless it was started by Psychokinesis). Powers or abilities which sometimes take this Limitation include Combat Skill Levels, Combat Sense, Danger Sense, and BOECV Ranged Killing Attacks.

Side Effects

If a campaign (or a particular character’s origin) involves Mental Powers which are inherently unreliable, Side Effects is a good way to simulate the dangers of having Mental Powers “backfire” or “mal-function.” As a general guideline, mentalists should take Side Effects which will cause them BODY damage (i.e., EBs instead of Ego Attacks) or some other significant loss (such as an EGO or INT Drain). Also, if a Mental Power such as Mind Control or Mental Illusions is the Side Effect, the GM should make sure that the mentalist’s EGO is not so high that will ordinarily have an easy time breaking out of the effect; otherwise, the Side Effect isn’t much of a Limitation.

Some suggested Side Effects for Mental Powers: Character suffers a low-level KA (character begins to bleed, usually from veins on his head, his ears, or his nose).

Character is afflicted with a Mental Illusion; character will automatically believe in the illusion (and/or be so distracted by it as to be unable to do anything else) for 2 Phases, and thereafter may make Breakout Rolls as normal.

Character’s Mental Defense vanishes for 1d6 Phases (only appropriate for campaigns where lack of MD for this period of time is potentially dangerous at least half of the time).

Character is stricken deaf, dumb, and/or blind for 1d6 Phases (i.e., the nerves controlling his senses and speech are temporarily “shorted out” because of the mental feedback).

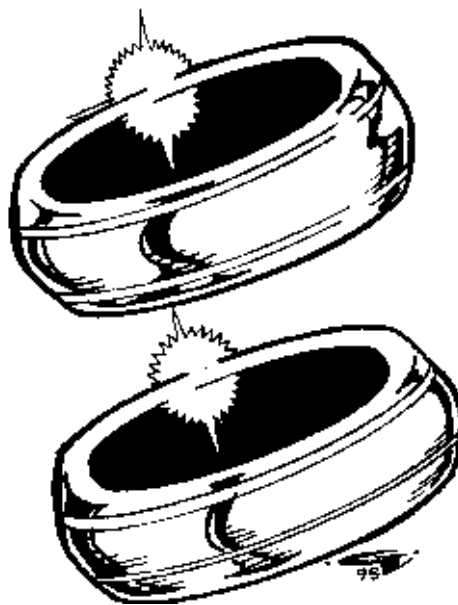
Character suffers from Mental Paralysis of appropriate strength.

Character’s Psychological Limitations all become 5-10 points worse for 1d6 hours, and/or character suffers from rampant paranoia for that same period of time.

Character’s Berserk is automatically triggered.

Character suffers from a psychosomatic Physical Limitation (“I can’t feel my legs!”, for example, or psychosomatic blindness) for 1d6 hours.

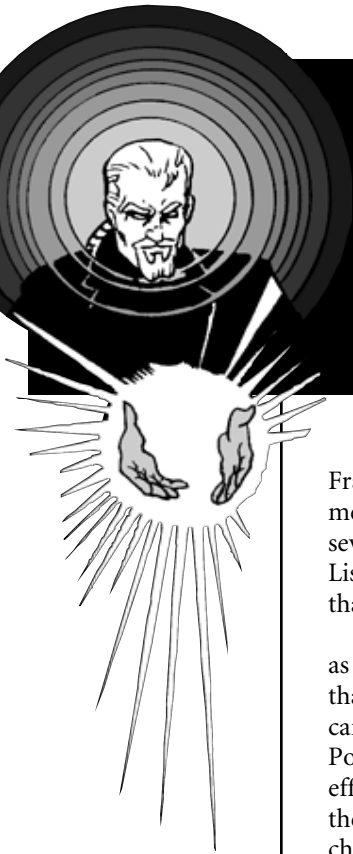
Character’s mental powers are all 5-10 Active Points weaker for 1d6 Turns (or longer).



Linkbands



POWER FRAMEWORKS



Mentalist characters can, of course, use Power Frameworks; in fact, they are very common with mentalist characters, since they allow them to buy several expensive Mental Powers at a discount. Listed below are some examples of Frameworks that mentalists might take.

Regarding continuing-effect Mental Powers such as Mind Control and Mental Illusions, remember that because they are Instant Powers, a character can use one and then switch to a different slot or Power in his Framework without disrupting the effects of the first Power. However, he cannot feed the power END to keep it from deteriorating or change its level of effect unless he switches back to that power and makes an ECV Attack Roll. On the other hand, Mind Scan, which is a Constant Power, will be disrupted if the character “turns it off” by switching slots or powers.

Telekinesis Frameworks:

Since Telekinesis can be used to accomplish so many different, useful effects (the “Telekinesis tricks” discussed above), many telekinetic characters will buy a Power Framework for their various Telekinesis-based powers.

Mental Powers Power Pools

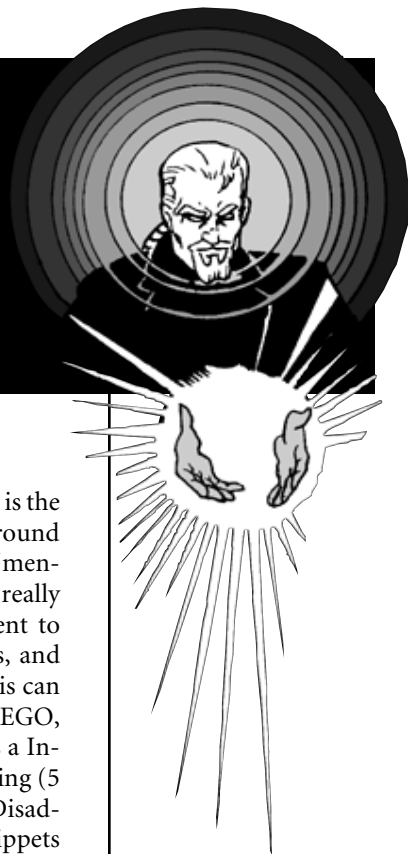
A Mental Powers Power Pool is a Variable Power Pool which can only be used for those Powers specifically defined as Mental Powers (Ego Attack, Mental Illusions, Mind Control, Mind Scan, Telepathy, and any Power defined as a Mental Power by the “house rules” of the campaign). Other Powers, including BOECV Powers, cannot be used in a Mental Powers Power Pool. “Mental Powers Power Pool” is worth a $-\frac{1}{2}$ Limitation on the Pool, but such Pools can usually be changed without a Skill Roll at any time, so they are very expensive.

Mentalist Power Pools

A Mentalist Pool is much broader than a Mental Powers Power Pool; essentially, it allows the mentalist to use any of the powers discussed in this book (including telekinetic effects and BOECV powers), plus any other powers that the GM is willing to allow under the rubric of “mentalism.” Mentalist Pools usually do not require a Skill Roll to change powers, and can be changed at any time. “Mentalist Power Pool” is a -0 to $-\frac{1}{4}$ Limitation, depending on just how limiting the GM thinks the concept is.



DISADVANTAGES



Age

In a psionics campaign where Normal Characteristic Maxima are imposed, this Disadvantage may be quite popular, since it increases the amount of EGO and INT that characters can buy at the normal cost. GMs should make sure that this Disadvantage is suited to the character in question and is not just an excuse to buy a higher EGO or INT.

Distinctive Features

Some mentalists are so powerful that they stand out to other mentalists and people with Mental Awareness—their powers are like a beacon. This can be bought as a Distinctive Feature: Powerful Mentalist (not concealable, noticed and recognizable by small group): 5 points.

Hunted

There are many “classic” Hunteds for mentalists. The first is people who, rightly or wrongly, fear psychic powers and what mentalists may be able to do with them. The second is the government, which would like to have Mental Powers in its “arsenal.” The third type, a ruthless corporation, is similar to the government; it wants to use psychic powers to damage its competitors and establish a pre-eminent economic position for itself.

Physical Limitation

A classic Physical Limitation for telepaths is the inability to screen out the thoughts of those around them. They constantly hear the muttering of mental voices in their minds, not clear enough to really distinguish anything, but sufficiently present to frustrate the mentalist, give him headaches, and generally annoy him. At the GM’s whim this can become so bad that it affects the character’s EGO, INT, CON, or other Characteristics. This is a Infrequent limitation which is Slightly impairing (5 points). On occasion the GM can use this Disadvantage as a plot device by having useful snippets of information leak through into the character’s mind.

Refer to “Susceptibility,” below, for more thoughts on this effect.

Psychological Limitations

The fact that mentalists have prodigious mental abilities does not make them immune to psychological afflictions—indeed, the presence of Mental Powers might even tend to cause serious psychological problems in the possessor. For example, a young telepath with no control over his power might think that he’s “hearing voices in his head,” which could affect him greatly (and maybe even lead to having him put in an asylum). A mentalist with criminal inclinations might become a full-blown megalomaniac, convinced that his powers entitle him to rule the world.

Psychosomatic Limitations

Psychosomatic Limitations are Limitations that are only “in the character’s head.” For example, a character might *think* that he’s Susceptible to green argonite meteorites. In reality, green argonite meteorites do not affect him at all, but he believes that they do. If he were exposed to green argonite meteorites, he would begin to feel weak and sick, and might even die—such is the power of the mind.

Psychosomatic Limitations can be affected by Psionic Surgery and certain other powers. A mentalist who uses Telepathy on someone with a Psychosomatic Limitation and searches for information about it will realize that the Limitation is psychosomatic and not “real.”



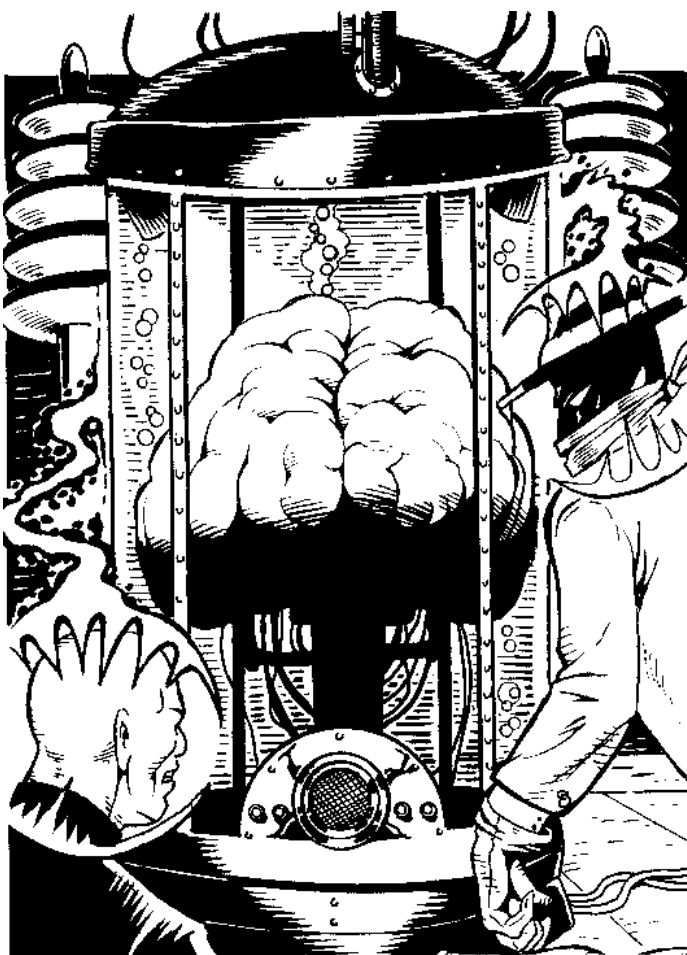
Susceptibility

The inability to screen out the thoughts of those around you, discussed above under “Physical Limitation,” can also be bought as a Susceptibility to large groups of people (say, half a dozen or more). In this case the thoughts and mental energy seeping into the character’s brain give him intense headaches. The only drawback to this approach is the possibility of killing the character, but the GM can ignore any BODY damage if he feels this would be appropriate (or can substitute a non-BODY-damage effect, such as a STUN Drain).

Example: Susceptibility to crowds of six or more people (Common, takes 1d6 per Minute); 10 points.

Vulnerability

Some psychically sensitive individuals may be Vulnerable to All Mental Powers (which can usually be considered Common or Very Common attacks). Gullible characters may be Vulnerable to Mental Illusions, or submissive characters to Mind Control.



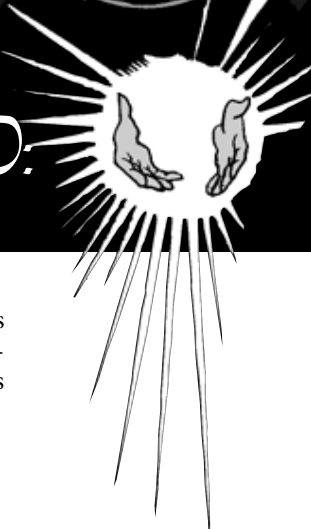


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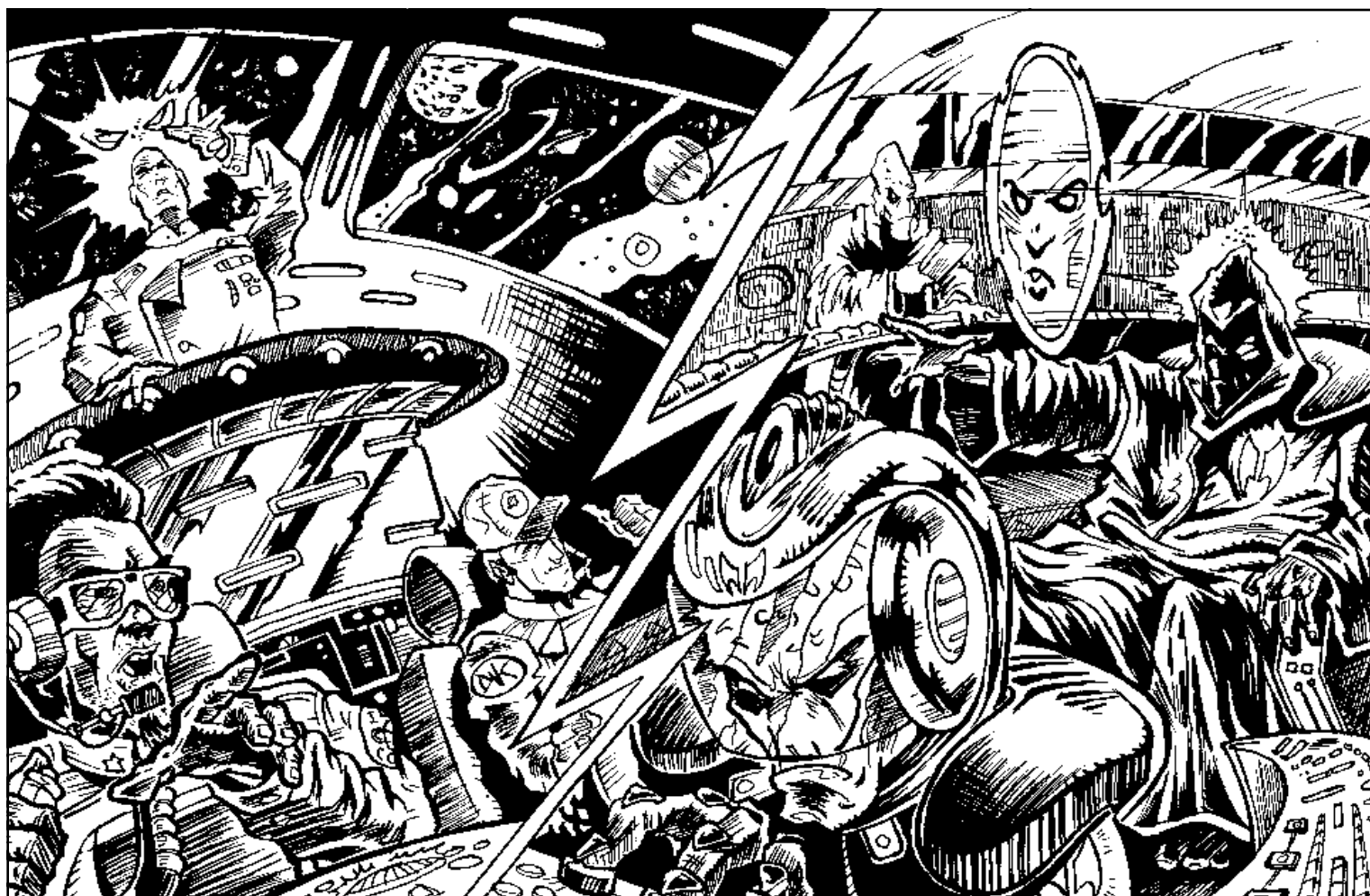
TWO.

CAMPAIGN

CREATION



This chapter of *The Ultimate Mentalist* explores some of the issues involved in gamemastering campaigns which involve mentalists, including “psionics campaigns” whose chief feature is mental powers.





GENERAL ISSUES RELATING TO MENTALISTS

PRECONCEPTIONS ABOUT MENTAL POWERS

It is important for a GM who is running a campaign which involves mental powers (whether it's a psionics campaign, a superhero campaign with a single mentalist PC, or something in between) to decide how mental powers work, and what he wants to do with them in his campaign. Those decisions will shape how mental powers are used, perceived, and generate storylines.

A consistent view of how mental powers work, how they are developed, and what can be done with them will allow the GM to create a "feeling" for mental powers in his campaign, setting them apart from other powers, and from mental powers in other campaigns. Making these determinations also gives the GM a rationale for establishing whatever house rules his campaign needs for mental powers.

The "Powers" subsection of the "Character Creation" section of this book provides what can be regarded as a "baseline" discussion and exploration of mental powers—how they work, and how they are to be represented (in game mechanics terms) in the *HERO System*. An effort has been made to make as few "judgment calls" about how mental powers work as necessary. Where a judgment call was necessary, notes on possible variations of that option were given, so that GMs can make up their own minds.

For example, in the discussion of Telekinesis, a rule was made that Telekinesis cannot be used to affect gases, smokes, and similar substances unless the character pays for a +10 points modifier. However, this is not to say that a particular GM cannot rule otherwise. Suppose, for example, that a GM decided to run a campaign in which the majority of mental powers would be psychokinetic. Psionic or psychic powers would be rare, feared by the populace more than psychokinetic powers, and probably difficult to use. To create the proper atmosphere for this preconception of mental powers, the GM establishes the following house rules:

- 1) All psionic and psychic mental powers are rare, and can only be purchased with the GM's permission. If used, they automatically cost twice as much END as normal to use (1 END per 5 Active Points), but the "Reduced END" Advantage can be bought for them as normal.

- 2) Mentalists who use psionic and psychic powers will be the object of fear, loathing, and possible mob attacks by ordinary humans, who are terrified of such powers. Reputations or Distinctive Features may be built around this cultural phenomenon.
- 3) Telekinesis will only cost 1 Character Point per point of telekinetic STR.
- 4) Characters with Telekinesis can perform the following "TK tricks" for free: they can dissipate gases and smokes, at the rate of 1 hex's worth of gas/smoke per Phase; they can "fly" by standing on an object and moving that object with TK, at the rate of (Active Points in Telekinesis)/4 in inches of movement. Other TK tricks, such as telekinetic force blasts or force walls, must be purchased normally; for this reason, most telekinetics will have a Power Framework of some sort.

Besides emphasizing one type of power or another, other possible preconceptions about mental powers include:

They are inherently difficult or dangerous to use. This can be represented by increased END cost or various Limitations relating to reliability (see below).

They are inherently easy to use. This can be represented by decreased END cost.

Mental powers can be developed only in certain ways (as a mutation; through the use of particular drugs; and so forth); this may have implications for other powers that the character may have or for how society views mentalists.

POWER LEVEL OF MENTAL POWERS

One of the first things a GM needs to decide is how powerful he will allow mental powers to be. Some genres (such as superheroics or science fiction) tend to have relatively powerful mental abilities—in superhero comic books, for example, there is little or no limit on the types or power levels of mental powers that characters can possess. Other genres, such as paranormal Dark Champions or wild martial arts, tend towards much lower levels of mental powers.



Just because a mental ability is powerful does not mean that it is better or more fun. Good GMs and players can create excellent characters and stories regardless of the power level involved; in this sense, mental powers should be regarded as a storytelling tool, not just as an attack power for the mentalist character. There are as many interesting story ideas related to very low-powered mental abilities (for example, 5-15 Active Points powers) as there are to high-powered abilities (say, 50 or more Active Points powers).

However, the power level (and reliability, see below) of mental powers will usually have some effect on their emphasis and use within the story. A mentalist with 100 Active Points powers that always work properly will use those powers a lot more frequently than a mentalist with one or two 10-point powers that give him terrible headaches when he uses them. The GM will have to plan his games so that he takes the 100-point powers into account a lot more than he will have to account for the 10-point powers.



RELIABILITY OF MENTAL POWERS

Related to the power levels of mental powers within the campaign is the subject of how reliable mental powers are—an extremely powerful mental ability which only works one time out of ten isn't really all that powerful in the long run. "Reliability" means not just how often (or how well) the power works, but reflects other aspects of mental powers, such as whether the power is likely to "feed back" into the mentalist and injure him. Again, reliability or unreliability factors both into storytelling and into how the GM prepares for the game—a power that only works on rare occasions is less likely to affect the GM's scenario than one that is infallible.

Usually, a high level of reliability is more common than a high level of power, particularly in gaming campaigns. Most players don't have a lot of fun if their powers are constantly fizzling out on them. However, in some genres, such as paranormal Dark Champions games, or science fiction campaigns with very low-powered psionic abilities, a low level of reliability may actually add flavor to the campaign. For example, in a low-reliability campaign, the player characters are going to have to develop other skills and abilities in addition to their mental powers, since they can't count on their mental powers in every situation. On the other hand, in a campaign where mental abilities are reliable, characters can be built exclusively around them, and other skills and abilities more or less ignored.



GETTING THE POWER LEVEL AND "FEEL" YOU WANT

Obviously, where the GM sets the power level and reliability of mental powers in the campaign will affect the "feel" of the campaign. The following guidelines are suggested for defining the power level of mental powers in a campaign:

Low-Powered

For campaigns where low-powered mental powers are desired, the GM should limit mental powers to 30 Active Points (at most). Furthermore, each mental power must have at least -1 worth of Limitations. In the case of some powers that require more than 30 Active Points to work effectively (such as Mental Paralysis or Mind Transference), the GM may vary this guideline, but instances of this should be rare. Low-powered campaigns often impose other restrictions on mental powers, such as making it very difficult to use them (for example, Skill Rolls or Increased END Cost are required), or making it dangerous to use them (Skill Rolls and Side Effects are required). The reliability of mental powers may also be quite low, as discussed above.

Mid-Powered

In campaigns in which the GM wants to have a "medium" level of power, mental powers should be limited to 45 Active Points. Optionally, all mental powers may be required to have at least -½ worth of Limitations; other restrictions will be much more relaxed than those imposed on low-powered games (or will even be nonexistent). Medium-level mental powers are usually pretty reliable.

High-Powered

"High-powered" is defined as games in which mental powers can have 60 or more Active Points, are utterly reliable, and have little or no requirement that they be limited in any way. The Active Point limits in a high-powered campaign could be set much higher than 60 if the GM prefers. Usually mentalists in high-powered games can literally accomplish miracles with their powers.





GENRE MENTAL POWERS

Cyberpunk/Near Future

In the “cyberpunk” genre, *HERO System* Mental Powers are most often used to simulate netrunner abilities in the “Net,” or computer matrix. Characters generally do not possess mental powers themselves; however, when they do, their powers are often a key aspect of the storyline. For example, the characters may have been kidnapped by a megacorp and used as guinea pigs in experiments that gave them mental powers. Then they escaped, and now the corp wants them back, even if they have to kill them to do it. The PCs use their mental powers to fend off the corp’s hit squads while doing good deeds and so forth.

Alternately, a cyberpunk campaign could feature a lot more mental powers than the one described above. Since science and technology have advanced a great deal over the modern day in most cyberpunk campaigns, the thought of legions of specially-bred psionic warriors is not too far-fetched for many cyberpunk campaigns. Some PCs would be psionic, providing yet another front on which the characters can wage war on their enemies.

Espionage

Espionage games are usually very “realistic” and do not involve mental powers. The exception is the *ESPionage* campaign, such as the one featured in Brian Lumley’s “Necroscope” series of books, in which mental powers are used in the service of intelligence agencies. In this sort of campaign, powers are usually low-powered, but relatively reliable. The more powerful an ability is, the less reliable it is likely to be, thus keeping the campaign balanced. A powerful, reliable mentalist would be highly sought after by all sides.

Fantasy

Fantasy mental powers are most often simply one form of magic that mages can employ. Whether it is called sorcery (as in Lyndon Hardy’s *Master of the Five Magics*), mind magics, or the Colleges of Mentalism and Empathy (as in various *Fantasy Hero* products), it usually has the same level of power and reliability as other forms of magic in the campaign. However, it is not unheard of for mages in some fantasy worlds to possess mental powers in addition to their mystical powers.

Horror

In order to inspire feelings of horror, mental powers usually need to be at least moderately powerful and moderately reliable—they’re not going to be scary if they don’t work, after all. However, they do not need to be overwhelmingly powerful; even the threat of mental domination or mind reading frightens most people, and it only takes a small telepathic “nudge” to manipulate a person’s dreams into nightmares.

Characters in horror stories sometimes have minor amounts of psychic power, usually such things as Mental Awareness or perhaps some Precognition. Just enough to really get them into trouble; they know something bad is going to happen to them, but they’re not sure when or how.

Martial Arts

Mental Powers occasionally surface in martial arts campaigns as “*ch’i* powers,” but this is fairly rare, and such powers cannot always be relied upon. For more information on *ch’i* powers, refer to *The Ultimate Martial Artist*.

Pulp Era

A few pulp characters, such as The Shadow, possess some form of mental powers. These tend to be relatively low-powered, but can have any level of reliability; they are often sensory or “general purpose” powers instead of offensive abilities. Examples include The Shadow’s hypnotic powers and ability to “cloud men’s minds”; a medium’s precognitive or retrocognitive powers; and the like.

Science Fiction

Mental powers are very common in this genre. They run the gamut from low-powered, low-reliability powers (such as those possessed by Larry Niven's character Gil Hamilton), to very powerful abilities which are completely reliable (such as E. E. Smith's Lensmen, or the "Force"-based abilities of the *Star Wars* universe). Mental abilities may be limited only to aliens, only to humans, or may be shared by all sentient species equally. For more information on mental powers in science fiction, refer to *Star Hero*.

Superheroes

Characters with psionic powers are, of course, a staple of the superheroic genre, and thus of *Champions* as well. A quick glance through a few issues of Marvel Comics' "X-titles" and many other comics series will give players and GMs plenty of ideas for mentalist characters. Comic-book psionic powers tend to be not only very powerful, but very reliable as well. This is true for the "Champions 3000" subgenre which crosses science fiction and superheroes, but in the "Golden Age," mental powers are relatively rare, though fairly powerful and more-or-less completely reliable when they do exist.

In paranormal Dark Champions campaigns (i.e., Dark Champions games involving some superpowers), mental powers exist, but they are usually somewhat lower-powered than those found in four-color games, and are less reliable as well. They also tend to be considerably "darker" or stranger, acting on the worst sides of humanity. Refer to *Underworld Enemies* and *Asylum* for many examples of this.

Western

Mental powers are not a feature of the western genre, except in those rare circumstances where an Indian shaman's mystic powers are built with certain Mental Powers, or a cowboy accidentally ingests peyote (Mental Illusions, No Conscious Control).

DEALING WITH MENTALIST PROBLEMS IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Their Sheer Existence

Many GMs have observed that having a mentalist PC in the campaign can lead to real problems. Either the mentalist tends to run roughshod over the opposition, since his attack powers require a special defense, or all the villains suddenly develop Mental Defense to compensate for his powers, even when there's no justification for it in their character conceptions. At the same time, while the GM wants to guarantee that the campaign is balanced and that

everyone has fun, if this means that the mentalist character can only be effective half the time, the mentalist character's player is going to feel as if he is being "picked on."

If you've been having these problems in your game, but still wish to allow for mentalist PCs, here are some potential solutions:

Make Mental Defense a Characteristic, as suggested in Chapter One. This way all of the opposition will automatically have at least a little defense against Mental Powers, just like they do against energy attacks and physical blows, and can buy extra MD without being subjected to minimum purchase requirements. Of course, the average character's MD is likely to be lower than his PD or ED, because mental attacks are not nearly as common as physical or energy attacks, so even after applying their defenses, many villains will still be affected by Mental Powers.

Allow fewer Active Points in Mental Powers. For example, if attacks in your campaign are limited to 60 Active Points, limit Mental Powers to, say, 40 Active Points. This may not seem entirely fair to someone who wants to play a mentalist character. But if, in the GM's estimation, Mental Powers are unbalancingly effective, then a mentalist should be, on the average, just as effective as a non-mentalist PC even though he has a "smaller" power. "Fewer points allowed" does not necessarily equate to "less effective." A similar option, with different potential effects on the game, is to increase the cost of Mental Powers (to, say, double what they are now).

Impose some sort of limiting factor on Mental Powers other than Active Points. For example, you could establish a "house rule" that all Mental Powers automatically cost 2x END, and cannot be bought with the "Reduced END" Advantage. This makes Mental Powers a trickier proposition for the user. Other possible limits include: require Activation (and possibly Side Effects) for all Mental Powers; limit the range of Mental Powers; forbid Mental Powers to be placed in some (or all) Power Frameworks; require all Mental Powers to be visible to Normal Sight.

The Mentalist Sniper Syndrome

The "mentalist sniper syndrome" is a condition caused by mentalist characters who rely too much on the fact that their powers work on a Line Of Sight basis. The mentalist takes a position 50' away from the main combat, hides behind cover, peeks out so that only the top of his head and eyes are exposed, and proceeds to attack his foes with virtual impunity.

It's only fair that mentalists be allowed, at least occasionally, to derive some tactical advantage from the LOS targeting rule (after all, it has a lot of drawbacks, too). But abusing it this way unbalances the campaign. Gamemasters who see the syndrome creeping into their game need to put a stop to it right away.



There are several ways to do this. First of all, the GM should provide the mentalist player with a firm definition of Line Of Sight; refer to Chapter One for suggestions. The GM can “shorten” LOS this way, or even require the mentalist to make occasional PER Rolls to prove that he does, in fact, have LOS (after all, people move around a lot in superhero combat, and the mentalist’s target may move behind someone or something just as the mentalist is about to attack!).

Second, the GM should simply inform the player from the very beginning that this sort of “rules abuse” will not be tolerated. If the player does not comply, the GM can penalize his Experience Point awards or take other steps to assure compliance.

Third, since the GM has control over the reality in which the campaign is set, he can arrange “coincidences” which interfere with the mentalist character’s “sniper” tendencies. Villains “just happen” to see where he’s hiding and come to attack him. One of the bad guys “just happens” to be carrying a No Range Penalty rifle with which he can shoot back at the mentalist. Fog, smoke, and uncountable other obstacles and phenomenon can interfere with LOS, so most battles “just happen” to take place in areas with little or no “long-range visual clearance” or involve a villain with Darkness powers.

Fourth, interfere with the mentalist character’s vision (or other long-range Targeting Senses). What he can’t sense, he can’t draw LOS on. This can be done with the aforementioned smoke and fog; other possibilities include: rain and other weather phenomenon; invisible foes; using Darkness and Flash attacks against the mentalist; holding battles in locations with lots of objects that interfere with targeting senses (for example, in a forest); clever use of cover by enemies; and so forth.

Fifth, remember that most supervillains are fairly intelligent. When their comrades start to suffer the effects of Mental Powers, often it will be easy for the villains to deduce what is going on, find the source of the attacks, and counterattack. Even if Mental Defense is not common in your world, Mental Awareness may be, and Mental Awareness makes it a lot harder for a mentalist to hide where his attacks are coming from.

Sixth, sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. For every time the mentalist PC subjects your game to the mentalist sniper syndrome, do the same to the PC team. Pretty soon the other players will figure out what is happening, and then they will bring peer pressure to bear on the offending mentalist player.

Mentalists And Mysteries

Let’s face it—mental powers, particularly Psychometry, Precognition, and Telepathy—can make it virtually impossible to run a mystery scenario. One quick “scan” of the area or the murder weapon, or a little bit of Telepathy directed at the chief suspects, and the mystery is finished almost before it’s begun.

Dealing with this phenomenon is not easy. In many cases, the best solution is simply to forbid the purchase and/or use of “scenario-ruining powers” outright. This may strike players of mentalist characters as unfair and illogical—and they’re right, it’s both—but in this case the benefits to everyone concerned outweigh the unfairness to one player.

Alternately, the GM can simply make it difficult or impossible for the mentalist to use his powers to spoil the mystery. “Psychic static” or other occurrences make the character’s Psychometry “fuzzy” and unreliable. The mentalist takes a nasty knock on the head in the first scene of the scenario and is unable to use his powers at full effectiveness. The chief suspects all have high EGO Characteristics and lots of Mental Defense. Any solution that helps to preserve the mystery without straining the logic of the campaign *too* much is worth trying.

MENTALISTS AND SOCIETY

Mentalists And The Law

The existence and use of Mental Powers raises a large number of legal questions. What follows are some suggestions about how to answer a few of these questions. Readers should refer to Chapter Two of *Dark Champions* for a detailed discussion of other aspects of “superhero law.”

Use Of Mental Powers

The use of Mental Powers on an unwilling subject, regardless of whether the power in question could actually injure the victim, is considered aggravated assault in most states. Aggravated assault is a felony and usually carries a penalty of two to five years in prison.

Using Telepathy to read an unwilling mind is considered a violation of the target’s right to privacy, and can be punished criminally or through a civil suit. It may or may not affect the admissibility in court of the information gained; see below.

Using Mind Control on an unwilling victim violates the victim’s Thirteenth Amendment right to be free from involuntary servitude and slavery. However, most states and the federal government provide a “law enforcement” exception for the use of Mind



Control to capture felons. This exception is limited to capturing the criminal; using Mind Control to “interrogate” a subject and “force” a confession out of him violates his Fifth Amendment right to “remain silent.”

Evidence Gained By Telepathy

Another mentalism issue in the “superlaw” area is whether evidence gained by using Telepathy on an unwilling suspect is admissible in court. The Supreme Court has not yet ruled on this issue.

The states themselves are split. A slim majority of states rules that telepathic evidence is usually inadmissible in court,

on one of several theories. First, it infringes the right to privacy to read someone’s mind, and to allow such evidence would encourage the violation of that right, and of any applicable invasion of privacy laws.

Second, some states hold that the use of evidence acquired through Telepathy infringes the defendant’s Fifth Amendment right not to incriminate himself. Some scholars argue that since the Fifth Amendment does not prevent the police from taking fingerprints, blood samples, and similar “evidence” from a suspect, it should not prevent the use of Telepathy either; critics of this position respond that thoughts are different from physical evidence, and thus are subject to different standards. For an in-depth discussion of this subject, see Fortescu, *Invisible Compulsion: Fourth and Fifth Amendment Problems of Telepathy, Mental Control, and Other Mental Superpowers*, 1986 Duke Law Journal 4303.

Third, many states consider the use of Telepathy on an unwilling person to be an illegal search and seizure under the Fourth Amendment and similar state laws. These states consider the use of Telepathy to obtain evidence to be illegal under all conditions, because Telepathy would be subject to too much abuse if the states attempted to create any exceptions.

Fourth, some states maintain that many forms of telepathic evidence constitutes inadmissible *hearsay*. Broadly put, a hearsay statement is a statement made outside the trial by someone other than the testifying witness which is offered to prove the truth of the matter asserted. An example of a hearsay statement would be if Carl testified, “Stan said that the light was green.” Since Stan is not testifying, and the statement is being used to prove the truth of the matter asserted (that the light was green), the statement is hearsay and may not be admitted into evidence. Although there are numerous exceptions to the “hearsay rule,” no jurisdiction which forbids the use of telepathic evidence as hearsay has allowed any of the exceptions to be used to avoid the “no Telepathy” rule.

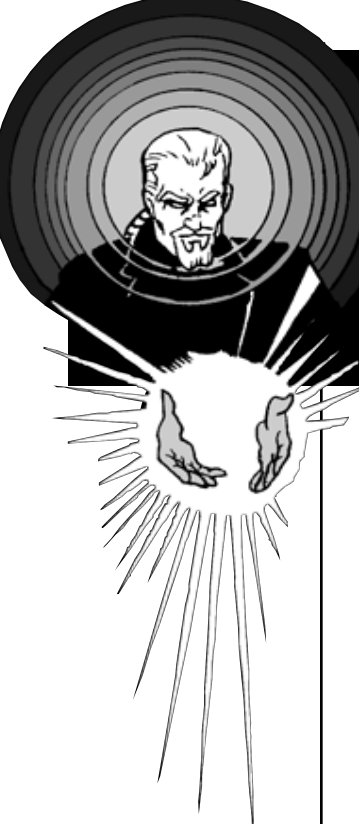
In those states where telepathic evidence can be admissible, there are very strict procedures to be followed to make it so. First, only telepathic evidence from sanctioned heroes can be admissible. The hero must get a warrant to read a suspect’s mind, similar to getting a warrant for a wiretap, and other rules regarding searches and seizures must be observed, including announcing the search, unless “destruction” of the evidence (because of strong mental defenses) is feared. If possible, the “search” will be conducted in controlled conditions (such as at the police station), and the telepath will be hooked up to a *mentaphone*, a machine which transcribes the thoughts the telepath is reading. The mentaphone prevents the telepath from abusing the limited right of “mental entry” that the warrant gives him. When the telepath gets to court, he will be subject to tests, run by the criminal defense attorney, to prove that he is a genuine telepath. Often, these tests involve reading the mind of the most neutral person in the courtroom—the judge. The testing is done out of the presence of the jury to avoid possible prejudice to the defendant.

Anti-Mentalism Prejudice

The GM should also consider how the ordinary citizens in his campaign feel about mental powers. In most cases they will be feared and despised—after all, how would *you* feel if you knew that there were people out there who could read your innermost thoughts, and even manipulate them? Known (or suspected) mentalists will often suffer from anti-mentalist prejudice and will generally be ostracized. This may have important implications for the popularity of mentalist superheroes or police units, such as the fact that ordinary citizens are not willing to assist them in emergencies.



PSIONICS CAMPAIGNS



A Psionics Campaign is a gaming campaign focusing primarily on characters who possess various kinds of mental powers. This section of *The Ultimate Mentalist* provides guidelines for Psionics Campaigns and describes several “sample” campaigns.

STANDARDS FOR PSIONICS CAMPAIGNS

Most Psionics Campaigns feature characters who are normal, if highly-trained, humans, with one exception: they also happen to possess mental powers. Therefore, it is suggested that characters be created in a sort of two-step process. First, have the players design a “heroic normal” character built on up to 150 points. Normal Characteristic Maxima will usually be automatically imposed on the characters, but possibly EGO and INT would not be subject to that rule.

After the players have completed the first step of character design, they are given another set of points with which to buy their mental powers. The amount of points granted for the purchase of mental powers will depend on what type of campaign the GM wants. If mental powers are supposed to be fairly low-powered or heavily Limited, then only a few points (say, 15-75) are necessary. If mental powers are the primary focus of the campaign, they need to be fairly powerful and varied, so 100-200 points, or more, may be needed. If a player in a “strong mentalists” campaign wants to build a character who is a “weak” mentalist but who has extra Skills or Talents, he should be allowed to use some of his “mental powers points” for additional Skills, Characteristics, and so forth.

The Active Point limit on mental powers in a Psionics Campaign is up to the GM; again, this will depend on how powerful the GM wants the mental powers to be. GMs should refer to some of the guidelines given earlier in this chapter for suggestions. However, remember that there are a lot of mental powers (such as Mind Transference and Mental Paralysis) which are very expensive; the GM might want to waive the Active Point limit for those powers, or otherwise ensure that some characters can purchase them if they want to.

Depending upon how much control the GM wishes to exercise over the PCs, Power Frameworks may or may not be allowed, or certain types of Frameworks (such as Variable Power Pools) might be forbidden.

However, since there are a lot of different mental abilities, more than even a group of characters can possibly afford, allowing VPPs and other Frameworks does provide characters with the means to use rare and unusual powers.

In Psionics Campaigns, Mental Defense should be considered a Characteristic. Other options suggested in Chapter One for converting various Powers to Mental Powers should be used in Psionics Campaigns.

TYPES OF PSIONICS CAMPAIGNS

The following are some suggestions for possible Psionics Campaigns:

ESPionage

“All right, Henry. Time to do your thing,” said the man in the dark gray suit. The Army and Air Force officers sitting next to him didn’t say a thing.

Henry Williams seated himself at an all-too-familiar screen. It showed a video map of the world, large enough so that the observers could see all the nations of the Earth laid out clearly before them. Allies were marked in light blue, Soviet-bloc countries in red, and neutral nations in white. Everyone present shared at least one thought: too many of the countries were red.

Henry picked up the helmet that was connected to the console before him by about a dozen cables and put it on his head. He flexed his hands nervously and placed them on the console. Then he closed his eyes and began to relax, slowly but surely slipping into a trance. A few minutes later, when he was thoroughly under, the screen suddenly flared and brightened, and then a curious golden wave front passed over the map. In its wake it left a series of tiny golden satellite icons and ship icons, almost like a comet trailing computer graphics instead of celestial matter.

The wave front passed over the screen again, and again, about once a minute, confirming the positions of the icons. Slowly, ever so slowly, the icons moved. The officers watched intently, thoroughly absorbed in what they were seeing. At last, one of the satellite icons crossed a glowing blue line that bisected the screen slightly to the left of center. A general picked up a phone and spoke into it softly. “X-7 has passed beyond range of our objective. The mission is a go. Repeat, the mission is a

go.”

The general replaced the phone on its cradle and returned to watching the screen. About fifteen minutes later, the phone beeped. The general picked it up at once. “Yes?” he asked, quietly but insistently. Then his face broke into a broad smile and he hung up. “Gentlemen, the mission is an unqualified success. The Undersecretary has been rescued with no losses to our side, and the terrorist cell that kidnapped him has been completely eliminated.”

As the men broke into applause and self-congratulatory statements, Henry slumped at the console, exhausted, sweat rolling off his forehead and beading on his upper lip. The little golden icons quickly faded from the screen, and he took the helmet off and laid his head down on the console.

“Good work, son,” the man in the suit said, placing a hand on Henry’s shoulder. “Damn good work.”

ESPionage campaigns involve the use of mental powers to assist in intelligence-gathering missions—in other words, psionic spying. The powers involved are usually nothing like the flashy, nigh-unstoppable mental abilities common to comic books; instead, they tend to be much lower-key and more difficult to use—but they are quite powerful in their own right.

ESPionage characters are usually built as heroic normals, i.e., on 150 Character Points, with Normal Characteristic Maxima automatically imposed. The GM then grants the character a separate pool of

points, usually 50-150 points, to be used solely for his mental powers. In order to preserve the “feel” of the genre, there are normally strict limits on the amount of Active Points that can be placed in any one power (say, 30 Active Points), and Power Frameworks are not allowed; however, the GM can waive these restrictions if a player comes up with a really interesting power. Additionally, most ESPionage powers are heavily Limited; common Limitations include Activation, Concentrate, Extra Time, Increased END, Requires A Skill Roll, and Side Effect.

Most ESPionage abilities are not offensive powers; instead, they tend to be psychic powers, defensive abilities, and the like. Examples include: a clairvoyance-like power which tracks enemy satellites and ships; Danger Sense; the ability to “cloud men’s minds” so as to become invisible or have a different appearance; Mind Scan (very useful for tracking enemy agents); various limited forms of Telepathy (for interrogating enemy spies); low-level psychokinetic powers (telekinetic lockpicking, for example); and so forth.

ESPionage campaigns are generally set during the Cold War period, since the Soviet Union and her agents make a convenient opponent for PC ESPionage agents. The Soviet Union is large enough and powerful enough to recruit a large pool of enemy espers, giving the PCs a steady stream of challenging villains. However, a modern-day campaign, with many smaller foes instead of one monolithic enemy, is also possible.

PsiCops

Carter paused in the shadows near the lift. This was close enough. He didn't want to get too close to the Centaurian ambassador's cabin anyway; that would put him in range of the security scanners. He began to concentrate, projecting his mental energies outward in a wave of destructive force. Soon, the Ambassador's mind would be a cinder, and Centaurian pride would force them to retaliate against the Empire! His employers would be pleased.

"Freeze! Cease all psionic activity in the name of the law!" came a shout from off to his left. Carter turned—and saw the hated uniforms of the Psi-Patrol! Desperately, he lashed out with his mental powers. His vicious assault caught one of the officers by surprise, stunning her. But as Carter turned to flee for his life, the other psicop retaliated. His first mental attack, a paralysis effect, was deflected by Carter's mental defenses, but his second attack—a pure blast of mental force—penetrated the shields and dropped Carter to his knees. A third blast knocked him out cold.

The psicop ran up to Carter, using his mental powers to scan the prone form warily. Detecting neither physical nor mental activity, he placed handcuffs on Carter's hands. Then he unfolded a Restraining Mesh, a "cap" of fine metal mesh studded with pale purple crystals, and fitted it to Carter's head.

He waited a couple of minutes, until Carter awoke. "Jason Carter," he said officiously, "you are under arrest for the attempted mental murder of a member of the Centaurian Delegation. You have the right to mental integrity until such time as you are found guilty; if you forfeit this right by attempting to use your mental powers on a member of the Psionic Patrol, your mental powers or memories may be altered. You have the right to have an attorney present during all telepathic scans of your mind. If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be provided for you by the Terran Empire. Do you understand these rights as I have explained them to you?"

"Yes," Carter said sullenly as they led him toward the lift—and the detention cells.

PsiCops campaigns center around the efforts of one or more organizations—in the above example, the Psionic Patrol—to prevent crimes involving mental powers and otherwise police mentalists. In other words, the player characters are psionic police officers.

Psicops characters are usually built on 250 Character Points, but Normal Characteristic Maxima are imposed on them; other than their mental powers, psicops are simply normal, if well-trained, humans (depending on the campaign setting, they may also be aliens, robots, or what have you). Characters may



have ordinary equipment and weapons for free; unique items must be paid for with Character Points. It is up to the GM to determine what qualifies as “ordinary;” in the above example, handcuffs might be considered ordinary, whereas a Restraining Mesh might be special enough that characters must pay for it.

Psicops campaigns are frequently set in a science fiction environment, or even combined with an ordinary *Star Hero* campaign (for example, one PC out of a group of *Star Hero* PCs might be a psicop). This is because mental powers are more common and/or more accepted in a science fiction setting, and thus are more likely to be used to commit crimes and to be employed by the government in an official capacity. However, this is not the only option for psicops campaigns. One could be set in the modern day, for example—the PCs are psychics who are secretly employed by the Department of Justice’s Psionic Enforcement Agency to police renegade psychics (who refer to the PCs as “PEAbraints”). Psicops campaigns also work well in a “cyberpunk” setting.

As an alternative to the ordinary psicops campaign, perhaps the PCs are not the cops, but the “criminals.” The government in this campaign is ruthless and oppressive, and employs the Psionic Patrol as a sort of “secret police” that not only tries to eliminate other psionics, but helps the government keep the populace docile. The PCs are rebels who are using their psionic powers in an attempt to overthrow the government and destroy the Psi-Patrol.

Psychic Wars

The cityscape around SSL-112765 was desolate and harsh; all the color seemed to have been leached out of it, so that it was the same leaden gray as the overcast sky. The effects of the war were evident for all to see: streets so filled with craters that they looked like moonscapes; buildings blasted by artillery and burned out by napalm; dead bodies lying in alleyways.

SSL-112765, veteran of a thousand psychic wars, didn’t intend to become one of those bodies. He moved forward cautiously, his rifle held loosely in front of him, all physical and mental senses on alert. After about a hundred careful steps along the wall of a ruined building, he paused. What was that mental flicker over there? He stared at it, concentrating his mental senses on that area, trying to...

“Damn!!” he shouted as he ran and dove for cover into the nearest alley, narrowly avoiding the gunfire aimed at him. That “flicker” was another psiwarrior attempting to hide himself with an illusion. Cursing himself for his stupidity, SSL-112765 returned fire with

his blaster rifle and prayed that his enemy didn’t have any Dampener Grenades.

The year is 2110. Five years ago the Russian Confederation, desperate for raw material and other resources, launched a surprise attack on the European Union using a new type of soldier—the psiwarrior. Cloned from the cells of proven psychics, psiwarriors were soldiers trained in both physical and mental combat. Ordinary soldiers could not stand against them. Relying primarily on their mental powers, the psiwarrior battalions rolled over Europe, taking control of it with little damage to the physical assets and resources which the Confederation coveted.

It only took eighteen months for the European Resistance and its ally, the United States of America, to develop their own psiwarriors and retaliate. After some initial gains for the allies, the war quickly settled into one of attrition, in which the small but immensely powerful armies of the two sides stalked and attacked one another with both mental and physical weapons. Today, most of Europe is a blasted wasteland that will take decades to recover from the effects of the war—and still the enemies fight on.

A Psychic War campaign takes place in just the sort of setting described above—a wartime environment in which the war is fought in both physical and psychic arenas. The PCs are psiwarriors, soldiers who carry ordinary weapons but also use some cybernetic implants and wield potent mental abilities. The mental powers of each soldier may vary, but they are always powerful—after all, their government grew them that way.

Psiwarrior characters should usually be built on at least 300 points (200 base, plus 100 in Disadvantages)—roughly 150 points for physical abilities and Skills and 150 points for mental abilities. Ordinary equipment (again, as defined by the GM) is free, but some powerful weapons (such as the aforementioned Dampener Grenades) may cost Character Points.



TYPICAL PSIWARRIOR

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	200 kg; 3d6 [1]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
15	CON	10	12-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll 12-
18	EGO	16	13-	ECV: 6
13	PRE	3	12-	PRE Attack 3d6
8	COM	-1	11-	
8	PD	5		
8	ED	5		
3	SPD	2		Phases: 4,8,12
8	REC	4		
40	END	5		
35	STUN	7		

Total Characteristics Cost: 94

Movement: Running: 7"/14"
Swimming: 2"/4"



Powers & Skills

Combat Training:

Martial Arts—Commando Training (21)

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage
Boxing Cross	+0	+2	5d6
Choke	-2	0	Grab one limb; 2d6 NND(2)
Escape	+0	+0	STR 30 vs. Grabs
Hold	-1	-1	Grab three limbs, 25 STR
Kung Fu Block	+2	+2	Block, abort

PsiWarrior Powers:

Multipower 40 point pool (40)

u - Mind Attack: Ego Attack 4d6 (40/4) [4]

u - Illusions: Mental Illusions 8d6 (40/4) [4]

u - Compulsion: Mind Control 8d6 (40/4) [4]

u - Mind Reading: Telepathy 8d6 (40/4) [4]

Elemental Control (20)

Mind Scan 8d6 (20) [4]

Telekinesis STR 30 (25) [4]

Barrier: Force Wall 6 PD, 6 ED, 4 MD over 8

Hexsides (20) [4]

Mental Defense: 7 pts. (3)

PsiWarrior Equipment:

Body Armor: Armor +6 PD/+6 ED, OIF, Act. 14- (9)

PsiWarrior Rifle:

Multipower 60 point pool, OAF,

2 clips of 64 charges (52) [2x64]

u - Normal Beam: EB 8d6, Autofire (60/3)

u - High Intensity Beam: RKA 2d6, Autofire (45/2)

Rifle Attachments: Multipower 26 point pool, OAF (13)

u - Bayonet: HKA 1d6 (2d6 w/ STR), Blade Limitations (15/1) [1+]

u - Rifle Butt: HKA +4d6 (7d6 w/ STR) (12/1) [1+]

m - Scope, Normal Functions: +1 OCV, +2 Levels vs. Range Mods (11/1)

m - Scope, Anti-Mentalist Functions: +3 OCV, Only works against Mentalists (-1/2) (15/1)

Helmet: High Range Radio Hearing, OIF (7)

(Note: refer to the Source book for more detailed descriptions of PsiWarrior equipment)

Cybersight Implant, CyberWare (-1/4):

IR Vision (4)

+4 Levels vs. Range Mod for Sight PER Rolls (5)

Running: +1" (7" total) (2) [1/5"]

Superleap: +3" (6" forward, 3" up total) (3) [1/5"]

PsiWarrior Training:

PS: PsiWarrior 11- (2)

Stealth 13- (3)

WF: Small Arms, Knife (3)

Other Skills of GM's choice (3)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 197

Total Character Cost: 291



Disadvantages: 200+

Distinctive Features:

PsiWarrior (not concealable; always noticed)
(20)

Hunted by:

Enemy PsiWarriors, as powerful, 11- (15)

Psychological Limitation:

Utterly Loyal To His Country

(Very Common, Total) (25)

Fanatical Hatred Of The Enemy

(Very Common, Total) (25)

Watched by:

His government, more powerful, NCI, 11-

Total Disadvantage Points: 291

Background/History: This character sheet represents a typical PsiWarrior. PsiWarriors are cloned from the cells of known psychics; the culturing process includes the use of various steroids, chemicals, and other stimulants which enhance the clone's physical and mental attributes. When fully grown, the PsiWarrior is trained in the arts of combat, both physical and mental, and is psychologically implanted with an unshakable patriotism and a

deep, abiding hatred of the enemy.

Powers/Tactics: PsiWarriors are equipped with special body armor and weapons designed for them. They are taught Commando Training. They possess a wide variety of mental powers, and over time (i.e., as they accumulate Experience Points) may develop additional powers. The most highly-trained and/or experienced PsiWarriors usually are also well-versed in Commando Psionics.

PsiWarriors generally operate solo, or in small groups; it is rare to see more than six working together on a mission. Thus, they are trained primarily to rely on their own initiative and skills (their training in how to fight as a unit is minimal). When fighting in a group, they will use their Telepathy (or a Mind Link, if available) to communicate with each other.

Appearance: PsiWarriors are obviously not "true" humans. Their skin is a distinctive chalky-white color, and built into the left side of their heads is a cybernetic unit which enhances their eyesight (many PsiWarriors will have other cybernetic implants as well). They are almost always six feet tall, muscular, and totally bald (they have no hair on their bodies at all); tattooed in the center of their foreheads is a bar code and identification number. They wear the body armor and military uniform of their creator nation, and carry weapons issued by that country (usually a rifle, knife, and selection of other weapons).



CHAPTER
THREE:



MENTAL
COMBAT



It was the first day of the month of Newgreen when Azelard the Smiling Magician set forth on his journey to the City of the Kings. Taking with him his Traveler's Staff, his Unsharpenable Knife, his Horn of Fine Repast, and a headful of spells, he departed his tower in the high hills of Vorgeth and took the southward path.

By the late afternoon of the first day he had left the hills behind and come to a region of grassy fields and meadows, mixed with small wooded areas and lakes. The footpath he took wove in and out between the woods, picking the easiest path for a traveler on foot.

A few minutes more, and the path brought him to a bridge over a broad stream. As chance would have it, another traveler approached from the south. Wearing a hooded robe of dirty purple, he leaned on a tall staff, obviously lame in one leg. A long, gray beard hung out beyond the edge of the hood. He reached the bridge at the same time Azelard did.

Azelard looked at the little man and sneered. "One side, old man!" he said. "I have business in the City, and I must cross this bridge to get there."

"I, too, have business in the City," the old man replied calmly. "I have come a long way to get here. I will cross the bridge first, as is my right as your elder by the ancient laws of hospitality."

"Bah! I honor no such laws, old man. I am Azelard the wizard, and I take what I want! Stand aside!"

The old man didn't move. "I believe I have heard of you," he said inquisitively. "You are the one they call the Smiling Magician, are you not?"

"If you know my name, then you know of my power! For the last time, stand aside, or I will lay you low with my spells!"

"If fight we must, so be it, but not with spells, Azelard. I invoke the Law of Hermes and challenge you to a Wizard's Duel. Not even you would lightly ignore that Law, eh, Smiling Magician?"

"You? Challenge me to a Duel?" Azelard laughed at the older's presumption, displaying the wide smile and mirthful countenance which had earned him his sobriquet. "Very well, then. It is all one to me how you die. That meadow there, it is acceptable to you?"

"Very much so," the old man replied, walking that way.

Azelard followed him to the meadow. He took a position thirteen feet from the old man and stuck his staff in the ground. The old man did likewise. Walking widdershins, they drew a circle in the soft soil. When it was completed, they drew a star inside it. Then Azelard, the Challenged, took his seat at the head of the pentagram; the old man, as Challenger, sat at its base.

Azelard brought his hands up so that his fingertips touched in front of his face. The old man copied his gesture. Suddenly the world outside the pentagram grew hazy and indistinct. In another moment, it faded from view entirely as Azelard's eyes rolled back in his head and his Magesight took over.

Azelard blinked, amazed by what he saw. The old man's ka loomed strong and proud behind him—not the manifestation of power of a man in his dotage, but rather that of a powerful wizard. What of it? Azelard thought. I am still more powerful than this graybeard!

As if to reassure him, his own ka rose up out of him, bright and powerful, taking on its usual owl-headed aspect to reflect Azelard's totem.

Wordlessly, Azelard struck at the old man, determined to end the fight quickly and be on his way. At first he seemed to feel the old man falter and wither underneath the attack, and his ka screeched victory. But then the old man straightened himself, and countered Azelard's attack.

Back and forth the battle swayed. The blows from Azelard's mind, both the subtle and the forceful, were blocked time and again, and were returned. But the old man's blows were not as strong as Azelard's, and the Smiling Magician knew that victory was only a matter of time.

But then he felt his right hand twitch. No! Azelard shouted wordlessly, but already the old man had him. He stopped his attack to concentrate on defending himself. Inch by inch, the old man forced him to move his right hand towards his waist—and his Knife! Sweat broke out on Azelard's brow as he struggled to resist the old man's compulsion—but to no avail. Against all his strength, his will, he felt his hand grasp the cold hilt of the enchanted blade and draw it. Its perfectly sharp blade glittered in the red afternoon sunlight. And now his hand reversed itself and began to move upward, inch by inch.

He was struggling frantically now, trying to stop his hand, trying to make the old man break off his attack. It didn't work; what little energy he could devote to attacking the old man wasn't enough to break through his shields. The last thing he felt was the edge of the blade against his throat. The last thing he saw was his bright red blood, spurting out onto the green grass....

A few moments later, the old man moved his hands away from the front of his face. Grasping his staff, he got to his feet shakily. Then he looked down at the body of his foe. "You smile the broader now, Azelard," he said mockingly, and then continued on his way.

This chapter of *The Ultimate Mentalist* covers the topic of mental combat: what it involves, how it occurs, and what maneuvers (if any) the mentalist can use. As always, the rules on Mental Combat are optional; the GM should feel free to ignore or change them if it would suit his campaign to do so.

It is important for GMs and players to keep in mind the distinction between *Mental Combat* and *Mind-To-Mind Combat* (MTM Combat) made in this chapter. Mental Combat is a combat between a mentalist and any other character (whether or not a mentalist) involving the use of a mental power of some sort. MTM Combat is a special "subtype" of Mental Combat which can *only* be engaged in by two or more mentalists. MTM Combat can involve the use of normal mental powers, or special Mental Combat Maneuvers that only mentalists can use. Non-mentalists cannot engage other characters (mentalists or otherwise) in MTM Combat, nor can they be attacked with MTM Combat or its special Mental Combat Maneuvers. (Characters who are not mentalists who want to participate in MTM Combat can buy the Talent, "Latent Mentalist.")



BASIC RULES OF MENTAL COMBAT

Here, with minor corrections, is the text of the basic rules on Mental Combat from the *HERO System Rulebook*, page 147:

Almost all attacks use the ordinary Attack Rolls and CV that have already been described. However, the Mental Powers use EGO Combat Value instead of the normal Combat Value. The Powers that use EGO Combat Value (or ECV) are Ego Attack, Mental Illusions, Mind Control, Mind Link, Mind Scan, and Telepathy. EGO Combat Value is also used for powers bought with the Power Advantage *Based On ECV*. EGO Combat Value is determined using the following formula:

$$\text{EGO Combat Value} = \text{EGO}/3$$

Substituting ECV for CV, Mental Combat works just the same as normal combat. The Attack Roll is $11 + \text{Offensive ECV} - \text{Defensive ECV}$ on 3d6. Apply any modifiers for Skill Levels, just as normal. However, Mental Combat works on a Line Of Sight basis; if the attacker can sense the target with any Targeting Sense, he can affect him with no Range Modifier. None of the Combat Modifiers apply, either. A character using a Mental Power uses EGO instead of DEX to determine when the character moves in the Phase.

Implications, Clarifications, And Options

Combat Modifiers

The basic Mental Combat rule states that Combat Modifiers do not apply to Mental Powers. However, in some cases and campaigns this blanket statement will not hold true; refer to "Mental Combat Modifiers," below, for discussion of this subject.

Missing An ECV Attack Roll

It is unusual for a mentalist character in the comics, movies, or other source material to actually "miss" his target. Rather than missing his target, his failure to succeed in his attack on the target is explained as a special effect. Perhaps the mentalist was not able to concentrate enough to bring his powers to bear properly. Maybe there is "psychic static" interfering with his ability to locate the target. Or, most common of all, the mentalist hit the target, but somehow failed to "get a grip" on him, and therefore could do no damage or have no effect.

GMs should keep this sort of special effect in mind when describing mental combat. Visualization and conceptualization are important here. It adds a lot more flavor to such a combat to say, "Your mental powers seem to be weakening—you can't manage to get a firm grip on your opponent's mind," rather than, "You miss. Who goes next?"

Targeting Mental Powers

As specified by the rule, Mental Powers are targeted by Line of Sight (LOS), which can be established with any Targeting Sense (including Mind Scan). What constitutes "Line Of Sight" is discussed in the chapter on "Character Creation" under "Mental Powers: Their General Nature."

When The Mentalist Moves

A character using a Mental Power acts on his EGO, not his DEX, during a Phase. If he wants to take any physical actions (such as making a Half Move), first, he must wait until his DEX comes up, move, and then use his Mental Power.

MENTAL COMBAT MODIFIERS

This section discusses whether certain Combat Modifiers apply to Mental Powers, and if so, how. If a Modifier is not mentioned, it cannot be applied to Mental Powers or Mental Combat. Mental Combat Modifiers can be applied in both Mental Combat (between a mentalist and a non-mentalist), or in Mind-To-Mind (MTM) Combat (Mental Combat between two mentalists, see below.)

Mental Combat Modifiers

Modifier	Notes
Area Of Effect	Areas are ECV 3
Autofire	Same as for normal attacks
Braced	Only with Powers with Range Modifiers
Coordinated Attacks	Only with Powers that directly cause damage
Multiple Attackers	-1 DECV per attacker, maximum 1/2 DECV Bonus
Sleeping/Unconscious	0 ECV
Spreading	Only with Ego Attacks (GM's option)
Surprised	1/2 DECV, 2x STUN or +10 effect
Target Size	May make achieving LOS harder



Area Of Effect Attacks

Area Of Effect Mental Powers target ECV 3. Refer to the discussion of the “Area Of Effect” Advantage in the “Character Creation” section for more details. The same guideline applies to the “Explosion” Advantage when bought for a mental attack.

Autofire

The “Autofire” may be applied to Mental Powers, but this costs an extra +1 Advantage (refer to “Character Creation,” above). Autofire Mental Powers use the same rules as for normal Autofire attacks. At the GM’s option, characters may buy the “Autofire Skills” described in *An Eye For An Eye*, page 5, for use with Mental Powers. If bought for use with Mental Powers, these Skills cannot be used with physical powers, and vice-versa.

Braced

Since Mental Powers do not have Range Modifiers, a character cannot Brace and achieve any bonus when using them. If a character has bought a Mental Power that does have a Range Modifier, he may, at the GM’s option, use this Combat Modifier.

Concealment

Concealment has no effect on Mental Combat—if the mentalist has LOS on any part of the target, he can attack him without suffering any penalties for the amount of cover the target is hiding behind.

Coordinated Attacks

Ego Attacks and other Mental Powers that directly cause damage can be Coordinated. Each attacker must use the same Mental Power (for example, they can Coordinate if they both use Ego Attacks, if one character uses an Ego Attack and the other a BOECV STUN Drain, they cannot Coordinate). The attackers must act on the same EGO; otherwise, rules for Coordinating are applied normally.

To “Coordinate” continuing-effect Mental Powers, players should use the rule for “complementary Mental Powers” found in Chapter One.

Multiple Attackers Bonus

This Modifier can be used with any mental attacks that can be Coordinated (see above). The defender suffers a -1 DECV for every attacker, down to a minimum of 1/2 DECV.

Sleeping/Unconscious Minds

Persons who are sleeping or unconscious have an ECV of 0.

Spreading

As discussed in the “Character Creation” section under “Ego Attack,” at the GM’s option mentalists may be allowed to Spread their Ego Attacks, at the rate of one additional mind per d6 of damage subtracted. Other Mental Powers cannot be Spread.

Surprised

Surprised can be used with Mental Powers. A Surprised target is at 1/2 DECV and takes 2x STUN or +10 Effect from the Power, as appropriate. However, the GM should only use these modifiers in situations when the mental attack is a *real* surprise. In ordinary circumstances, Mind Scan (an attack which is usually made from a long distance away) and other Mental Powers (which are invisible) will come as a “surprise,” so constantly applying Surprised bonuses would give mentalist characters an unfair advantage. The bonus should only be granted if the mentalist character does something especially surprising or unusual with his powers.

Target Size

Target Size has no effect on a character’s DECV, although a very small character could be hard to see, and hence hard to achieve LOS on.



MIND-TO-MIND COMBAT

Mind-To-Mind (MTM) Combat is Mental Combat between two mentalists, involving mental powers and Mental Combat Maneuvers. All MTM Combat, regardless of the mechanics of the particular Maneuvers being used, is based on EGO Combat Value.

MTM Combat costs END. A mentalist may Push his EGO for purposes of Mental Combat, in order to increase his ECV or his EGO Roll. When appropriate, a mentalist may also use his “Casual EGO,” or half his EGO, as a zero-Phase action to break out of certain mental attacks or through some kinds of mental barriers.

MTM Combat is initiated whenever one mentalist attacks another with a mental power or Mental Combat Maneuver. As illustrated by the story which opens this chapter, it may be accompanied by some sort of ritual or protocol if the GM or players so desire, but this is not required.

What Is A Mentalist?

Some Mental Combat Maneuvers can only be used by mentalists against mentalists, but who qualifies as a mentalist? No precise definition is possible—in fact, the definition may vary from campaign to campaign—but generally, any character with at least one Mental Power (usually of an offensive nature) may be considered a mentalist. (Of course, if the Mental Power is limited in some significant way, such as a vigilante character who can use Hypnosis built as a form of Mind Control, the character might not be considered a mentalist.) Just having Mental Defense does not qualify a character as a mentalist; neither, in most cases, will having a Mind Link or Mental Awareness. A character can purchase “mentalist-ness” by buying the Talent “Latent Mentalist”; this makes him a “mentalist” for purposes of using certain Mental Combat Maneuvers.



Mind-To-Mind Combat And Physical Combat

This section discusses Mental Combat Maneuvers, i.e., maneuvers which involve Mental Powers.

MENTAL COMBAT MANEUVERS

Mental Combat Maneuvers

Maneuver	Phase	OECV	Notes
Coercion	1/2	—	Incremental Mind Control
Defensive Concentration	1*	—	+3 Mental Defense or +1 DECV
Defensive Effort	1/2*	—	Lose sensory awareness; +3 Mental Defense or +1 DECV
Defensive Push	0	—	+1 Mental Defense/+1 END; Must make EGO Roll (additional +1/1 pt. EGO Roll is made by)
Defensive Stand	1/2*	—	DCV 0; +3 Mental Defense or +1 DECV
Fast Attack	1	-2	Lets character get back behind cover
Mind Bar	1/2		OECV vs. OECV, +1 OECV/10 active points, blocks same Power; pay full END
Mind Lock	1/2	-1/power	OECV vs. DECV, Power vs. Power roll, Locks same Powers; -1 OECV per Power locked; pay full END
Mind Probe	1/2		Incremental Telepathy
Mind Search	1/2		Incremental Mind Scan
Mind Shield	1/2		+2 Mental Defense for each -1 CV/Skill Rolls, up to +6 Mental Defense
Mind Strike	1/2	+0	Using an offensive Mental power
Offensive Concentration	1**		+5 active points or +1 OECV
Offensive Effort	1/2**		Lose sensory awareness; +5 active points or +1 OECV
Offensive Push	0	—	+1 Active Point/+1 END; Must make EGO Roll (additional +1/1 pt. EGO Roll is made by)
Offensive Stand	1/2**		DCV 0; +5 active points or +1 OECV
Prepared	1/2	-1	ready to use power on target
Ready	1	+1	

* Can be used with other Defensive maneuvers at the same time

** Can be used with other Offensive maneuvers at the same time, along with any attack maneuver

MTM Combat takes the same amount of time as physical combat, i.e., a character can attack once per Phase. The GM may rule that a character who wants to move a few hexes before attacking must wait until his DEX comes up in the order of combat for that Phase, make his physical Half Move, and then use his Mental Power or Mental Combat Maneuver. (Of course, this analysis assumes that the mentalist's EGO exceeds his DEX; while this is ordinarily true, it is not always the case.)



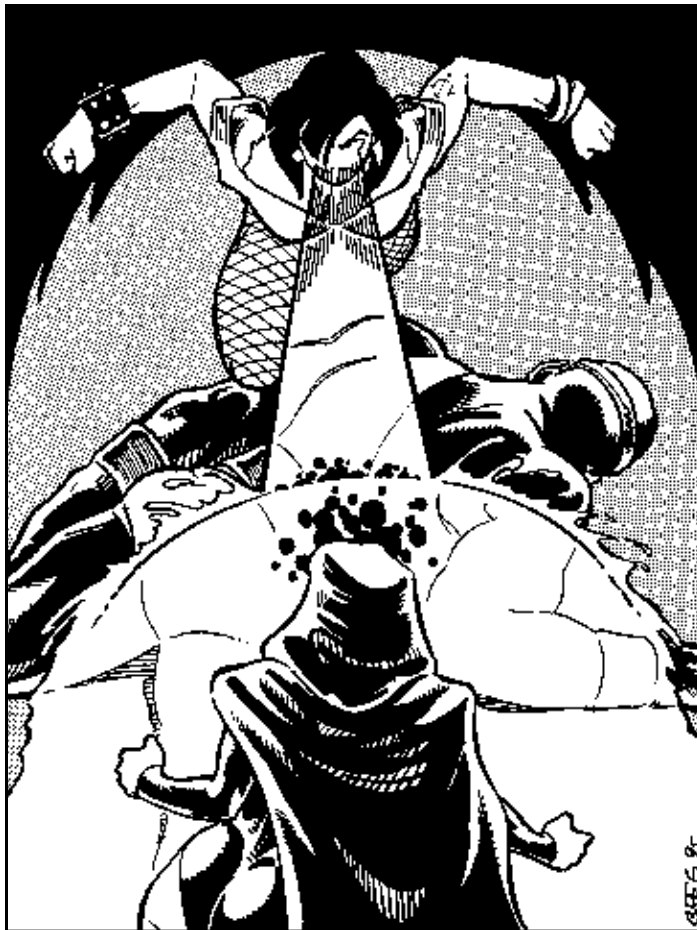
Explanation Of Mental

A mentalist can switch between MTM Combat and physical combat at will, without penalty. A character may take mental or physical actions in any of his Phases, unless he has imposed limitations on himself that dictate otherwise.

Optionally, the GM may prefer to run MTM Combat as an entirely separate phenomenon from physical combat—and a much faster one. It can be assumed that MTM Combat, which works at the speed of thought, would take place in a much shorter time span than physical combat. Using this rule, any MTM Combat lasts only 1 Phase (or, at the GM's discretion, 1-3 Phases). The GM should use the Speed Chart to determine when the mentalists attack, to simulate the give and take of the MTM Combat, but when the fight is over and one mentalist is left standing, only one second of "real," physical time has passed.

Example: Mindstorm and Brainchylde, both backed by groups of their allies, are battling one another. Each is SPD 5. In Phase 3, they decide to engage in MTM Combat. The GM puts the physical combat on hold so that he can resolve the mental battle first. On Phases 3, 5, 8, 10, and 12, each mentalist attacks; finally, in Phase 12, Mindstorm Knocks Out Brainchylde. The GM now switches back to the physical battle. For the space of a second—Phase 3—the mentalists' comrades have watched them glare at each other, and suddenly, Brainchylde passed out and fell. No further physical time has passed; the GM was simply using the SPD Chart as a tool to structure the MTM Combat, even though no time was actually passing. The GM now resolves the physical actions remaining in Phase 3 (Mindstorm and Brainchylde have used up their Phase 3 in MTM Combat, and therefore cannot take any further actions), and proceeds on with the rest of the combat.

To the mentalists themselves, Mental Combat may have the same sort of appearance, or may be radically different. For example, when a mentalist enters Mental Combat, he may experience a vision of a vast "mental arena," with the combatants depicted as Roman gladiators or something similar. The size, shape, and weapons of the combatants may indicate their relative mental strength (a weak mentalist appears scrawny, a strong one is big and muscular). The exact nature of these "visions" may be established by the GM, by a consensus of all mentalists engaging in the combat, or by the strongest mentalist (however "strongest" is defined).



Visualizing Mental Combat

The exact appearance of Mental Combat is up to the GM. To outside observers, the mentalists may simply be concentrating, or staring at one another; there may or may not be visible effects (such as an energy pattern or ghostly warriors) between them. Perhaps the visual effects are only detectable by persons with Mental Awareness.



Combat Maneuvers

The Mental Combat Maneuvers are all, of course, optional. As always, the GM is free to change or delete any Maneuver that he would rather not use in his campaign. These Maneuvers alter the “flavor” of Mental Powers, so the GM’s choices of which Maneuvers to use are very important. Some discussion of the effect on campaign flavor is provided in the explanation of each Maneuver.

The GM may decide to charge points for any or all of these Maneuvers. The recommended cost is 3 points per Maneuver, if the GM decides that there should be a cost. The GM may also decide to make a Maneuver the default way of using a particular Mental Power; for instance, that Coercion is the standard way that Mind Control is used. This is perfectly reasonable; it just means that the “flavor” of Mind Control is different in such a campaign.

Coercion

This Maneuver is used by mentalists with Mind Control to try to impose their will on the target, and gain some benefit even if the desired Effect Roll isn’t achieved. Using Coercion also gives the target some chance to affect the Mind Control even if they can’t Break Out. This provides for a much more interesting combat than the standard Mind Control, where you either succeed or fail.



The mentalist decides on the command and follows the normal procedure for making a Mind Control attack (see the Mind Control write-up in the Powers section for details). The ECV Roll is made as normal, and the Mind Control effect dice are rolled and totaled as for a standard Mind Control attack. But here’s where the difference occurs: With Coercion, there is some effect even if the Mind Control Effect Roll fails to reach the total required by the GM’s ruling, and the target has a chance to resist even if the Effect Roll total is reached or exceeded.

If the Effect Roll total required by the GM is exceeded, then the target gets to make a Breakout Roll as normal. If the Breakout Roll succeeds, the target can ignore the Mind Control effect. However, if the Breakout Roll fails to reach the number needed but the target still makes a normal Ego Roll (this can be a separate roll if the GM desires, or just look at the Breakout Roll), then the target may make some minor resistance to the effects of the Mind Control. The target can look for loopholes in the exact wording of the command, or perhaps take some very minor action that wasn’t specifically disallowed by the command while the command is being implemented.

Example: Brainchylde uses his Mind Control as a Coercion attack on Jimmy Dugan, an intrepid reporter for the local paper, Jimmy’s EGO is a healthy 14. Brainchylde tells Jimmy to jump off the top of the newspaper building (something other people have done before, but never with Mind Control to back it up). The GM rules that this requires an EGO +30 Effect Roll, so Brainchylde needs a total of 44 on his Effect Roll to make Jimmy jump. Brainchylde also uses the maneuvers Offensive Concentration, Effort, and Stand to get a total of 13d6, and he rolls an impressive 56 points total. (Being truly evil, Brainchylde is determined to keep pouring END into the Mind Control to keep Jimmy from getting out easily.) This exceeds Jimmy’s EGO by 42, so Jimmy’s Breakout Roll is -2. So Jimmy’s Breakout Roll is 12 - 2 = 10 or less; Jimmy rolls an 11 and fails to break out of the Mind Control. Jimmy starts walking to the elevator to head to the roof, and he can’t stop himself or even slow down! But Jimmy did make his ordinary Ego Roll, even if he failed the Breakout Roll, so the GM will let him try to think of something he can do to save himself. Thinking fast, Jimmy whips out his cellular phone and calls his friend Defender, who happens to be out on patrol. “Help! Brainchylde’s making me throw myself off the roof of the Henderson building, and I can’t stop myself!” (Since Brainchylde didn’t specifically keep Jimmy quiet in his orders, the GM lets Jimmy get away with this.) Of course, Defender shows up in time to stop a journalistic tragedy.

While this may reduce the power of Mind Control somewhat, the mentalist is compensated for this by getting some partial effectiveness even if the required Effect Total isn’t reached. When the Effect Total is less than required, the target must make an Ego Roll; if made, the Mind Control is ignored and nothing

happens. (Note that the GM may allow the attacking mentalist to use Skill Levels with his Mind Control to reduce the target's Ego Roll; a very useful if rather nasty trick.) If the Ego Roll is not made, then consult the following table to see what happens:

Coercion Effects Table

Effect Roll
less than
required

Target Results

-1 to -10	May alter action slightly OR may resist (perform action at half speed)
-11 to -20	May alter action moderately OR may resist (perform action at 1/3 speed)
-21 to -30	May alter action greatly OR may resist (do not move, 1/2 DCV)

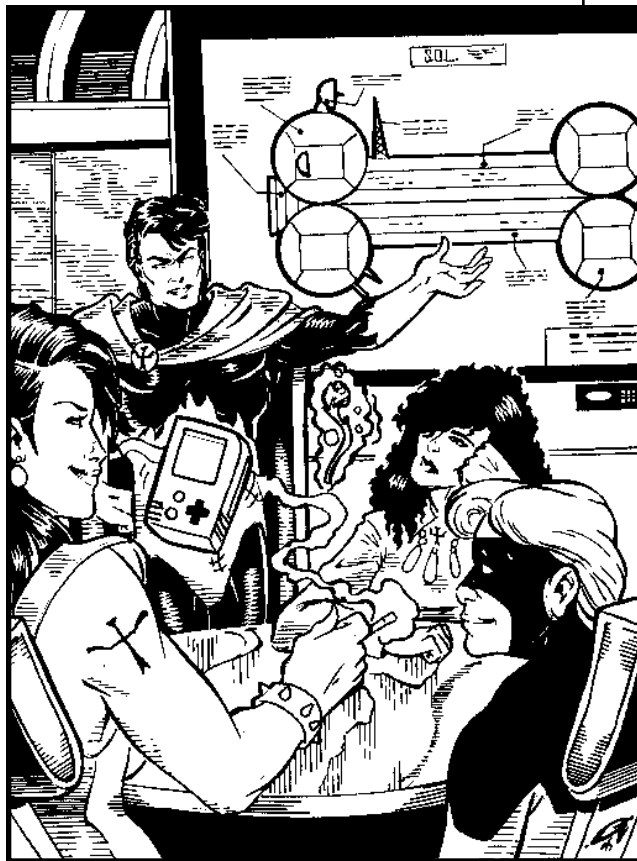
In the -1 to -10 range, the target may perform the action specified by the Mind Control, but can change it slightly, or the target can decide to resist and perform the specified action at half speed. Changing an action slightly might mean lowering your OCV to 1/2 when making a commanded attack, or forgetting to take off the safety when you fire a pistol, or adding in an extra word or phrase when you're saying something you've been commanded to say. The GM and players are encouraged to be creative with this process. The target can also decide to leave the command as stated, but perform it much more slowly by resisting its effects.

Similarly, in the -11 to -20 range the target may make greater changes to the commanded action, or may perform the action even more slowly. Finally, at the -21 to -30 level, the target can alter the action greatly or choose to stay in one spot and not perform the action at all (though the target wouldn't be able to do much of anything else).

During this time, the target can continue to attempt to make Ego Rolls to snap out of the Coercion entirely, while the mentalist can continue to put END into the Mind Control to keep the Ego Roll from getting easier with the passage of time. Both the mentalist and the target can choose to use some of the Offensive or Defensive Mental Combat Maneuvers to assist them in this process. The mentalist can even shift Skill Levels towards reducing the target's Ego Roll in order to make it more difficult to get rid of the Coercion effects.

Defensive Concentration

This Maneuver lets the target of a mental power take a full phase action to attempt to resist the effects of the mental power. This maneuver may be Aborted to, at no END. Defensive Concentration can be used at the same time as other Defensive Mental Combat Maneuvers; a character could use Defensive Concentration, Effort, Push, and Stand all at the same time



(which would require one full phase for all of these Maneuvers together). A character using Defensive Concentration cannot perform any Maneuver (other than the Defense Maneuvers listed above, Mind Bar, or Mind Shield) or use offensive Power. Defensive Concentration adds either +3 Mental Defense (or grants that much Mental Defense if the character has none) or +1 DECV, at the character's discretion.

The GM may decide that only characters who already possess the Mental Defense power may use Defensive Concentration.

Defensive Effort

This Maneuver lets the target of a mental power use intense mental discipline to attempt to resist the effects of the mental power; when doing so, the character loses all sensory awareness of the physical world. This maneuver may be Aborted to, and costs no END. Defensive Effort can be used at the same time as other Defensive Mental Combat Maneuvers; a character could use Defensive Concentration, Effort, Push, and Stand all at the same time (which would only require one full phase for all of these Maneuvers together). A character using Defensive Effort cannot perform any other Maneuver (other than the Defense Maneuvers listed above, Mind Bar, or Mind Shield) or use any offensive Power. Defensive Effort adds either +3 Mental Defense (or grants that much Mental Defense if the character has none) or +1 DECV, at the character's discretion.

The GM may decide that only characters who already possess the Mental Defense power may make a Defensive Effort.

Defensive Push

This Maneuver lets the target of a mental power Push their Mental Defense in order to resist the effects of the mental power. The character must make an Ego Roll to be able to do a Defensive Push, and can add up to 5 points of Mental Defense by paying 1 END for each point of Mental Defense used. The GM may allow even greater Defensive Pushes, up to +1 additional point of Mental Defense for every 1 point the Ego Roll is made by. This maneuver may be Aborted to. Defensive Push can be used at the same time as other Defensive Mental Combat Maneuvers; a character could use Defensive Concentration, Effort, Push, and Stand all at the same time (which would only require one full phase for all of these Maneuvers together). A character using Defensive Push cannot perform any other Maneuver (other than the Defense Maneuvers listed above, Mind Bar, or Mind Shield) or use any offensive Power.

The GM may decide that only characters who already possess the Mental Defense power may make a Defensive Push.

Defensive Stand

This Maneuver lets the target of a mental power put even more effort into resisting the effects of the mental power; when doing so, the character cannot move and is DCV 0. This maneuver may be Aborted to, and costs no END. Defensive Stand can be used at

the same time as other Defensive Mental Combat Maneuvers; a character could use Defensive Concentration, Effort, Push, and Stand all at the same time (which would only require one full phase for all of these Maneuvers together). A character using Defensive Stand cannot perform any other Maneuver (other than the Defense Maneuvers listed above, Mind Bar, or Mind Shield) or use any offensive Power. Defensive Stand adds either +3 Mental Defense (or grants that much Mental Defense if the character has none) or +1 DECV, at the character's discretion.

The GM may decide that only characters who already possess the Mental Defense power may make a Defensive Stand.

Fast Attack

This Maneuver lets the mentalist move out from behind cover, use their mental power, then return to cover. The mentalist must wait until his DEX to move out from behind cover and attack. In psionics campaigns and other games with lots of Mental Powers, this maneuver can be very useful, since a character can use it to remove himself from an opposing mentalist's Line Of Sight between Phases.

Mind Bar

Mind Bar lets a character with a Mental Power "block" an attack against themselves with the same Mental Power, preventing the Mental Power from having any effect on them. The character using Mind Bar rolls an OECV versus OECV roll, using his OECV against the OECV of the attacking mentalist. The OECV's are modified by +1 for every 10 active points of the mental power being used (the normal END cost must be paid for this power usage). If the Mind Bar roll is successful, the attacker's power has no effect.

The character using the Mind Bar maneuver must declare the amount of power being used in the Mind Bar before the roll is made (as, of course, the attacker must also do). Characters can Abort to Mind Bar. The GM may rule that the power used to Mind Bar requires the same special effects as the attacking power; for instance, that you can't use a chemical Mind Control to Mind Bar a psychic Mind Control. Or the GM can apply negative modifiers to the Mind Bar roll because of differing special effects.

The GM may also allow any mentalist (or any characters with Latent Mentalist) to use this maneuver, adding +1 to their OECV for every 10 points of Ego used to Mind Bar (instead of using the same mental power as the attacking power to perform the Mind Bar). Ego used in this fashion must burn END at 1 END per 10 points of EGO. For example, if a character with an EGO of 20 uses Mind Bar, they have an OECV of $7 + 2 = 9$, at an END Cost of 2 END.



Mind Lock



Mind Lock lets a character with a Mental Power “lock” the same Mental Power in another character, preventing them from using the Mental Power on anyone. Multiple Mental Powers may be Mind Locked at once, if the attacker possesses those powers. The character using Mind Lock rolls an OECV versus DECV roll, using his OECV against the DECV of the target mentalist. The OECV is -1 for each power Locked. If the Attack Roll is successful, then the attacker must make a Power vs. Power Roll to Lock the Power(s) attacked. If multiple Powers are attacked, each one can be rolled for separately, or the GM can combine the active points of all Powers affected together and make one big roll. The attacker and the defender each roll 1d6 for every 5 active points in the affected Power(s). Roll the dice and count the BODY total; if the attacker’s total is higher, then the defender’s Power is Locked. If the defender’s total BODY is higher, there is no effect. Both attacker and defender must pay the normal END cost for the powers used (that is, whatever END they would normally pay to use the power, if any).

The Mind Lock stays in effect until the attacker drops it, goes unconscious (or dies) or performs another Maneuver, or until the defender succeeds in overwhelming the BODY total of the Lock. The Lock may be held in place without additional Attack Rolls unless it is broken, in which case a new Attack Roll is needed. Whenever the defender attempts to exert power to break the Lock, the attacker may exert power to maintain the lock. Of course, the Offensive and Defensive maneuvers may be used to add to the dice totals for the Power versus Power roll. If the defender isn’t trying to break out, no END need be spent by the attacker to maintain the Mind Lock. Of course, the attacker can’t perform any other Mental Combat Maneuvers (except the Offensive Maneuvers) while holding the Mind Lock.

The character using the Mind Lock maneuver must declare the amount of power being used in the Mind Lock before the roll is made (as, of course, the defender must also do). The GM may rule that the power used to Mind Lock requires the same special effects as the attacking power; for instance, that you can’t use a chemical Mind Control to Mind Lock a psychic Mind Control. Or the GM can apply negative modifiers to the Mind Lock Attack Roll because of differing special effects.

The GM may also allow any mentalist (or any characters with Latent Mentalist) to use EGO to defend against this maneuver, adding +1d6 to their Power dice for every 5 points of Ego used to defend against the Mind Lock. Ego used in this fashion must burn END at 1 END per 10 points of EGO. For example, if a character with an EGO of 20 uses it to defend from a Mind Lock, they have an extra 4d6 to use at an END Cost of 2 END.



Mind Probe



This Maneuver is used by mentalists with Telepathy to try to get information from the mind of the target, and gain some benefit even if the desired Effect Roll isn’t achieved. Using Mind Probe also gives the target some chance to affect the Telepathy even if they can’t Break Out. This provides for a much more interesting situation than the standard Telepathy, where you either succeed or fail. This process works similarly to Coercion (see above).

The mentalist decides on the desired level of Telepathy and follows the normal procedure for making a Telepathic attack (see the Telepathy write-up in the Powers section for details). The ECV Roll is made as normal, and the Telepathy effect dice are rolled and totaled as for a standard Telepathy attack. With Mind Probe, there is some effect even if the Telepathy Effect Roll fails to reach the total required by the GM’s ruling, and the target has a chance to resist even if the Effect Roll total is reached or exceeded.

If the Effect Roll total required by the GM is exceeded, then the target gets to make a Breakout Roll as normal. If the Breakout Roll succeeds, the attacker gets no information from the Telepathy attempt. However, if the Breakout Roll fails to reach the number needed but the target still makes a normal Ego Roll (this can be a separate roll if the GM desires, or just look at the Breakout Roll), then the target may make some minor resistance to the effects of the Telepathy. The target can modify their thoughts to try





and obscure the information that the telepath is seeking. This can only be done to a very minor extent, such as changing a number or slightly changing a name by one or two letters. Enough, perhaps, to throw the telepath off course a bit, if the player can think fast enough.

While this may reduce the power of Telepathy somewhat, the mentalist is compensated for this by getting some partial effectiveness even if the required Effect Total isn't reached. When the Effect Total is less than required, the target must make an Ego Roll; if made, the Mind Probe is ignored and nothing happens. (Note that the GM may allow the attacking mentalist to use Skill Levels with his Telepathy to reduce the target's Ego Roll; a very useful if rather nasty trick.) If the Ego Roll is not made, then consult the following table to see what happens:

Mind Probe Effects Table

Effect Roll less than required	Target Results
-1 to -10	Moderate info gained. May alter surface thoughts.
-11 to -20	Slight info gained. May alter deep thoughts.
-21 to -30	No info gained. May call up different memories.

In the -1 to -10 range, only a moderate amount of information is gained by the Mind Probe, and the target may alter their surface thoughts (choosing something else to think about, or thinking about a deliberate falsehood). The GM and players are encouraged to be creative with this process.

Similarly, in the -11 to -20 range only slight information is gained by the Mind Probe, and the target may change surface thoughts or deeper thoughts (or, at least, subtly directing the Mind Probe towards different areas of thought). Finally, at the -21 to -30 level, no information is gained by the Mind Probe, and the target can call up different memories than the telepath is seeking.

During this time, the target can continue to attempt to make Ego Rolls to snap out of the Mind Probe entirely, while the mentalist can continue to put END into the Mind Probe to keep the Ego Roll from getting easier with the passage of time. Both the mentalist and the target can choose to use some of the Offensive or Defensive Mental Combat Maneuvers to assist them in this process. The mentalist can even shift Skill Levels towards reducing the target's Ego Roll in order to make it more difficult to get rid of the Mind Probe.

Mind Search



This Maneuver is used by mentalists with Mind Scan to try to find the target, and gain some benefit even if the desired Effect Roll isn't achieved. This provides for a much more interesting combat than the standard Mind Scan, where you either succeed or fail. This process works in a similar fashion to Coercion (see above).

The mentalist follows the normal procedure for making a Mind Scan (see the Mind Scan write-up in the Powers section for details). The ECV Roll is made as normal, and the Mind Scan effect dice are rolled and totaled as for a standard Mind Scan. But here's where the difference occurs: With Mind Search, there is some effect even if the Mind Scan Effect Roll fails to reach the total required by the GM's ruling, and the target has a chance to resist even if the Effect Roll total is reached or exceeded.

If the Effect Roll total required by the GM is exceeded, then the target gets to make a Breakout Roll as normal. If the Breakout Roll succeeds, the Mind Scan has no effect. However, if the Breakout Roll fails to reach the number needed but the target still makes a normal Ego Roll (this can be a separate roll if the GM desires, or just look at the Breakout Roll), then the target may make some minor resistance to the effects of the Mind Scan. The target gets +1 DECV for every 2 points the Ego Roll is made by (0 to 2, +1 DECV; 3-4, +2 DECV; 5-6, +3 DECV; etc.).

While this may reduce the power of Mind Scan somewhat, the mentalist is compensated for this by getting some partial effectiveness even if the required Effect Total isn't reached. When the Effect Total is less than required, the target must make an Ego Roll; if made, the Mind Scan is ignored and nothing hap-



pens. (Note that the GM may allow the attacking mentalist to use Skill Levels with his Mind Scan to reduce the target's Ego Roll; a very useful if rather nasty trick.) If the Ego Roll is not made, then consult the following table to see what happens:

Mind Search Effects Table

Effect Roll less than required	Target Results
-1 to -10	General info about location. Attacker uses Mental Powers at 1/2 OECV
-11 to -20	Vague info about location. Attacker uses Mental Powers at 0 OECV

In the -1 to -10 range, the attacker gets some general information about the location of the target. The attacker can use mental powers on the target, but with only 1/2 normal OECV.

Similarly, in the -11 to -20 range some vague information about the location of the target is known, and the attacker can attack with mental powers but at 0 OECV (given that many characters have low DECV, this still means there's some chance for success).

During this time, the target can continue to attempt to make Ego Rolls to snap out of the Mind Scan entirely, while the mentalist can continue to put END into the Mind Scan to keep the Ego Roll from getting easier with the passage of time. Both the mentalist and the target can choose to use some of the Offensive or Defensive Mental Combat Maneuvers to assist them in this process. The mentalist can even shift Skill Levels towards reducing the target's Ego Roll in order to make it more difficult to get rid of the Mind Scan.

Mind Shield

This Maneuver lets anyone erect a simple defense against mental powers, usually by reciting the multiplication tables or some such mental exercise. This concentration makes it harder for the character to perform other actions, though. The character gets +2 Mental Defense for every -1 to all Skill Rolls, OCV, and DCV (though NOT OECV and DECV), up to a maximum of +6 Mental Defense (and -3 to all Skill Rolls and OCV/DCV). This takes a half phase action (though it's not an attack action).

The GM may decide that only characters who already possess the Mental Defense power may use Mind Shield.

Mind Strike

This is the basic attack maneuver in Mental Combat. This represents use of any Mental Power used to attack, such as Mind Control, Telepathy, Mind Scan, Mental Illusions, or Ego Blast.

Offensive Concentration

This Maneuver lets an attacking mentalist take a full phase action to increase the effects of the mental

power they are using. This maneuver costs no END to use. Offensive Concentration can be used at the same time as other Offensive Mental Combat Maneuvers; a character could use Offensive Concentration, Effort, Push, and Stand all at the same time (which would only require one full phase for all of these Maneuvers together). A character using Offensive Concentration cannot perform any other Maneuver other than the mental Offense Maneuvers listed above, Coercion, Fast Attack, Mind Probe, Mind Search or Mind Strike. Offensive Concentration adds either +5 active points to the power being used or +1 OECV, at the character's discretion.

Offensive Effort

This Maneuver lets an attacking mentalist use intense mental discipline to increase the effects of a mental power; when doing so, the character loses all sensory awareness of the physical world. This maneuver costs no END to use. Offensive Effort can be used at the same time as other Offensive Mental Combat Maneuvers; a character could use Offensive Concentration, Effort, Push, and Stand all at the same time (which would only require one full phase for all of these Maneuvers together). A character using Offensive Effort cannot perform any other Maneuver other than the mental Offense Maneuvers listed above, Coercion, Fast Attack, Mind Probe, Mind Search or Mind Strike. Offensive Effort adds either +5 active points to the power being used or +1 OECV, at the character's discretion.



Offensive Push

This Maneuver lets the target of a mental power Push their power in order to increase the effects of the mental power. The character must make an Ego Roll to be able to do an Offensive Push, and can add up to 5 active points of power by paying 1 END for each active point of power used. The GM may allow even greater Offensive Pushes, up to +1 additional active point of power for every 1 point the Ego Roll is made by. This maneuver costs no END to use. Offensive Push can be used at the same time as other Offensive Mental Combat Maneuvers; a character could use Offensive Concentration, Effort, Push, and Stand all at the same time (which would only require one full phase for all of these Maneuvers together). A character using Offensive Push cannot perform any other Maneuver other than the mental Offense Maneuvers listed above, Coercion, Fast Attack, Mind Probe, Mind Search or Mind Strike. Offensive Push adds either +5 active points to the power being used or +1 OECV, at the character's discretion.

Offensive Stand

This Maneuver lets an attacking mentalist put even more effort into the effects of the mental power; when doing so, the character cannot move and is DCV 0. This maneuver costs no END to use. Offensive Stand can be used at the same time as other Offensive Mental Combat Maneuvers; a character could use Offensive Concentration, Effort, Push, and Stand all at the same time (which would only require one full phase for all of these Maneuvers together). A character using Offensive Stand cannot perform any

other Maneuver other than the mental Offense Maneuvers listed above, Coercion, Fast Attack, Mind Probe, Mind Search or Mind Strike. Offensive Stand adds either +5 active points to the power being used or +1 OECV, at the character's discretion.

Prepared

This Maneuver can be used in the same way as Covered is with physical attacks. Since Mental Powers are ordinarily invisible, the target may not know that he is covered by a Prepared mental power, spoiling many of the advantages of this Maneuver. Characters with Mental Awareness will be able to tell when they are "mentally Covered."

Ready

This Maneuver represents a character taking a full phase to prepare to make a Mind Strike. This gives the character a +1 to their OECV.

COMBAT TACTICS FOR MENTALISTS

Players with mentalist characters sometimes complain that their powers aren't as effective in combat as some other types of powers. To a certain extent, this has to do with the "all or nothing" nature of Mental Powers, which was discussed in Chapter One. This phenomenon also reflects a sort of balance between different character types for example, Mental Powers have a lot of non-combat uses, whereas a brick's high STR and defenses don't, so it stands to reason that a brick's powers will be more effective in combat (their primary area of use) than will a mentalist's.

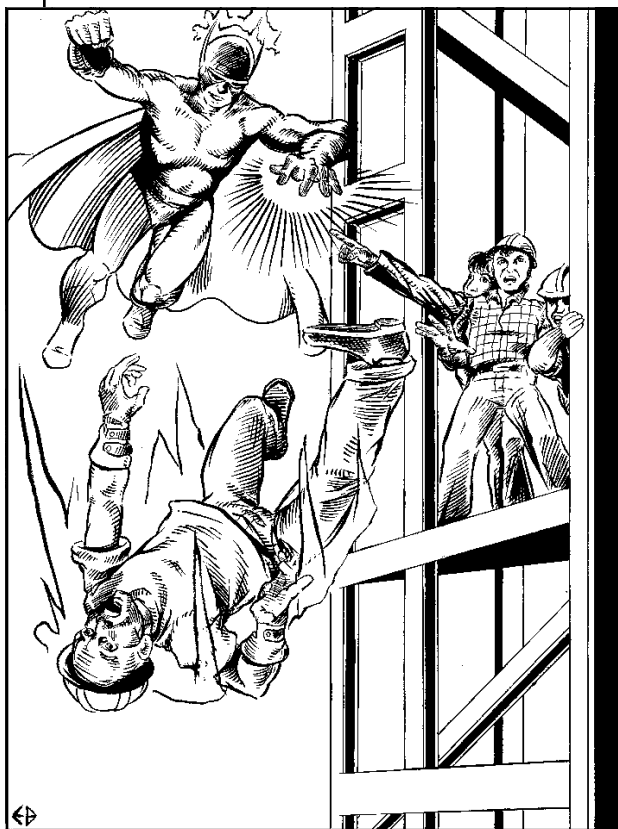
However, there are ways for a clever player to maximize a mentalist's combat effectiveness. Here are some suggestions:

Take Advantage of LOS

Since a mentalist's powers usually work on a Line Of Sight basis, he can back off a little from the main combat without suffering any penalty, thereby protecting himself (at least a little) from harm. However, it is unfair and unbalancing for mentalists to do this all the time, or to take it to an extreme ("You guys go get 'em, I'll wait here on the rooftop and pick off a few."). This is referred to in Chapter Two as the "mentalist sniper" syndrome, and it is neither heroic nor conducive to balanced, long-term campaigning. Discuss with your GM how he would like you to handle this, so that you can use the best tactics for your character without upsetting game balance.

Go for Lesser Effects

When using continuing-effect Mental Powers, keep in mind that it is much easier to achieve a low-level effect, such as EGO +10, than a more powerful ef-



fect—but used correctly, a low-level effect can accomplish a lot. EGO +10 allows for “major changes to setting” with Mental Illusions, for example, or the reading of “deep, hidden thoughts” with Telepathy. That’s enough to read a target’s mind to uncover his greatest fear or a key Psychological Limitation, and then create an Illusion to exploit it.

Ego Attack

Since relatively few characters have Mental Defense, Ego Attacks can inflict a lot of STUN, so they are often the perfect way to set a target up for a “one-two” punch. Either the mentalist holds his action until a teammate has gotten in a good blow, and then follows it up with a hard-hitting Ego Attack, or he can “soften up” the target first and give his teammate a better chance to Knock him Out. The mentalist can even attempt to Coordinate with his teammates to achieve this effect.

Mental Illusions

Keep your illusions as believable as possible. In combat, an illusion of someone being wounded is a lot more plausible than one of an army suddenly appearing out of nowhere. For example, suppose that Mindstorm and his teammates are fighting Thunder and Lightning. Mindstorm knows he cannot withstand the force of Lightning’s attack, so he decides to distract him with an Illusion that his teammate Brutus has just inflicted a grievous injury on Thunder. Since creating a “fake wound” is a simple cosmetic change, he has no trouble convincing Lightning that his wife has been hurt. Lightning turns to attack Brutus, who has more than enough defense to withstand the attack, and the rest of the team can now gang up on the two criminals.

It is important for mentalists to remember that, where Mental Illusions are concerned, cleverness is better than sheer power or impressiveness. A lot can be accomplished with a relatively low-level illusion if the mentalist puts some thought into it and takes advantage of his surroundings, the situation, and his target’s psychology. Few characters are going to believe an illusion of a dragon or a crashing airplane appearing out of nowhere, regardless of how good an Effect Roll the mentalist makes.

Mind Control

Using Telepathy or common sense to uncover a villain’s Psychological Limitations or present goals will allow the mentalist to make the best use of Mind Control. A simple command that agrees with the target’s motivations is almost sure to succeed. For example, commanding a greedy villain to “Quick, gather up all the money before it gets destroyed in the



fight!” is a lot more likely to succeed than commanding him to stand still. While he’s busy stuffing twenties into a sack, one of the mentalist’s teammates can grab him or knock him out. Mentalist players should keep a list of the characters they’ve encountered and what commands have worked on them; perusing psychological profiles that have been made of captured villains will also help.

Telepathy

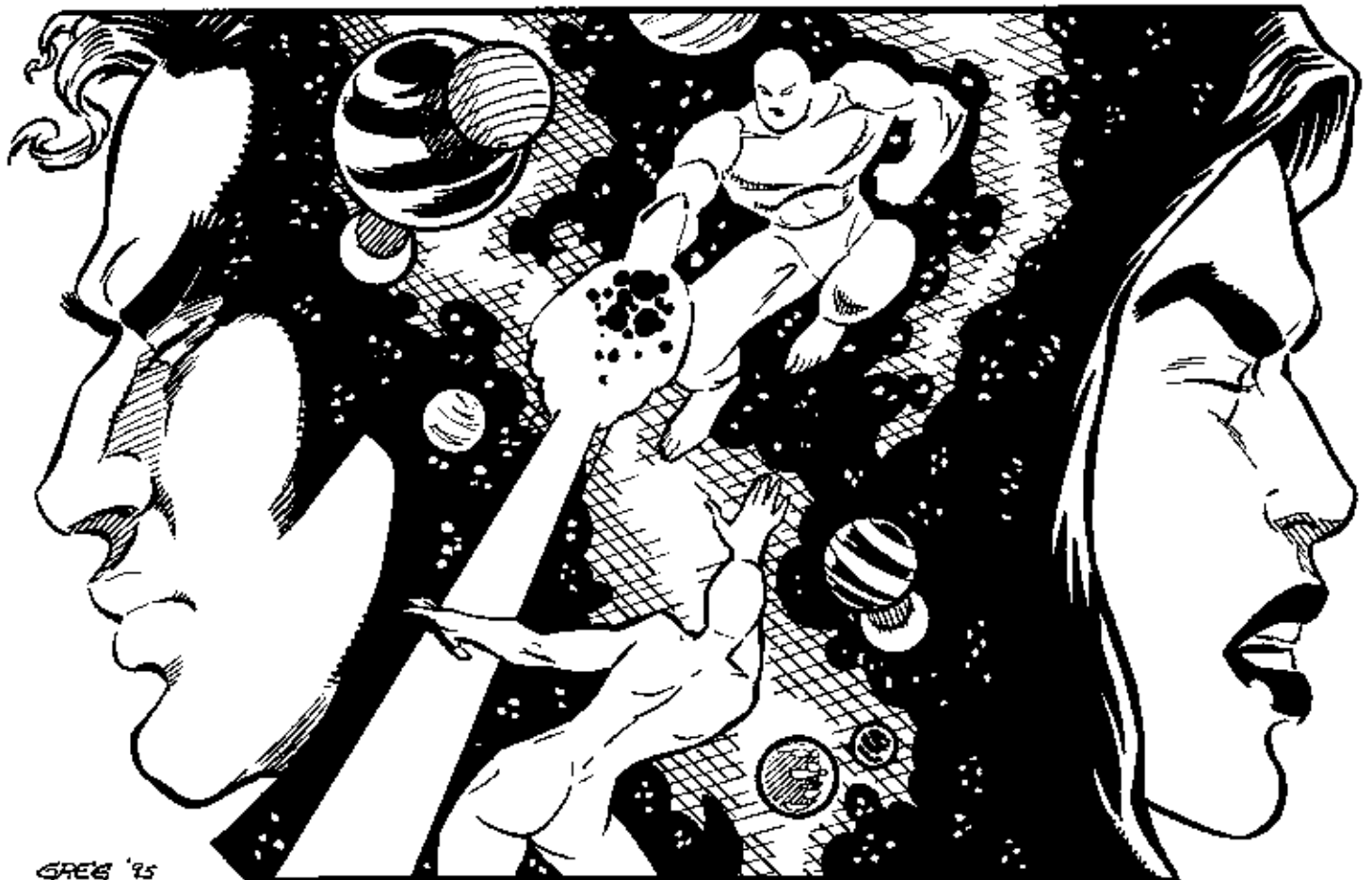
Telepathy’s most important combat use, mentioned above, is to give the mentalist enough information about his opponent that he can employ his other Mental Powers with the greatest possibility of success. A Telepathy attack is a good “opening shot” for a mentalist if he feels that he will be able to tolerate one or two counterattacks before bringing a more offensive power to bear.

CHAPTER

FOUR.

SOURCE

BOOK



GREG '15

The glade was still and quiet in the early evening as the group walked into it. They came in ones and twos, seemingly unconcerned with protocol or order. They were an unusual group, men and women of all ages, dressed in a chaotic fashion; some wore clothing fit for a formal party, others were garbed in torn jeans and t-shirts. But one thing they all had in common was their eyes—each of them had eyes of deep blue.

One by one, they took their place in a circle around the spring in the center of the glade. Finally, when they were all in place, another man entered. He was tall and broad-shouldered, with long blonde hair. His eyes were as blue as theirs, and he wore a pair of sunglasses tinted a similar shade. In his arms he carried a bundle of crimson robes. He walked around the circle, handing a robe to each person; they donned them and stood awaiting his instructions.

When he had given away all of the robes, the tall man went to a rock on one side of the spring and stood on it. “Join hands,” he said to the others, and they did so; the two on either side of him stretched their arms up to grasp his hands as he stood on the stone.

“Begin,” he intoned. At once, the glade seemed to become quieter; even the night insects ceased their singing. Then, slowly but surely, a soft golden glow surrounded the head of one of the robed figures. Then another one began to glow. After a few minutes, all of their heads were glowing. Then the glow began to spread to the interior of the circle, coating the spring with golden light. Gradually the golden light faded from the center of the spring, to be replaced by a picture—a picture of a man. He had short blondish hair and a matching short beard, and appeared to be in his early 30s. He looked friendly enough, but each member of the circle could somehow sense something... sinister... about him.

The tall man began to speak. “Behold, children of O’Sethmas. This is the man we seek. He is a member of the League of the Pure Mind; in fact, he is a lieutenant in that League. Their goal, as well you know, is the subjugation of Humanity. This we cannot allow, for it would interfere with our own plans.”

“Therefore, this man must be eliminated. Our sister ‘Denise’ has been spying on him for some time now, and she indicates that the time for our attack is ripe. You know what must be done. Go.”

With that, the golden glow faded away entirely. The men and women in the circle let go of each other’s hands, and one by one they left the glade again. When they had gone, the tall man sat down on the stone, and waited for the night sounds to begin again.

Chapter Four of *The Ultimate Mentalist* provides ready-made source material for GMs and players to use with mentalist characters and campaigns.

PSIONIC GADGETS

This section provides descriptions of and statistics for many mentalist gadgets. Almost all of them require the Skill “SC: Psionic Engineering” to build (refer to Chapter One for details).

Offensive Gadgets

Focusing Gems

Focusing Gems are a special type of crystal which are attuned to a particular mental power and are used to enhance and refine that power. Mentalists create one by obtaining a perfect crystal of some sorts and “aligning” it with a given mental power by exposing it to that power repeatedly over the course of the creation period. This turns the Gem into a sort of “mental lens” for that mental power.

In order to use a Focusing Gem, a mentalist must “link” it to himself by wearing it next to his skin for a week. To use the Gem, the mentalist holds it to his head when attacking with the appropriate mental power. The Gem focuses and refines the mental energies the mentalist employs, enabling the attack





to more easily penetrate a target's defenses.

Each Focusing Gem is limited to a specific Mental Power, such as Mind Control or Ego Attack (the two most common types). For example, an Ego Attack Focusing Gem will not work for Mind Control or any other Mental Power. Focusing Gems are also limited in the amount of mental energy they can focus (in game terms, they only work for attacks of a certain Active Point value or less). When in use, a Gem flares with light. (There are rumors that some mentalists have constructed Gems that do not light up this way.)

Ego Attack Focusing Gem: "Armor Piercing" Advantage for up to 60 Active Points Ego Attack (30 Active Points); OAF (-1), Renders Mental Attack Visible (-1/4). Real Cost: 13 points.

Hallucination Inducer

An Hallucination Inducer is an item, such as a piece of jewelry or armor, that a mentalist has "infected" with the ability to cause Mental Illusions in the person wearing or carrying it. The mentalist does not retain control over the Illusion; he simply activates the Inducer (he must be within

LOS of the victim to do so) and makes his Effect Roll. The Effect Roll stays the same until the target breaks out of the Illusion. The Illusion cannot be controlled by the mentalist (though he must pay END to keep it operating); it is based on the thoughts, memories, and psychology of the target. Such Illusions generally do not have great combat effectiveness, but can operate as an intense distraction at inopportune moments.

Hallucination Inducer: 8d6 Mental Illusions, Invisible Power Effects (the source of the Illusions, i.e., the "infected" item, is not apparent to the victim or to any observers, +1/2) (60 Active Points); IAF (-1/2), No Conscious Control (-1), Only Works If Target Is Wearing/Carrying Item (-1/2), Costs END To Maintain (-1/2). Real Cost: 17 points.

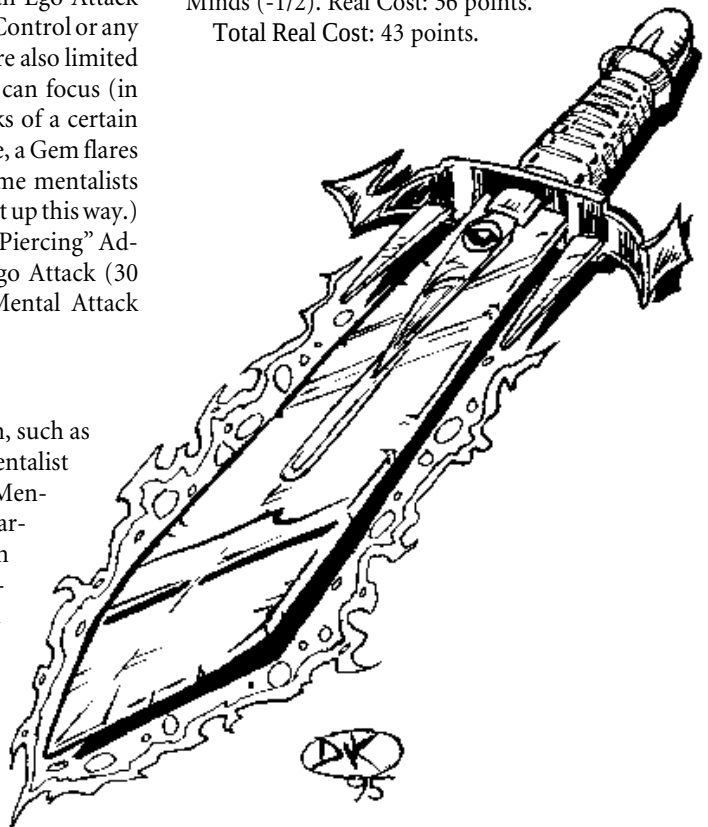
Mindblades

A Mindblade is a sword or dagger made of "psycho-active" metal which becomes more dangerous when powered by the mental energies of a mentalist. A Mindblade can be used as a normal blade by non-mentalists, but when wielded by a mentalist takes on a slight glow and is even deadlier—it attacks the target not only physically, but psychically, withering his brain. The more power (i.e., END) the mentalist pumps into the blade, the brighter and more spectacular the glow.

Mindblade (basic sword blade): 1d6 HKA (15 Active Points); OAF (-1), Blade Limitations (-1/4). Real Cost: 7 points.

Additional effect: +3d6 RKA, Based On ECV (+1), Does BODY (+1) (135 Active Points); OAF (-1), No KB (-1/4), Only Works For Mentalists (-1/2), 2x END (-1/2), Only Works On Creatures With Minds (-1/2). Real Cost: 36 points.

Total Real Cost: 43 points.

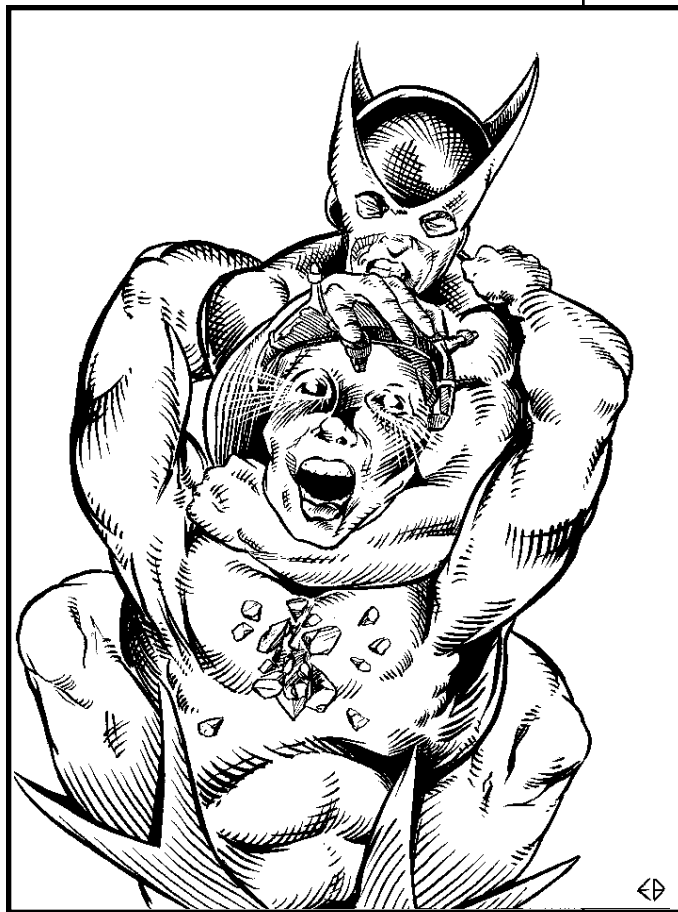
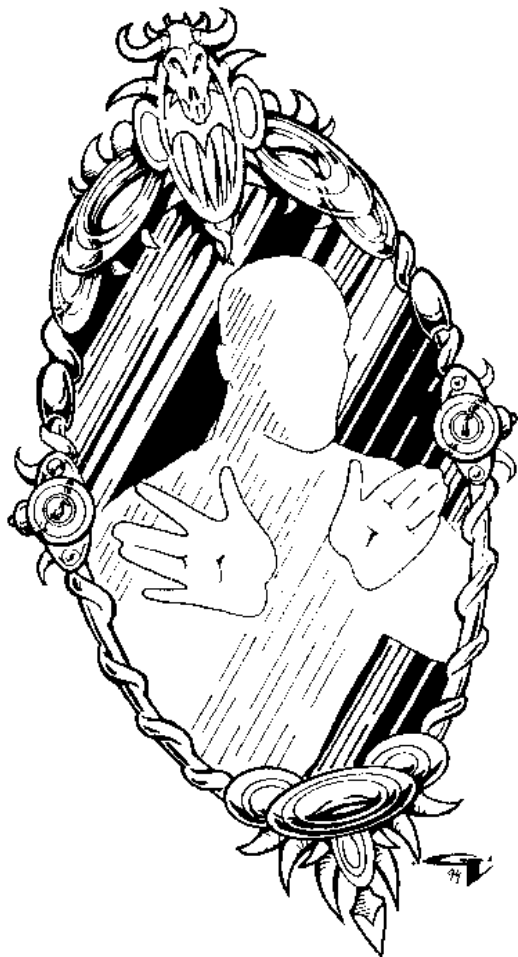


Mirror Of Mindstealing

This is another “trapped” object similar to the Hallucination Inducer. Unlike the Hallucination Inducer, which must be set off by the mentalist who prepared it (much like a normal mental attack), the Mirror of Mindstealing will work on anyone who looks into it after it has been properly prepared. Its effect is simple, yet horrifying: it steal’s the victim’s mind, trapping the mind inside itself until a mentalist with sufficiently strong mental powers can free it. Often this never happens, or if it does, the “rescue” occurs so long after the event that the mind has gone mad in its prison.

A typical Mirror of Mindstealing can only store four minds at once. If it is used on a fifth victim, one of the four already held captive (chosen at random) is automatically released into the now-vacant body of the fifth victim.

Mirror Of Mindstealing: 6d6 Major Transform (human to mindless body; the mind itself is sucked into the mirror), Trigger (looking into the mirror, +1/4) (112 Active Points); OAF (-1), 1 Charge (-2), No Range (-1/2), Mirror Can Only Store 4 Minds (-1/4). Real Cost: 24 points.



Psi Dampening Devices

This type of device is used to “dampen” or block a mentalist’s powers. Typically it is built into a helmet, headband, handcuffs or other piece of equipment which is used to restrain a mentalist. Depending on the strength of the mentalist’s powers, it may block them entirely, or only weaken them.

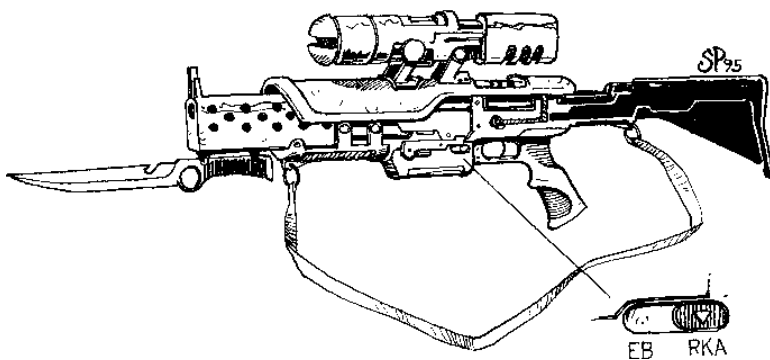
Psi Dampening Device, Type I: 4d6 Suppress, all mentalist powers at once (+2), 0 END (+1/2), Uncontrolled (+1/2) (80 Active Points); OAF (helmet, headband, or other appropriate device, -1), No Range (-1/2). Real Cost: 32 points.

Psi Dampening Device, Type II: Mental Defense (25 points), Usable Against Others (+1) (i.e., the imprisoned mentalist must punch through 25 points of Mental Defense when trying to use his powers) (50 Active Points); OAF (-1). Real Cost: 25 points.

Psibernetic Implants

Psibernetic Implants are tiny devices that are surgically implanted into a person’s brain to give him mental powers. The devices and the surgery are both extremely expensive. Psibernetic Implants can be bought as any Mental Power with the Limitation, “Cyberware” (-1/4). Psibernetic Implant powers should be bought “one at a time,” since a given Implant is only big enough to provide a person with one mental ability (in game terms, Psibernetic Implant powers should not be placed in a Power Framework).





PsiWarrior Weapons

Here are some typical weapons that might be carried by characters in a Psychic War campaign (described in Chapter Two):

PsiWarrior Grenades

PsiWarrior Grenades are typically issued in packs or bandoliers of four grenades each.

Blinder Grenade (pack of four): 3d6 Flash, Sight and Mental Sense Groups, Area of Effect: One Hex (+1/2) (75 Active Points); OAF (-1), 4 Charges (-1). Real Cost: 25 points.

Dampener Grenade: 3d6 Suppress, all mentalist powers at once (+2), Area Of Effect: Radius (+1) (60 Active Points); OAF (-1), 4 Charges lasting 1 Turn each (-1/2). Real Cost: 24 points.

Weakness Gas: 4d6 END Drain, returns 5 CP/Turn, Ranged (+1/2), Area Of Effect: Radius (+1) (100 Active Points); OAF (-1), 4 Charges lasting 1 Turn each (-1/2). Real Cost: 40 points.

PsiWarrior Rifle

The PsiWarrior Rifle is a standard assault blaster rifle, with settings for normal beam (EB) and high-intensity beam (RKA). It also comes equipped with a bayonet. However, it has an additional feature that most rifles do not: a scope that is specially tuned to the brain wave frequencies of PsiWarriors and other mentalists, making it easier for the user to target such individuals. A PsiWarrior's personal rifle will be calibrated to "screen out" his own brain waves; any other PsiWarrior or mentalist who tries to use the scope will cause so much interference as to render it useless (in game terms, the anti-mentalist function of the scope is a Personal Focus when mentalists other than the mentalist the rifle is calibrated for try to use it, and a Universal Focus if a non-mentalist uses it).

PsiWarrior Rifle: See the PsiWarrior character sheet.

Psychic Poisons

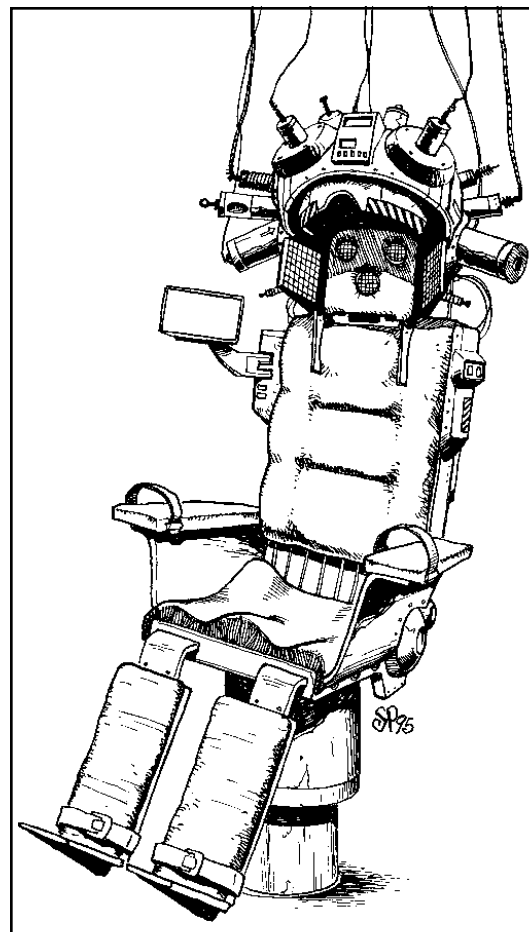
Psychic Poisons are a method of preventing mentalists from using their powers; however, they are a much more ruthless and dangerous method than the use of Psi Dampening Devices. Essentially, a Psychic Poison is a poison that only becomes deadly when exposed to the mental energies that a mentalist generates when he uses his powers.

Psychic Poison: 1d6 RKA, NND which does BODY (defense is Immunity to the poison, +2), Trigger (use of mental powers by the victim, +1/4), Uncontrolled (+1/2) (56 Active Points); OAF (poison and syringe, -1), Must Be Injected (-1), No KB (-1/4), No Range (-1/2), 8 Charges (-1/2). Real Cost: 13 points.

Psychic Sifter

This device, a staple of many science fiction and comic-book stories, is used to read someone's mind. The subject is seated in the device (it resembles a large chair with sensors near where the seated person's head is), which can then probe him telepathically. Unfortunately for the subject, the process often proves fatal.

Psychic Sifter: 8d6 Telepathy, 0 END (+1/2) (60 Active Points); OAF Bulky (-1 1/2), Subject Takes 1/2d6 KA Per Turn Of Use (-1/2). Real Cost: 20 points.



Defensive Gadgets

Deflector Technology

Deflector Technology provides the user with defense against mental attacks. It is usually built into a headband, helmet, or similar device. Unlike other mentalism-related devices, Deflector Technology can be built without knowledge of SC: Psionic Engineering.

Deflector Headband: Mental Defense (+15 points) (15 Active Points); OIF (-1/2). Real Cost: 10 points.

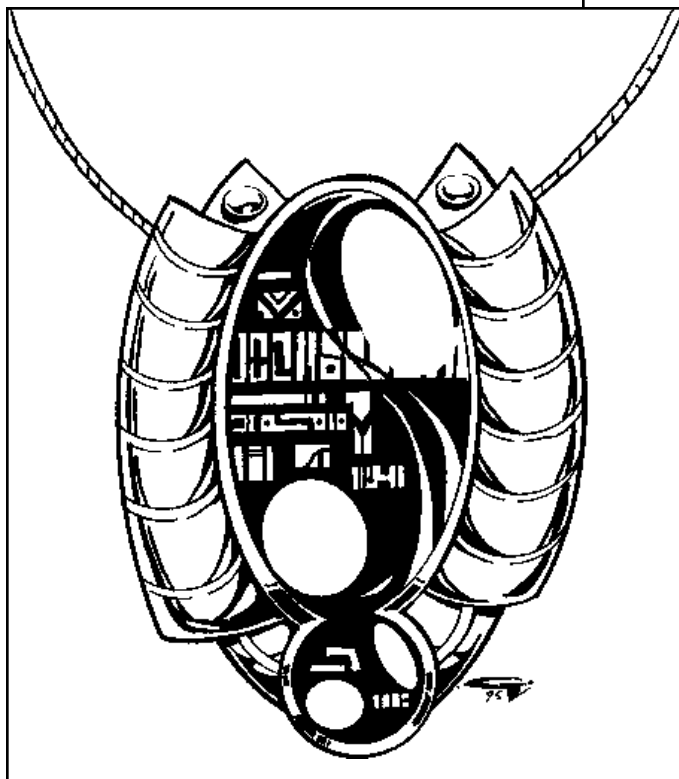
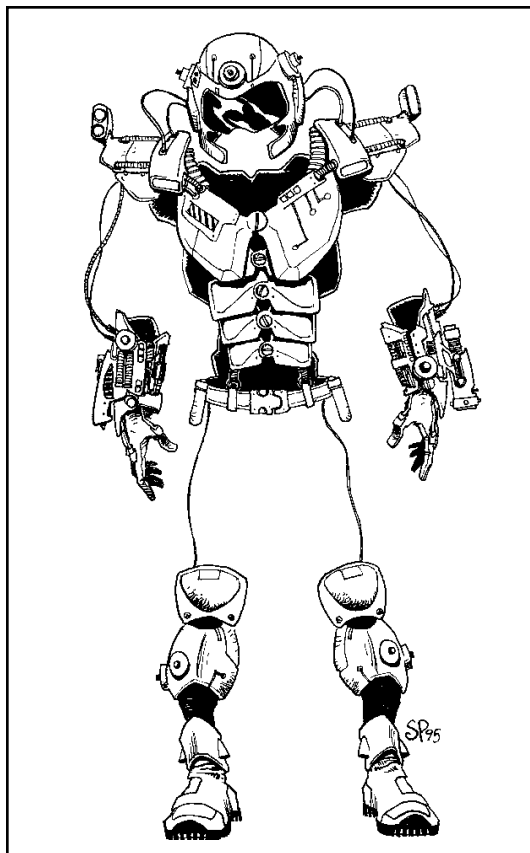
PsiShield

A PsiShield, also known as a PsiScreen, is a device which is able to screen mental powers out of a given area. Mental abilities of sufficient power can break through it, of course, but a PsiShield can deflect most mental attacks.

PsiShield: Mental Force Wall (8 MD), 0 END (+1/2) (30 Active Points); OIF (appropriate gadget, such as a belt buckle, armored suit, or helmet; -1/2). Real Cost: 20 points.

Psychic Armor

Psychic Armor is a special type of high-tech battlesuit that enhances and augments a mentalist's powers. Most suits are created for a specific mentalist, and cannot be used by anyone else (i.e., they are Personal Foci). A few suits, however, are "generic" and will work for any mentalist (i.e., they are Universal Foci); these suits tend to be less powerful, however.



PSYCHIC ARMOR

Powers

Psychic Armor, OIF:

+3 EGO; OIF (4)

+20 END; Only For Mental Powers (-1) (4)

Armor +6 PD, +6 ED) (12)

Mental Defense (+10 points) (7)

Augmentation Ability:

Variable Power Pool: 20 base + 10 control cost;

No Control Roll (+1),

0-Phase Action To Change (+1); OIF (-1/2),

Only To Augment Wearer's

Mental Powers (-1/2) (35)

Total Real Cost: 62 points.

Telekinetic Booster

This device is used to augment a telekinetic's basic powers, enabling him to construct a telekinetic force field to protect himself from harm (or to strengthen his force field, if he can generate one normally).

Telekinetic Booster: Force Field (+6 PD/ED), 0 END (+1/2) (18 Active Points); OIF (appropriate device, -1/2), Only Works For Telekinetics (-1/2). Real Cost: 9 points.



Movement Gadgets

Astral Cube

An Astral Cube is a large (5' square) cube made out of rods of psychoactive metal. The metal is attuned so as to allow mentalists who cannot normally project an astral form to do so. The mentalist need only sit inside the cube and concentrate, and his astral form will be freed. If the mentalist's body is removed from the confines of the cube, his astral form instantly "snaps back" into his body, which can be very disorienting.

Astral Cube:

- 1) Desolidification, 0 END (+1/2) (60 Active Points); Astral Form (-1); OAF Bulky (-1 1/2). Real Cost: 17 points.
 - 2) Affects Solid World (+2) for up to 60 points' worth of mental powers (180 Active Points); OAF Bulky (-1 1/2). Real Cost: 72 points.
- Total Cost: 89 points.

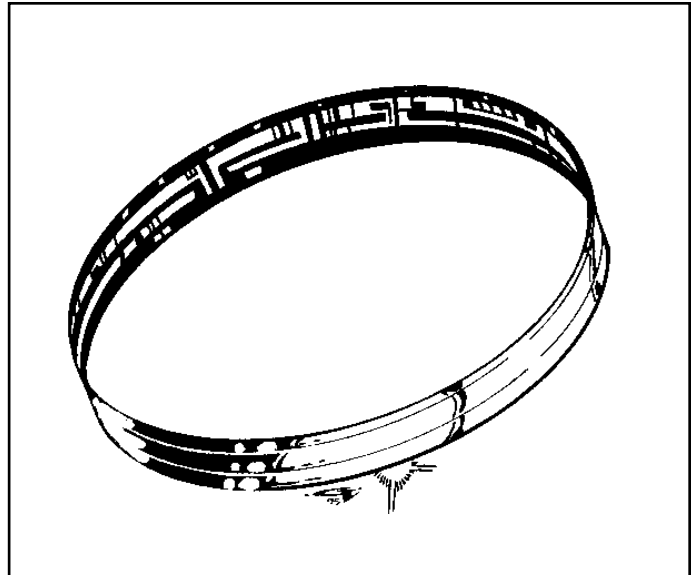
Levitation Band

This device (usually built in the form of a headband, armring, belt, or finger-ring, hence its name) taps a telekinetic's powers to allow him to fly. It offers no benefits (other than a 0 END cost) to telekinetics who can already fly under their own power.

Levitation Band: 10" Flight, 0 END (+1/2) (30 Active Points); OIF (-1/2), Only Works For Telekinetics (-1/2). Real Cost: 15 points.

Teleportation Belt

Teleportation Belts tap into a mentalist's mental energies to allow him to teleport a short distance. The technology needed to cre-



ate these Belts is rare and expensive, and hence the Belts themselves are highly prized.

Teleportation Belt: 15" Teleport (30 Active Points); OIF (-1/2), Only Works For Mentalists (-1/4). Real Cost: 17 points.

Communications And Reconnaissance Gadgets

Clairvoyance Mirror

This device is simply a mirror which allows anyone who looks into it to view scenes some distance away.

Clairvoyance Mirror: Clairvoyance, 800" range (35 Active Points); OAF Bulky (-1 1/2). Real Cost: 14 points.

Linkbands

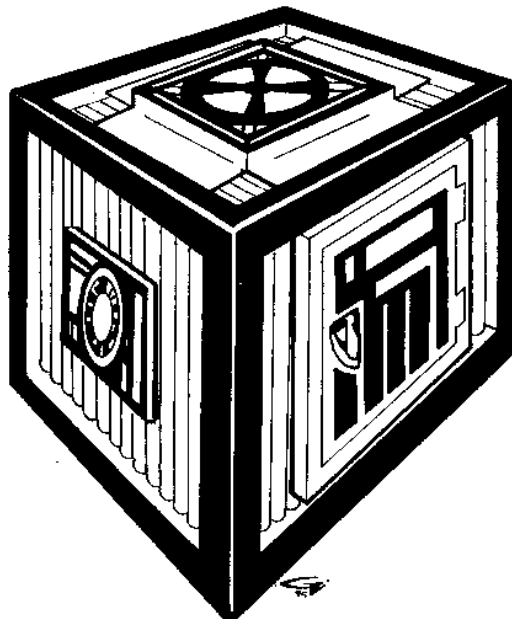
This item is a set of rings which establish a Mind Link between the wearers. Most sets are limited to two rings (the ideal wedding gift!), but a set can have as many rings as the creator wants.

Linkbands: Mind Link, one specific mind, any distance or dimension (15 Active Points); OIF (-1/2), Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1). Real Cost: 6 points.

Missive Gems

Missive Gems are a special type of "psychoactive" gemstone, similar to Focusing Gems. Missive Gems are created to be especially sensitive to telepathic energies; in essence, they act as a "recorder" for thoughts that are projected at them. A telepath handling the stone can then read those thoughts.

There is no point cost for Missive Gems; they are, in essence, a colorful plot device, since Telepathy can be used to implant messages in just about any object (refer to Chapter One for details).



CHAPTER

FIVE

VILLAINS



The final chapter of *The Ultimate Mentalist* provides several villains for GMs to use in their campaigns. Notes are provided with the characters for adapting them to different genres.

Mentalist Villains In Other *HERO System* Products

Several other *HERO System* products contain mentalist villains which the GM might find useful.

Mind Games, by Scott Heine, describes the nefarious mentalist criminal organization, PSI. PSI makes a great adversary or Hunted for mentalist characters; the group might also be the PCs' chief opposition in a PsiCops campaign.

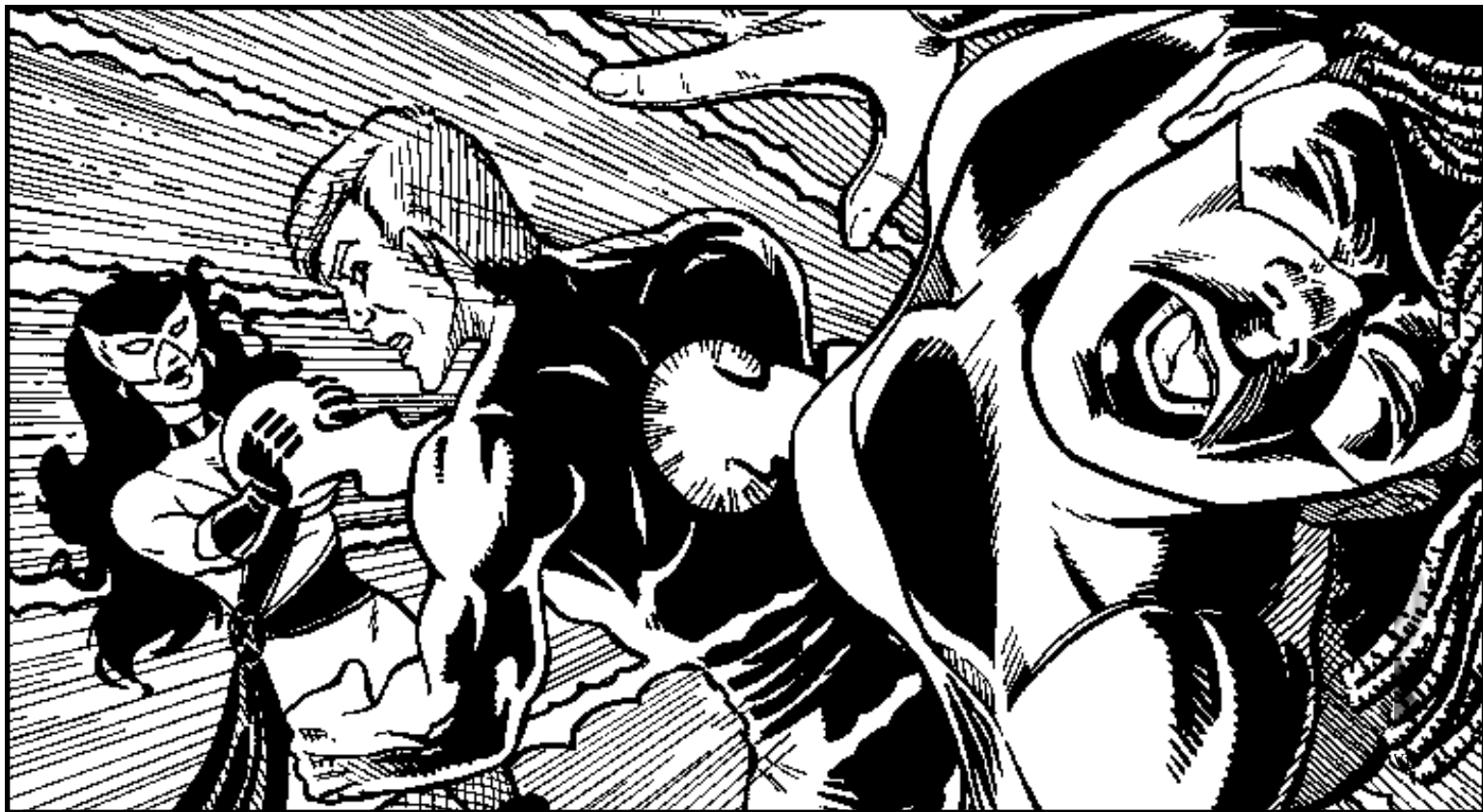
Alien Enemies, also by Scott Heine, contains several alien races with mental powers or similar abilities, such as the Puppeteers and the Tyrixx.

Champions of the North, by Jon Mattson, features a large number of mentalist NPCs and villains. GMs can easily adapt them to campaigns outside of Canada.

The Mutant File, by Sean Fannon, describes the mutant-hunting organization Genocide. Since many mentalists are mutants, Genocide is a good enemy organization for them.

Classic Enemies, by Scott Bennie, includes write-ups of several classic *Champions* mentalists, including Menton, Mentalla, Esper, and several others.

Underworld Enemies and *Asylum*, both by Chris Avellone, are intended mainly for Dark Champions campaigns, but the villains in them can also be used for *Champions*. A number of the characters have mental powers, often highly unusual or disturbing ones. They are also good examples of how to use low-level mental powers creatively.



THE VARANYI

The bridge of the spaceship, like every other place on the vessel, was quiet, filled only with the sound of electronic machinery and the background hum of the ship's drives. No one spoke a single word—but they didn't have to.

"Captain," the navigator announced solemnly with his telepathy, "we have arrived."

T'Nereq, commander of the Varanyi Star Galleon *Sitharados*, gazed down on the small blue planet. Even from here he could sense the billions of minds, with their vast psionic potential. His navigator, far more sensitive than he, had been able to track those psychic emanations across the light-years, they were so strong.

"Activate Deflection Screen," T'Nereq telepathized. *Best to be cautious, with this kind of power*, he thought to himself. The ship's cloaking device had been on since the ship had neared the planet's solar system, preventing more mundane forms of discovery, but now the ship was shielded from psychic detection as well.

"What now, Captain?" asked the Chief of Security, who was a bit concerned with the sharpness in his leader's voice when he gave his last order.

"We proceed with the mission the *Sh'garothayn* gave us: a complete survey of this planet and its inhabitants, preparatory to invasion."

The Varanyi are a race of aliens with powerful psionic capabilities. They are intended primarily as an opponent for mentalists in science fiction, superheroic, or high-powered psionics campaigns, but if scaled down are also appropriate for lower-powered campaigns.

Appearance

Physically, the Varanyi are a brown-skinned race who tend to be tall: 6'5" is the average height, and Varanyi 7'5" or 8'0" tall are not unknown. The Varanyi are usually thin, and their limbs and digits are long and slender, giving them a somewhat "delicate" appearance by human standards.

Varanyi facial features are minimal. Their ears are barely noticeable beyond the sides of their heads, their noses are similarly small, and they have no feature that corresponds to the lips on a human (hence, their voices, when they use them, sound odd to humans). They have no hair, whether on their heads or elsewhere (the Varanyi are descended from a warm-blooded reptilian creature, not a mammal).

However, they do have a feature on their heads which is even more significant

than hair. Each Varanyi has from zero to five bony ridges, known as "crests," running the length of his scalp. The crests meet at a point between the eyes, immediately above the nose. The number of crests a Varanyi has determines not only his psionic powers, but his position in Varanyi society.

Varanyi Mental Powers

The type (and, to a certain extent, the strength) of a Varanyi's mental powers depends upon the number of crests on his head: the more crests, the more powers.

A Varanyi without crests is known as a *Ks'lch*. This translates literally into English as "the primitive ones," but a more precise translation of what the term means in the Varanyi culture would be, "those who can only move objects by touching them." The *Ks'lch* have no mental powers at all. They are the lowest of the low in Varanyi society, and perform the most menial and degrading tasks.

A Varanyi with one crest (a *Chpereth*) has the following mental powers:

Powers

Mental Defense (base 2 points) (2)

Mind Link, any Varanyi, up to 4 minds at once;

Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1) (12)

4 STR Telekinesis (6)

"... Alages of death and chaos! Fearing further evil, the Brotherhood stole the Alask and hid it at the bottom of the great northern lake. Now the only remaining danger to our people is from the ..."



Missive Gem



122

CHAPTER FIVE



A Varanyi with two crests (a *Chvorsq*) has the following mental powers:

Powers

Mental Defense (base 3 points) (3)
 Mind Link, any Varanyi, up to 8 minds at once;
 Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1) (15)
 Multipower 20 point pool (20)
 u - 4d6 Telepathy (20/2) [2]
 u - 10 STR Telekinesis (15/1) [1]



A Varanyi with three crests (a *Ch'ggeb*) has the following mental powers:

Powers

Mental Defense (base 6 points) (6)
 Mind Link, any Varanyi, up to 16 minds at once;
 Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1) (20)
 Multipower 30 point pool (30)
 u - 6d6 Telepathy (30/3) [3]
 u - 20 STR Telekinesis (30/3) [3]
 u - 3d6 Ego Attack (30/3) [3]
 6d6 Mind Scan (30) [3]



A Varanyi with four crests (a *Ch'yuuk*) has the following mental powers:

Powers

Mental Defense (base 8 points) (8)
 Mind Link, any Varanyi, up to 32 minds at once;
 Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1) (22)
 Multipower 40 point pool (40)
 u - 8d6 Telepathy (40/4) [4]
 u - 24 STR Telekinesis (36/4) [4]
 u - 4d6 Ego Attack (40/4) [4]
 u - 8d6 Mental Illusions (40/4) [4]
 u - 8d6 Mind Control (40/4) [4]
 8d6 Mind Scan (40) [4]



A Varanyi with five crests (an *Al'gari*, i.e., a member of the Imperial Household) has the following mental powers:

Powers

Mental Defense (base 10 points) (10)
 Mind Link, any Varanyi, up to 64 minds at once;
 Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1) (25)
 Multipower 50 point pool (50)
 u - 10d6 Telepathy (50/5) [5]
 u - 32 STR Telekinesis (48/5) [5]
 u - 5d6 Ego Attack (50/5) [5]
 u - 10d6 Mental Illusions (50/5) [5]
 u - 10d6 Mind Control (50/5) [5]
 10d6 Mind Scan (50) [5]
 Up to 30 more points' worth of powers (GM's choice, varies from individual to individual) (30)

The power levels given above are merely averages; within the Varanyi population, power levels can vary by as much as 50% above or below the stated average. It is also not unheard of for a Varanyi to develop "early" powers, i.e., that are not normally possessed by one of that many crests. For example, a two-crested Varanyi might develop Telepathy or Mind Scan "early." Other variants on Varanyi mental powers that are known to have occurred are powers that are very easy to use (Reduced END cost), powers that penetrate mental defenses more easily than ordinary powers (Armor Piercing), and so forth.

Varanyi Society And Culture

Politics And Social Organization

The *Sh'garoth Varanyi* ("Varanyi Empire") is the chief political unit of the Varanyi. The *Sh'garothayn*, or "Emperor," is a hereditary ruler possessed of five crests. For its entire ten thousand-year existence the Empire has been ruled by the *Al'gari* clan. The present Emperor is B'varog XXVII, or, as he is more colloquially known, B'varog Iron-Face. The Emperor resides in the vast and impregnable palace *Voum Vathcersajz* on Varan, the hot, humid, and often swampy Varanyi homeworld.

The *Sh'garothayn's* power is absolute; his word is law. However, the Varanyi emperors have found that single-handedly ruling such a vast empire is not easy, and so over the centuries they have created a large group of nobles to help them govern. Nobles, whose titles correspond to the human "duke," "count," "baron," "earl," and so forth, are always four-crested Varanyi.

Also assisting the Emperor is an advisory council, the *Uthiriom Vaan*, or "House of Notables." Its role is to provide the Emperor with sound advice on matters of policy. Any Varanyi other than a *Ks'lch* is eligible for membership; members are elected by the current members or appointed by the Emperor, and membership in the council is an important status symbol. The council usually manages to fulfill its function and advise the Emperor adequately, but its rules are Byzantine and its internal relations are often marked by feuds, vendettas, and even assassination.

The position of Emperor is open only to male Varanyi. However, any other political position in the Empire is open to both male and female Varanyi (and in fact, the Empress has often wielded more influence and power than her husband).

As mentioned above, the Emperor is always a Varanyi of five crests. Traditionally the *Al'gari* clan males are five-crested, but it sometimes happens that one is born with four crests. Such a one, even if he is the firstborn son of the Emperor, can never aspire to the Golden Throne of Varan; he will be a high noble all of his life, but never the one, true ruler (this has led to civil war more than once in the past). On rare



occasions a five-crested Varanyi is born outside of the Al'gari clan; such children are taken from their parents, raised as part of the Imperial Household, and "adopted" into the Al'gari clan. Sometimes an adopted Al'gari has even become Emperor.

Socially, there are two important divisions within Varanyi society. The first is "caste," or division based on crests. The more crests a Varanyi has, the higher his *t'illk*. *T'illk* combines some of the meaning of the human terms "mental serenity," "class," "status," and "face." Due to their mental powers, the Varanyi are easily able to judge another Varanyi's state of mind, psychological "balance," mental acuity, and mental power, and all of these factors, as well as the more concrete ones such as "status," are implicit in the meaning of the term.

T'illk marks a clear division between social strata, but can be "lost" if a Varanyi does something particularly embarrassing or detrimental to society, or "gained" by particularly important accomplishments. While it is very, very rare for a Varanyi to lose so much *t'illk* that he drops below the "class" dictated by his crests, it is more common for a Varanyi to "jump crests" (to use the colloquial term) due to *t'illk* gained through valor in warfare, scientific discoveries, artistic achievements, or other significant deeds. The *Ks'lch*, who have no crests and hence no *t'illk* whatsoever, are free to act as they please without suffering further social opprobrium, which offers them a measure of social freedom that is sometimes envied by crested Varanyi.

Percentage of Varanyi, By Crests

Number of Crests	Percent of Population
0 (<i>Ks'lch</i>)	50.27%
1 (<i>Chpereth</i>)	20.32%
2 (<i>Chvorsq</i>)	11.41%
3 (<i>Ch'ggeb</i>)	10.55%
4 (<i>Ch'yuuk</i>)	7.44%
5 (<i>Al'gari</i>)	0.01%

One's position in society, job, and opportunity for significant achievement are generally predicated upon one's crests and *t'illk* (in game terms, this is reflected by buying Fringe Benefits similar to those listed in the *HERO System Rulebook* for "Member of the Aristocracy"; the cost of the Fringe Benefit is equal to the number of crests the Varanyi has, with extra points being paid for especially high *t'illk*). The lowest, dirtiest, most menial and dangerous tasks are reserved for the *Ks'lch*. The mid-level positions are occupied by Varanyi of one or two crests. The highest positions of society are almost always occupied by Varanyi of three or more crests, though it is possible for a lesser crested Varanyi to earn sufficient *t'illk* (through valor in warfare, notable scientific discoveries, and similar accomplishments) to obtain a position normally reserved for Varanyi of more crests. The *Ks'lch* have no such opportunities for advancement; they are forever trapped in their caste.

The second important division in Varanyi society is the *ey'vidra*, or "clan." Family ties are very important to the Varanyi, and the clans form one of the backbones of Varanyi society; a Varanyi's clan name is written first, before his given name. As a result, nepotism is often rampant, and large clans or alliances of clans can wield significant social and political power. There are estimated to be a total of 357 Varanyi clans; one for the entirety of the *Ks'lch*, and 356 for the crested Varanyi. It is generally accepted that male Varanyi may marry females who are beneath them in number of crests, but that females will only marry males who have as many or more crests as they do; in any event, no crested Varanyi would ever marry a *Ks'lch*.

Each crested Varanyi clan has its own unique "coat of arms" (*nuvalish*); most are centuries old. They were developed as a form of ostentatious display at court and as a way for *Ks'lch* soldiers to identify their armies; obviously, the crested Varanyi have no need for visual battlefield identification markers, since they can read minds. By tradition a *nuvalish* is divided into one to five "fields," depending upon the number of crests possessed by clan members (thus, only the Al'gari have a five-field coat of arms). The fields may be horizontal or vertical; the basic shape of the heraldic device is rectangular.

Because all crested Varanyi can communicate mentally, speaking is very rare among them. The important places of Varan—the palaces, courts, and so forth—are as quiet as an Earth library. Only the *Ks'lch* need to communicate with their voices, and thus the use of the voice is regarded as crude, unrefined, and often insulting by the Varanyi. A Varanyi who wishes to express the deepest sort of scorn, sarcasm, or insult towards someone will use his voice instead of his telepathic abilities.

The prevalence of telekinetic powers among crested Varanyi has affected their society. Humans, who must pick up things with their hands, have to store objects relatively close to the ground (or use tools to reach objects stored on high shelves). The Varanyi, however, can put up dozens of feet of shelving anywhere and be assured that they will have no difficulty reaching the stored items. Psychokinetically activated "elevators" are used in tall buildings, preventing the *Ks'lch* from gaining access to the upper floors.

The Varanyi Military

The Varanyi are a militaristic race, and often belligerent, though they are by no means in a state of constant warfare like some races. Their military has to be large and powerful to control their far-flung empire, and as a result the military has a certain amount of political power and can often influence the Emperor to take a militaristic stance.

There are two branches to the Varanyi military: Planetary and Interplanetary. Planetary includes all operations that take place within an atmosphere (including all the functions of modern Earth armies, navies, and air forces); Interplanetary covers all space-



based military activities. Interplanetary is generally regarded as the more prestigious force. The rank structure within both branches is roughly analogous to that of modern Earth military forces.

Ks'lh are allowed to join the military, though they may not become officers. Officers must have at least one crest; in practice, it requires at least two crests to rise above the rank of "captain." To become a member of a "special force" or achieve most other distinctions (such as command of a ship), a Varanyi must usually have at least three crests.

Varanyi military uniforms are similar for both Planetary and Interplanetary, and are the same for men and women, though they look nothing like typical Varanyi clothing (see below). They consist of a pair of pants and a mid-thigh-length tunic. On the shoulders are epaulet-like attachments which hold indicators of rank, medals, and similar objects. The basic uniform color is a dull gold for Planetary and a light blue for Interplanetary.

Varanyi Religion

The Varanyi religion is a monotheistic faith devoted to the worship of a god named Yinda'r. Yindrist tenets are roughly analogous to those of Earth's major monotheistic religions, but there is a special emphasis on the unique place of the Varanyi in the universe and how they are destined to rule all other races. Thus, many Varanyi feel it is the race's religious duty to conquer other sentient races.

The *Sh'garothayn* is regarded as the *Htas'qa*, or "First Messenger," of Yinda'r, a position somewhat analogous to that of the Pope in Earth's Roman Catholic faith, but with much less religious authority. Instead, most religious authority resides in the church's "Archbishop" (*Htas'lur*).

Some devotion is also given to a large number of *L'itaryth*, a term which roughly translates into English as "hero-saint." These are great figures in Varanyi history who have achieved a sort of demigod status. Each clan tends to worship hero-saints from its own family, but some hero-saints are universally venerated.

Outside of the normal hierarchy of worship—indeed, outside of everything that is "normal" in Varanyi society—are the *Gyuki-ani*, a sect or cult of mystic ascetics who reside in the wild places of Varan and worship Yinda'r with their own ceremonies, which involve many esoteric practices. *Gyuki-ani* cultists are said to have developed many unusual mental powers, often far beyond those normally expected for a Varanyi of a particular number of crests. Examples include astral projection, clairvoyance, and even teleportation. The *Gyuki-ani* keep to themselves, avoiding Varanyi society entirely.

Varanyi Garb

Varanyi fashion is not notable for its variety or artistry. There is one basic fashion for men, and one for women. Men wear long, high-collared robes that tend to brush the ground, with sleeves that end about mid-forearm and are often flared. Women wear an

unusual garb that is best described as being like an Indian *sari* with a hood and long sleeves attached to it. Men's fashions are generally in drab colors, women's are more colorful. Men do not normally wear jewelry; women often wear it, especially rings and necklaces.

The Varanyi Attack On Earth

Driven in part by the needs of their economy, in part by the desires of the military, and in part by religious fervor, the Varanyi often search for worthwhile conquests to add to their Empire. The powers of trained psychics are boosted by machines and used to scan the universe, searching for potential targets. Thus it happened, one day not so long ago, that one of these psychics chanced to detect Earth. Were it not for the fact that Earth was so far away from Varan, it would have been detected long ago, for the psychic potential of Humanity is immense, much larger than that of most races, and the "background mental energy" hit the searcher like a beacon when he finally scanned in the right general area.

The High Council of the Varanyi military was summoned at once, and a debate began. Some argued that a planet with so much mental energy was bound to be dangerous. Others argued that the psychics had sensed merely *latent* mental energy, not active mental energy, and that this meant that the planet was like a vast psychic "battery" waiting for the Empire to conquer and use.

In the end, the latter argument won—but only barely. It was decided that instead of sending a full-fledged Expeditionary Force to conquer Earth, a single *g'u'radic* ("Star Galleon," the most powerful type of ship in the Varanyi Interplanetary Fleet) would be sent to survey the planet's resources and defenses and determine whether a full-fledged invasion was feasible.

And so it has come to pass that T'Nereq Skolvasian, *Utashrin* ("Commander") of the Star Galleon *Sitharados*, finds himself poised above the Earth, cloaking device engaged, ready to begin his survey. The survey has two stages. The first one, a general scanning of the planet to determine its composition, population, mental strength, and other vital statistics, is easily completed without Humanity any the wiser: not even the equipment aboard UNTIL's space station, GATEWAY, can pierce the *Sitharados*'s cloaking technology.

The second stage is where the player characters come in: it is a general testing of Earth's defenses and military might. Due to the potentially vast mental power of Earthlings, the Varanyi are afraid simply to subvert them mentally, for fear this may unleash latent mental abilities or have some other "side effect" that they cannot control. (GMs who are using the Varanyi in Psionics Campaigns may wish to change this, since a "mental invasion" would be more appropriate to such a campaign.) Thus, military assaults are their first tool of conquest. Many of these assaults will be made by robot-only forces, so as to disguise the true nature of the assaults; as a result, the PCs may



mistakenly conclude that Mechanon or a similar villain is actually behind the series of attacks. However, some attacks will involve the *Hrewinth H'varr* (roughly, “Thrice-Blessed Space Commandos”), a Varanyi elite force composed entirely of three-crested soldiers.

The exact type of and location of attacks during the second stage of the survey is up to the GM. However, if possible the assaults should be arranged so that the fact that there is a potential alien invader behind them is hidden for as long as possible. After the first stage of the survey, the Varanyi should be able to come up with several ways to disguise their forces (for example, as the minions of a powerful supervillain). The Varanyi will also be eager to test the might of powerful superteams, which they will recognize as a major obstacle to their plans of conquest. If possible, superteams’ spaceflight capability will be crippled as soon as possible, to prevent them from locating the Varanyi by actually coming out into space.

If the Varanyi forces are uniformly repulsed, or if Earth shows that it has the wherewithal to resist the Varanyi, T’Nereq’s report will be strongly against an invasion, and no invasion will occur—for now. If the Varanyi forces are victorious at least half the time, T’Nereq’s report will be neutral, and an invasion will be launched. If the Varanyi forces are victorious at least 70% of the time, T’Nereq’s report will be positive, and an invasion will be launched.

Once the invasion proper commences, the Varanyi will begin using their mental powers on humans, assured by the data they have gathered that doing so is not likely to trigger mass outbursts of humanity’s mental energy. T’Nereq’s ship and crew will begin laying the groundwork for this by slowly taking mental control of various Earth leaders and playing them off against one another. This will weaken Earth’s preparedness (if any) for the Varanyi invasion and its ability to counteract it.

T’Nereq Skolvasian

Commander of the *Sitharados*

Background/History: T’Nereq Skolvasian is a scion of the proud and ancient T’Nereq clan, a four-crested Varanyi family. Raised as he was in the shadow of his father and grandfather, both prominent Interplanetary officers, there was never any doubt that Skolvasian, too, would join the military.

Skolvasian joined the Interplanetary as soon as he could, and quickly proved to have a talent for it. He began a slow but steady rise up the Varanyi military rankings, until at age 41 he commanded a small Varanyi starship. Two important victories later, he had garnered himself not only the attention of his superiors and his people, but command of a Star Galleon, the *Sitharados*. Since then his reputation as a brilliant commander and military strategist has only grown, and it was a natural choice to pick him to lead the survey expedition to Earth—despite his personal misgivings about the entire affair.

Personality/Motivation: T’Nereq Skolvasian is a precise, disciplined person, one of the main reasons for his success in the military. However, he also exhibits a rare empathy with and compassion for individuals which has made him a truly great leader, and a skilled diplomat as well. He inspires a high level of loyalty from his men.

Although in his youth T’Nereq was somewhat hawkish in his approach to his missions, the passing of years has cooled the fires of his ardor somewhat. Today he prefers whenever possible to seek a diplomatic solution to problems, and regards the use of force as a last resort. He is very ambivalent about his mission to Earth; while he recognizes the planet’s value to his people, he would rather approach them openly with offers of an alliance or some other peaceful “arrangement” than conquer them by military might.

Quote: “The military is like a hot poker—a useful tool, but one that is likely to hurt you if you don’t handle it carefully.”

Powers/Tactics: T’Nereq Skolvasian possesses the mental powers of a Varanyi of his crests, age, and condition who engages in regular mental exercise. In addition, he possesses two unusual powers, clairvoyance and the ability to create a minor telekinetic/psychic force field—an indicator of his strength of will and mental might. Additionally, he is trained in Varanyi unarmed combat techniques and has access to an extremely wide variety of equipment and weapons.

T’Nereq’s approach to combat, whether starship or personal, is a cautious one. He prefers to adopt a defensive posture and wait for an enemy to commit himself, so that he has the best chance to study his opponent. He will then react in clever, and often unanticipated, ways. Still, he is smart enough to spot a good opportunity for a “first strike” and take it.

Appearance: T’Nereq is a tall, good-looking four-crested Varanyi in his mid-fifties. He wears a typical Star Galleon commander’s uniform: A pair of pants and a mid-thigh-length tunic colored light blue with scarlet highlights. His insignia of rank and military medals are on his “epaulets”; T’Nereq has been decorated so many times that he is what the Varanyi refer to as a *e’eridosz* (“golden-shouldered one”).

Author’s Note: Remember that the Skills possessed by Commander T’Nereq and other Varanyi are not necessarily the same as those possessed by Humans. The Varanyi versions of Bureaucratics, Computer Programming, Lockpicking, Systems Operation, and other Skills will not necessarily work when Humans or Earth technology are involved (and vice-versa when the characters attempt to steer the Star Galleon). Unfortunately, a detailed discussion of Varanyi technology and society is beyond the scope of this work, so GMs will have to adjudicate the effects of differences between the two species as they see fit.



T'Nereq Skolvasian Commander of the *Sitharados*

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	150 kg; 2½d6 [1]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
15	CON	10	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-
24	EGO	28	14-	ECV: 8
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack 4d6
14	COM	2	12-	
7	PD	4		
6	ED	3		
4	SPD	12		Phases: 3,6,9,12
6	REC	0		
50	END	10		
30	STUN	5		

Total Characteristics Cost: 119

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Powers & Skills

Combat Training

Martial Arts—*Z'Ddarign* ("Varanyi Karate") (22)

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage
Blade Hand	-2	+0	1d6 HKA
Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
Escape	+0	+0	STR 28 Escape
Hold	-1	-1	Grab two limbs, 23 STR
Punch	+0	+2	4 ½d6
Throw	+0	+1	2 ½d6+v/5; target falls

Varanyi Mental Powers:

Mental Defense : 12 pts. (7)

Mind Link, any Varanyi, up to 32 minds at once;

Only With Others Who Have Mind

Link (-1) (22)

Multipower 40 point pool (40)

u - 8d6 Telepathy (40/4) [4]

u - 24 STR Telekinesis (36/4) [4]

u - 4d6 Ego Attack (40/4) [4]

u - 8d6 Mental Illusions (40/4) [4]

u - 8d6 Mind Control (40/4) [4]

u - Farseeing: Clairvoyance,

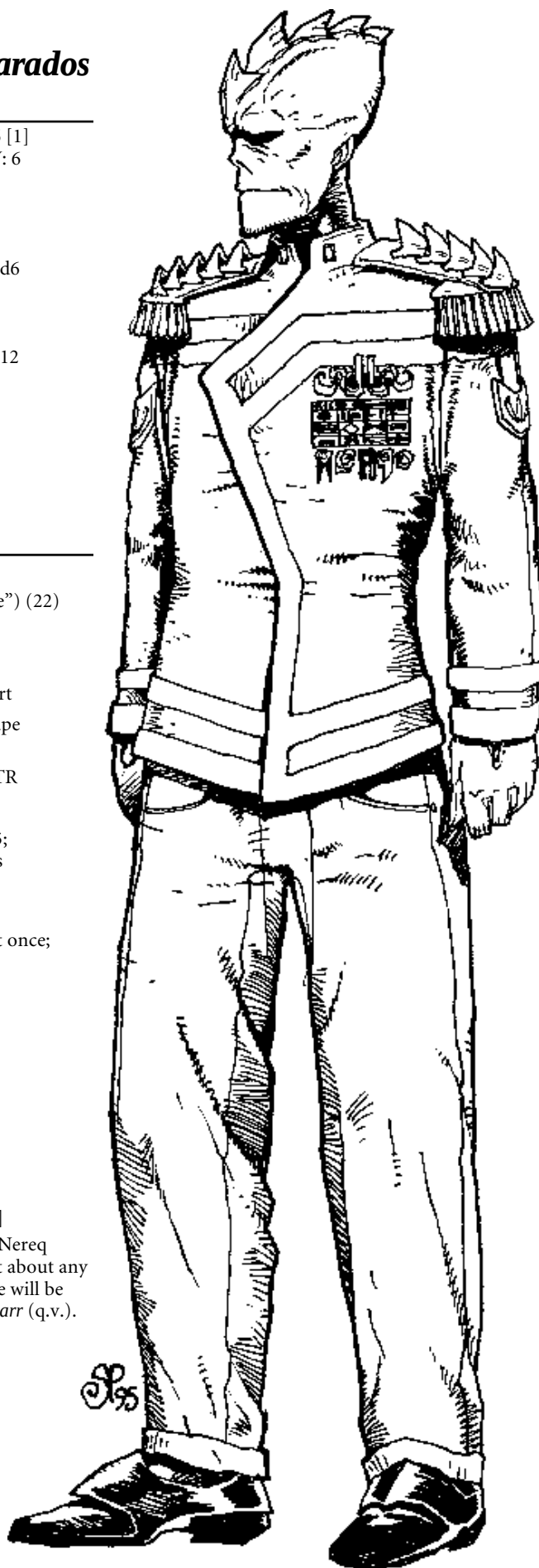
400" Range (35/3) [3]

8d6 Mind Scan (40) [4]

Force Field +5 PD, +5 ED, +5 MD (15) [1]

Weapons and Equipment: Commander T'Nereq

can reasonably be assumed to carry just about any sort of equipment he wants. In battle he will be equipped similarly to the *Hrewinth H'varr* (q.v.).



Starship Commander Skills:
 Fringe Benefit: Starship Captain (5)
 Fringe Benefit: Galactic Computernet Access Card (3)
 Fringe Benefit: Member Of The Varanyi Aristocracy (4)
 Well-Connected (3)
 15 Contacts (11- each) throughout the Varanyi military and society (15)
 Bureaucrats 13- (3)
 Combat Piloting 13- (3)
 Computer Programming 13- (3)
 Electronics 8- (1)
 High Society 13- (3)
 Oratory 13- (3)
 Systems Operation 13- (3)
 Tactics 13- (3)
 TF: All Space Vehicles (2)
 WF: Small Arms (2)
 Total Powers & Skills Cost: 225

Total Character Cost: 344

Disadvantages: 100+

Distinctive Features:

Varanyi military commander (easily concealed) (5)

Hunted by:

Enemies of the Varanyi, as powerful, NCI, 8- (15)

Psychological Limitation:

Varanyi Patriot (Common, Strong) (15)

Prefers Diplomacy To Force (Common) (10)

Reputation:

Skilled starship commander
 (among the Varanyi), 11- (10)

Watched by:

Superior officers, more powerful, NCI 8- (10)

Villain Bonus: (179)

Total Disadvantage Points: 344

Typical Hrewinth H'varr

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	STR	10	13-	400 kg; 4d6 [2]
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
20	CON	20	13-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack 4d6
10	COM	0	11-	
10	PD	6		
9	ED	5		
4	SPD	10		Phases: 3,6,9,12
10	REC	4		
50	END	5		
40	STUN	5		

Total Characteristics Cost: 136

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
 Swimming: 2"/4"

Powers & Skills

Combat Training

Combat Levels: +1 Level w/ Combat (8)

Combat Levels: +2 Levels w/ Blaster (6)

Martial Arts—*Z'Ddarign* ("Varanyi Karate") (30)

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage
Blade Hand	-2	+0	2d6 HKA
Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
Escape	+0	+0	STR 45 Escape
Hold	-1	-1	Grab two limbs, 40 STR
Punch	+0	+2	8d6
Throw	+0	+1	6d6+v/5; target falls

+2 Damage Classes (already added in)

Varanyi Mental Powers:

Mental Defense: 9 pts. (5)

Mind Link, any Varanyi, up to 16 minds at once;
 Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1) (20)

Multipower 30 point pool (30)

u - 6d6 Telepathy (30/3) [3]

u - 20 STR Telekinesis (30/3) [3]

u - 3d6 Ego Attack (30/3) [3]

6d6 Mind Scan (30) [3]

Battle Armor, OIF:

Armor +6 PD, +6 ED (12)

PsiShield: Mental Defense: +3 pts. (2)

Communications/Sensor Array: High Range
 Radio Hearing, IR Vision, UV Vision (13)



Assault Blaster: Multipower 60 point pool, OIF (30)
 u - Standard Bolt: 8d6 EB, 0 END (60/3) [0]
 u - Rapid Fire: 6d6 EB, Autofire, 64 charges (60/3)
 [64c]
 u - Needle Bolt: 2d6 RKA, AP, 16 charges (45/2)[16c]
 Other weapons and equipment appropriate to
 mission (GM's choice, up to 30 points worth)(30)

Hrewinth H'Vaar Skills:

Fringe Benefit: Member Of The Varanyi Aristocracy
 (3)

Fringe Benefit: Member Of Varanyi Elite
 Military Force (3)

Climbing 13- (3)

Combat Piloting 13- (3)

Computer Programming 8- (1)

Demolitions 11- (3)

Navigation 11- (3)

Stealth 13- (3)

Survival 11- (3)

Systems Operation 12- (3)

Tactics 12- (3)

WF: Small Arms, Knives (3)

Choose two from the following list: Bugging;
 Cryptography; Electronics; Lockpicking;
 Mechanics; Paramedic; Security Systems;
 Streetwise; Tracking; TF (3 points' worth);
 Weaponsmith (6)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 273

Total Character Cost: 409

Disadvantages: 100+

Distinctive Features:

Varanyi elite force member (easily concealable) (5)

Hunted by:

Enemies of the Varanyi, as powerful, NCI, 8- (15)

Psychological Limitation:

Varanyi Patriot (Common, Total) (20)

Reputation :

Space commando (among the Varanyi), 11- (5)

Watched by:

Superior officers, more powerful, NCI, 8- (10)

Villain Bonus (249)

Total Disadvantage Points: 404

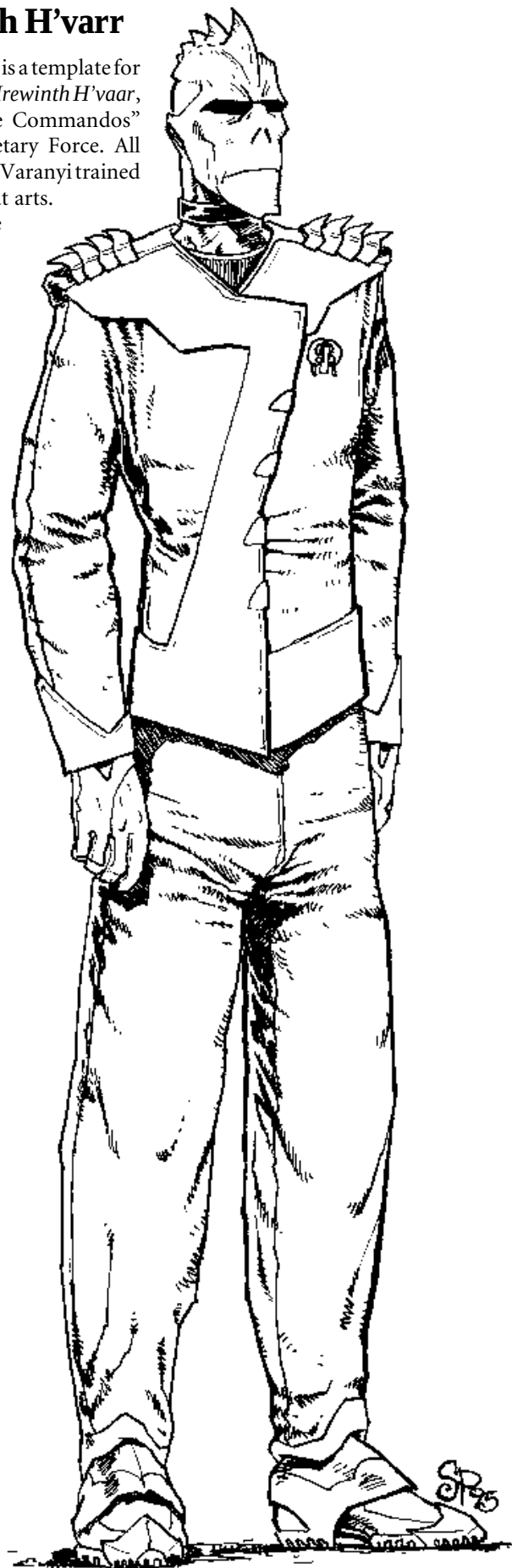
Typical Hrewinth H'varr

Notes: This character sheet is a template for the typical member of the *Hrewinth H'vaar*, the "Thrice-Blessed Space Commandos" of the Varanyi Interplanetary Force. All members are three-crested Varanyi trained in a wide variety of combat arts.

Their main weapon is the Varanyi Assault Blaster, a carbine-sized energy weapon; each Space Commando will carry additional weapons and equipment as appropriate for the mission.

The Space Commandos are a hard-driving, fanatic fighting force; they will commit suicide rather than be captured. Their preferred method of suicide is a mental discipline called *iwdric*, in which they literally "shut off" their body and mind, burning all information out of their brains in the process. (This ability is a plot device, and therefore does not appear on the character sheet.)

Appearance: On formal occasions, the *Hrewinth H'vaar* wear a special dress military uniform in a unique shade of blue which is associated with them ("Space Commando blue"). Their identifying insignia is a neck-ring made of gold and an obsidian-like mineral (for this reason they are sometimes known as the *V'raireth Rheng*, or "Black Torcs").





G'u'radic (Varanyi Star Galleon)

Description: A Varanyi Star Galleon, or *g'u'radic*, is not a spaceship designed to appeal to human aesthetics. Indeed, it has an almost insectile appearance, with its numerous protrusions (pods for communications and sensory equipment and weapons) and the five raised "crests" running along the top of its long body (an imitation of the five crests of the Varanyi emperor). It is painted a dull black, the better to blend into the background of space.

Author's Note: Regarding the ship's Sensor Array, technically it violates the *HERO System* rules to put Enhanced Senses in a Variable Power Pool. However, the type and number of sensors a starship possesses are so varied and large that there is no other cost-efficient way to represent them. Listing each one separately would invariably result in one or more sensors being forgotten, which would only become apparent once the ship was in use in a game. GMs who prefer to list the sensors individually are free to do so.

G'u'radic (Varanyi Star Galleon)

Val	CHA	Cost	Notes
85	STR	0	3200 ton; 17d6
25	BODY	0	
15	SIZE	75	OCV: 4/DCV: 4 Phases: 4,8,12
15	DEF	39	
12	DEX	6	
3	SPD	8	

Total Characteristics Cost: 128

Movement: Flight: 50"/1600"
FTL: 2 LY/Minute

Powers & Abilities

Movement:

Flight: 50" Flight with x32 Non-Combat Multiple (120)

FTL: 1,024,000 LY/Year (2 LY/minute) (50)

No Ground Movement (-12)

Power Plant: END Reserve 2000 END, 50 REC, OIF (125)

Computer: See below for statistics (115)

Photon Cannon: RKA 6d6, ½ END, OIF (56) [4]

Cannon Bank: x16 number of Photon Cannons (20)

Stellar Torpedoes: RKA 4d6, Explosion, 16 charges (45) [16c]

Torpedo Rack: x8 Stellar Torpedo Launchers

Life Support: Provides air, food, and immunity to vacuum for those inside it; its atmosphere is standard Varanyi (which is breathable by humans, though uncomfortably humid) (18)

Cloaking Device: Invisibility to all Sense Groups, ½ END; OIF (500) [4]

Communications Array: High Range Radio Hearing; OIF (5)

Sensor Array: Variable Power Pool, 80 base + 40 control cost; OIF, Only For Sensors (-1) (93)

Computer Stats:

Val	CHA	Cost
25	INT	(15)
20	DEX	(30)
4	SPD	(10)

Powers & Abilities

Universal Translator 14- (20)

Skills: Combat Piloting 13-; Computer

Programming 14-; Electronics 11-; Mechanics

11-; Navigation 14-; Systems Operation 14-;

Scholar and 60 11- KSs; Scientist and 30 11- SCs (120)

Programs: Drive Ship From A To B; Attack And Destroy Target; Run Ship Diagnostics; Operate Sensor Array; Show Entertainment; Search Reference Sources For Information On A Topic; 30 others of GM's choice (36)

Disadvantages:

Distinctive Features:

Varanyi warship (not concealable; causes fear) (25)

Total Disadvantage Points: 867/173

Brainchylde

Background/History: Bernard Shelton can't remember a time when he didn't have mental powers. When he was in elementary school and junior high, he used them to keep bullies away from him—and he was already smart enough to conceal his powers while he did it. In high school he used his powers to get straight As, and girls, who couldn't withstand the force of his powers of mental domination. All in all, a most pleasant existence.

Bernard, already well-versed in many scientific subjects (including psionic engineering) due to his innate intelligence and interest in such matters, didn't bother with college; instead, he went straight out into the working world—or, more precisely, the working underworld, since he realized that he could use his powers to get money the same way he'd used them to get girls. He arrogantly christened himself “Brainchylde” and set about robbing banks. His first few robberies were an astounding success; he flashily mind controlled the guards and loudly demanded money from the tellers, who just handed it to him, after which he walked out the door. Then he tried to rob a bank when Dr. Thomas Adams (Starburst) happened to be nearby. A few minutes later, Starburst was posing heroically for the cameras and giving a post-battle interview while Brainchylde was being taken by emergency vehicle to the hospital ward at Stronghold.

Humiliated and badly injured, Bernard began to rethink his approach. He didn't like pain—in fact, he absolutely loathed it—and had little interest in getting involved with the usual sorts of superbattles that people with superpowers seemed to participate in. He could make more money by using his mental and scientific talents to supply the underworld with goods and services. That would be nice, safe, and profitable.

After his broken ribs and third-degree burns had healed, Brainchylde served the rest of his term, was released, and then simply vanished. The police are still looking for him because he has violated the terms of his parole, but they are unaware that he has developed a lucrative trade in gadgetry for criminals.

Personality/Motivation: For a mentalist, Bernard Shelton is a relatively normal guy. All he asks out of life is that he be left alone to accumulate as much money as possible so that he can live like a king. The fact that people want to stop him from doing this because he acquires money in a criminal fashion annoys him considerably. The way he sees it, he's entitled to some money, since he doesn't try to use his mental powers to conquer the world or anything, like those *other* villains. He's doing the world a favor, and he ought to be compensated for it.

Brainchylde's goal as a criminal is to amass as much wealth as possible. He has very expensive tastes that he likes to indulge; whenever possible, he will live in expensive hotel rooms and penthouses, eat the best food, drink the finest wines, and date the most

beautiful women (whether they'll date him of their own free will or not). If he doesn't have money, you can bet that he's scheming to get some, somehow. If he ever hit a *really* big score, he would probably retire from crime—at least until the money ran out.

Brainchylde is a coward, though not an abject one. His fight with Starburst taught him just how painful superpowered combat can be, and he has no desire to repeat the experience. He will run rather than fight if confronted by superheroes. The only exception to this is that he absolutely cannot stand to be insulted or taunted; it brings back unpleasant memories of his childhood as an “egghead.” He is likely to turn on the person throwing insults at him and try to teach them a lesson.

Coward or not, Brainchylde is still a criminal, and sometimes displays a rather vicious streak. He will make sneak attacks or use “dirty blows” to gain a quick advantage, and he loves to torment his enemies when they're down (or to take unpleasant forms of revenge on them if they hurt or capture him). Superheroes who approach him simply as a cowardly little gadgeteer are in for a surprise.

Quote: “I think I've got just the thing for you....”

Powers/Tactics: Brainchylde is a mentalist with an average range of average-strength mental abilities. However, he tends to make his money with his talents as an electronics wizard and inventor—he supplies other criminals with gadgets or advice to help their crimes run better. Occasionally he hires himself out to help criminal groups; he does still commit a few crimes on his own, but they tend to be very low-risk crimes.

Brainchylde usually carries a large selection of gadgets (and spare parts with which to build other gadgets). He is really more dangerous as a gadgeteer than as a mentalist, a fact his enemies sometimes forget. His most favorite gadgets are those which enhance his mental powers or provide him with additional mental powers (Brainchylde is possibly the world's foremost expert on the science of Psionic Engineering). Other favorites include teleportation devices (“best thing in the world for a quick exit”), hologram projectors (“a wide variety of devious uses”), and defensive gadgets (“never hurts to boost the ol' force-field a little”).

Appearance: Brainchylde is an average-looking white man in his early 40s. His black hair is going prematurely bald in front. When “on duty,” he wears a loose red bodysuit with dull orange boots and gloves, with an X-shaped dull orange harness over his chest which holds various spare parts in its pockets. His force field belt is black with a large silver buckle with a red “B” on it. His mask is a red half-face mask.



Campaign Use: Brainchylde is primarily intended for superheroic campaigns or high-powered psionics campaigns. Brainchylde also works well in science fiction environments, since his strengths (electronics and psionics) are important elements of most sci-fi games. He can be used in low-powered psionics games simply by reducing his power level. By reducing his powers still further, and emphasizing the vicious side of his nature a little more, he could possibly become a sophisticated underworld supplier in paranormal Dark Champions campaigns.

Brainchylde

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	100 kg; 2d6 [1]
17	DEX	21	12-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
15	CON	10	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll 13-
24	EGO	28	14-	ECV: 8
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack 3d6
10	COM	0	11-	
4	PD	2		
5	ED	2		
5	SPD	23		Phases: 3,5,8,10,12
7	REC	4		
30	END	0		
30	STUN	7		

Total Characteristics Cost: 112

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Powers & Skills

Mutant Powers:

Mental Power Multipower: 50 point pool (50)
u - Mental Blast: Ego Attack 4d6,
½ END Cost (50/5) [2]
u - Mental Control: Mind Control 10d6 (50/5) [5]
u - Mental Illusions 8d6, ½
u - Mind Reading: Telepathy 8d6,
½ END Cost (50/5) [2]

Mental Defense: 8 pts. (3)

Gadget Pool: Power Pool 50 point pool, all powers must be at least OIFs (67)

Force Field Belt: Force Field +10 PD, +10 ED, 0 END, OIF (20) [0]

Background Skills:

Computer Programming 13- (3)

Electronics 13- (7)

Gadgeteering 20- (17)

Inventor 13- (3)

Mechanics 11- (3)

Persuasion 12- (3)

Security Systems 13- (3)

Systems Operation 13- (3)

Scientist (3)

SC: Psionic Engineering 16- (3)

SC: Physics 13- (3)

SC: Biology 13- (3)

SC: Neurobiology 13- (3)

SC: Chemistry 13- (3)

SC: Robotics 13- (3)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 220

Total Character Cost: 332

Disadvantages: 100+

Enraged:

if taunted, belittled, or insulted, go 11-, recover 11- (10)

Hunted by:

Law enforcement organization of GM's choice, more powerful, NCI, 8- (20)

PSI, more powerful, NCI, 8- (20)

Genocide, more powerful, NCI 8- (20)

Psychological Limitation:

Coward (Common, Strong) (15)

Sybarite (Common) (10)

Reputation:

Cowardly criminal psionic gadgeteer 8- (limited group: the underworld) (5)

Secret Identity: Bernard Shelton (15)

Unluck: 1d6 (5)

Villain Bonus (112)

Total Disadvantage Points: 332



Psychophant

Background/History: Gerald had been bad again.

"How many times do I have to tell you, young man?" his mother shouted at him, angrily. "Do not... touch... things... that you're not supposed to!" Each word was punctuated with a slap from her big, hard hand.

"B-but Momma," sniffled Gerald, "it was jussa cookie..."

STUPID BRAT

The blow he received in exchange for his whining was harder than the other three. Gerald stumbled back against the wall, crying, holding his head. It hurt, and someone else was talking to him, like his mother's voice, sort of, but far away and ... different.

NEVER SHOULD'VE HAD HIM

"Go to your room, Gerald, and don't come out until I say so!"

"Yes, Momma," Gerald said quietly. He could still "hear" her as he went up the stairs

DAMN KID'S GOTTA LEARN...

* * *

The hallway was crowded, like it always was between classes. It made Gerald's head hurt.

STUPID HOMEWORK...

COMPTON'S AN ASSHOLE...

I'D LIKETA BEAT THE...

WHAT A GEEK...

Why did They keep telling him these things? It made his head hurt, a deep, throbbing ache to match the beating of his heart. It made him want to... to... Unable to bear the thought, he turned and ran away from the hallway, hoping to escape Them.

* * *

"Thank you for coming in, Mrs. Hines," the principal said.

"I was lucky I could get the time from work," Mrs. Hines replied with a slight edge to her voice.

"I need to talk to you about Gerald, Mrs. Hines," the principal explained. "It's very important. His behavior is getting worse. In the past few weeks he's become even more inattentive and uncooperative—and more violent. Today he attacked one of the girls."

"What?" Mrs. Hines said, half amazed, half angry. "What do you mean, attacked?"

"He cornered this girl in the computer lab after everyone had left and knocked her down and began pawing at her. She's not hurt, but she's very shaken up. From what she told me, it seems to me that the attack had sexual overtones of some sort. Gerald's only fourteen, Mrs. Hines. Even in today's society, that's a little early for this sort of... assault."

"What do you suggest, Mr. Michaels?" Flora Hines asked weakly.

"I'm going to suspend Gerald for a week, Mrs. Hines. Before he gets himself in serious trouble—trouble with the law—*please* get him some counseling. He's disturbed, he needs help."

* * *

Momma was shouting at him again. It seemed like all she ever did was shout at him.

"...and you quit therapy, why I *don't* know, and now *this!*!" She waved the magazine in front of his face. "There's a whole box of them in there, where did you get them?"

HE'S A PERVERT

Gerald didn't say anything. He was tired of being yelled at. He just glared at her.

"Answer me!" she yelled again. "These filthy magazines, God knows what sort of ideas they're filling your head with!"

MY SON THE SEX FREAK

Gerald just kept glaring. Suddenly his mother stopped talking. There was a funny expression on her face. She clutched her hands to her head. "Oh, my head!" she said, not yelling this time. "Gotta get some aspirin." She only made it a few steps before she collapsed. Gerald was so angry he didn't even bother to find out what was wrong with her, he just picked up his magazine and went back to his room.

A couple of days later, when a neighbor noticed the smell, the police came. They found Flora Hines's decomposing body in the den. The kitchen was filled with empty frozen food containers and dirty dishes. Gerald was upstairs looking at his magazines.

Not sure whether Gerald was guilty or just deranged, the police took him into custody. Throughout it all he was sullen and uncommunicative; the police psychologist thought that he seemed distracted all the time, but couldn't get him to talk about it. When the autopsy showed that Mrs. Hines died of a massive brain hemorrhage, and not because of foul play, Gerald, now 16, was released into the custody of the County Home.

He only stayed there a couple of months. According to police reports, he sexually assaulted one of the girls at the Home, but did not seriously injure her. Then he fled.

That was over ten years ago. He hasn't been in anyone's custody since then. But he hasn't been a free man, either. They keep telling him what to do. No matter where he goes, no matter what he does, They talk to him, constantly whispering in his ear of hatred and violence, prompting him, always prompting him...

Personality/Motivation: Gerald Hines's psychology has been shaped primarily by his childhood and his powers. Raised by a repressed mother who disciplined him harshly, but erratically, and without positive male influences in his life, Hines developed unhealthy attitudes towards women and sexuality. From an early age he was constantly getting in trouble, seemingly unconcerned with authority or punishment.

His telepathic powers developed while he was still quite young, and the constant stream of negative voices that he heard, voices describing all sorts of terrible things that he should do to people, merely exacerbated his antisocial tendencies further. Hines's somewhat malleable personality is strongly influ-



enced by the voices in his head, and he usually does what “They” tell him to do. Since his Telepathy mostly picks up negative thoughts, Hines’s actions are usually correspondingly ugly, evil, and horrifying. Sometimes Hines does exactly as “They” bid him (for example, “Boy, I hate it when those damn construction workers whistle at me! I wish they’d fall off that building!!”); but usually, the “negative energy” that fills his mind merely prompts him to do *something* negative, not necessarily exactly what “They” say. After he does something in response to “Their” voices, They are calm for a while, and Hines knows some small measure of peace.

It wasn’t long after puberty when Hines began attacking people. This led to his subconscious attack on his mother, which killed her. Hines primarily attacks women, raping and killing them, as a way of satisfying his deviant sexual desires and quieting the voices in his mind. This has created a definite “link” in his mind—“If I do what They say, I’ll feel good!” Thus, he is unlikely to stop what he is doing unless forced to.

Quote: None. Psychophant never speaks to his victims, and rarely speaks to anyone else.

Powers/Tactics: Psychophant possesses some mental powers which he does not know about and exercises no control over. First, he has the power to “burn out” another person’s brain, injuring or killing them. Although he thinks he is strangling his victims when he kills them, in truth he is unknowingly using his power to kill them. Occasionally, when he thinks particularly hateful thoughts about someone in that person’s presence, they too will be attacked. (Since Psychophant does have *some* control over his powers this way, even though he’s not aware of it, no Limitation is taken to reflect his overall lack of control over this power; its unusual nature is simply a plot device.)

Psychophant’s other power is the ability to hear the thoughts of people around them. He experiences this as “voices in his head,” which he refers to simply as “They” (as in, “but they told me to!”). He has no control over this power whatsoever. For unknown reasons, this power is more likely to work around women, and is more likely to pick up negative thoughts than positive ones, thus causing/contributing to his mental problems (see above).

Appearance: Psychophant is a dirty little man in his late twenties. His blonde hair is greasy and stringy, his clothes need washing, and so does he. He lives in a succession of cheap apartments, never really working, just subsisting on disability payments.

Campaign Use: Psychophant is intended primarily for lower-powered psionics or superheroes campaigns, and paranormal Dark Champions campaigns. His powers make him a good one-shot villain, the subject of a scenario in which the PCs track him down and apprehend or kill him, but he can also be used repeatedly. To use him in a more four-color campaign, give him a few more mental powers and make him more of a psychic vampire—not a serial killer, but someone who stalks the streets using his powers to siphon the *élan vital* out of people.

Headhunter

Background/History: Mentalists the world over worry about the man they call Headhunter. They don’t know where he comes from. They don’t know what he looks like. They don’t know how he finds them. But they do know that when he finds a person with mental powers, that person dies. His trademark is a large-caliber bullet through the mentalist’s brain. Usually these bullets are fired from a long distance away, indicating that Headhunter is a skilled sniper.

A lot of rumors circulate around the Psionic World about Headhunter. The most popular theory is that he is a special agent of Genocide, working to eliminate all mentalists because the vast majority of them are mu-



Psychophant

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	200 kg; 3d6 [1]
17	DEX	21	12-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
18	CON	16	13-	
13	BODY	6	12-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack 4d6
8	COM	-1	11-	
8	PD	5		
6	ED	2		
4	SPD	13		Phases: 3,6,9,12
8	REC	2		
36	END	0		
30	STUN	0		

Total Characteristics Cost: 100

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Powers & Skills

Mental Rupture: RKA 1d6, BOECV, Does BODY, Invisible Power Effects (+½) (56) [2]

Receptive Telepathy: Telepathy 6d6, 0 END, Act. 9- (Act. 12- around women, -¾), No Conscious Control, Receptive Only (-½) (11) [0]

Mental Defense: 14 pts. (14)

Stealth 13- (5)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 82

Total Character Cost: 182

Disadvantages: 100+

Hunted by:

The police, more powerful, NCI, 8- (20)

Psychological Limitation:

Sociopath (Very Common, Total) (25)

Does What "They" Tell Him To (Common, Total) (20)

Secret Identity: Gerald Hines (15)

Villain Bonus (2)

Total Disadvantage Points: 182

tants. Some mentalists favor a simpler explanation, for example a straightforward, psychotic hatred of mentalists. The wildest theory is that Headhunter is himself a mentalist; he stalks and kills his own kind because the mental energies emitted by other psionics give him intense, painful headaches. No doubt even stranger theories will be created in the future.

Personality/Motivation: The simple theory—a psychotic hatred of mentalists—is actually the correct one. Like many other people, Headhunter once found himself in an unenviable position, the midst of a superbattle. In his case, it was a fight between PSI and some other mentalists. During this battle, both of Headhunter's parents were killed, and he and his younger brother were both used as "puppets" by the opposing sides, and as "mental launching platforms" from which the two sides could attack each other. This altered Headhunter irrevocably; he somehow gained the ability to perceive mental energies, and to

detect the presence of mentalists even when their powers were not in use. His younger brother was not so fortunate: his mind was burned out, leaving him a slack-jawed, "retarded" man with the mind of a six-year-old.

The incident changed Headhunter's mind in other ways. He developed an intense, obsessive-compulsive hatred of mentalists and their powers. Viewing them as a threat to all of humanity, he first tried writing to elected officials, trying to persuade them to outlaw psionic powers and round up and execute all mentalists. When that didn't work, he realized that *the mentalists had taken control of the government!* He immediately went into hiding—and began training.

His sole motivation, then as now, was the protection of humanity through the elimination of anyone with any mental powers (even latent mental powers). He has become quite callous about murder, blowing away anyone that he even *suspects* is a mentalist, and frequently injuring innocent bystanders during his attacks on mentalists. He often talks to himself during his attacks, psyching himself up, chanting slogans, and muttering insults at his targets.

Headhunter tends to think that mentalists are "behind" everything—working behind the scenes as puppetmasters, they have engineered Clinton's election, the introduction of blue M&Ms, the cancellation of the original *Star Trek* television show, increased defense spending... you name it. Still, for someone so unbalanced, he appears and acts remarkably sane (though extremely cold-blooded, of course).

Many believe Headhunter to be an agent of Genocide, but this is not true. He does have contacts in that organization, and works with them from time to time when their goals align, but he has nothing against mutants other than mentalists.

Quote: (As he sights in on a mentalist, before pulling the trigger) "The world needs you like it needs a hole in the head, Mr. Mentalist. Maybe *you're* the one who needs a hole in the head."

Powers/Tactics: Headhunter knows full well how powerful mentalists can be, and doesn't want to get anywhere near them. His main tactic is sniping; he has a powerful sniper rifle and is skilled with it. He locates targets by listening to police scanners for locations of superbattles, hanging around police stations where sanctioned heroes work in an effort to "spot" mentalists and register their unique mental "profiles" in his mind using his Detect Mentalists power. He tries not to remain "on stakeout" too long, though, for fear of triggering Danger Sense and related abilities.

Appearance: Since Headhunter has never been captured, and attacks from a distance, no one is quite sure what he looks like. Based on the information available, it is generally accepted that he is a white male of average build and height with dark hair, but any or all of these parameters could be questioned.

Campaign Use: Headhunter is appropriate for any type of campaign involving mentalists, though he is most fearsome in a psionics campaign.



Headhunter

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	STR	10	13-	400 kg; 4d6 [2]
23	DEX	39	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
20	CON	20	13-	
14	BODY	8	12-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 14—
18	EGO	16	13-	ECV: 6
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack 3d6
12	COM	1	11—	
8	PD	4		
8	ED	4		
5	SPD	17		Phases: 3,5,8,10,12
8	REC	0		
40	END	0		
35	STUN	1		

Total Characteristics Cost: 133

Movement: Running: 8"/16"
Swimming: 3"/6"
Superleap: 7"/14"
Swinging: 20"/40"

Powers & Skills

Combat Training:

Combat Levels: +5 OCV w/ Sniper Rifle (10)

Skill Levels: +1 Level w/ PER Rolls (3)

Martial Art—Commando Training (39)

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage
Aikido Throw	+0	+1	6d6+v/5"; target falls
Boxing Cross	+0	+2	8d6
Choke	-2	+0	Grab one limb; 2d6 NND(2)
Escape	+0	+0	45 STR Escape
Hold	-1	-1	Grab three limbs, 40 STR
Judo Disarm	-1	+1	40 STR Disarm
Karate "Chop"	-2	+0	2d6 HKA
Kung Fu Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort +2 Damage Classes (already added in)

Sniper Rifle: RKA 2d6, No range Mod, 750" maximum range, 8 charges, OAF (21) [8c]

Scope: Infrared Vision; +2 OCV; OAF (7)

Revolver w/ Magsafe Bullets: RKA 1 ½d6, +1 STUN Multiplier, 2 clips of 6 charges, OAF (15)[2x6c]

MindBlinder Grenades: Darkness 3"r to Darkness to Normal Smell, Sight Group, and Mental Sense Group, 8 charges, OAF (20) [8c]

Line-Gun: Multipower 30 point base, OAF (15)

u - Swinging 20" (20/1) [1/5"]

u - +18" Superleap (10" up total), Only Works To Carry User Upward (-½), No Non-Combat Multiple (-¼) (18/1) [1/5"]

u - +5 to Climbing Skill rolls (10/1)

u - Telekinesis STR 10, Only To Pull To Pull Objects

Towards User (-½), Affects Entire Object (No Squeezing) (-¼) (15/1) [1]

u - Entangle 3d6 DEF 3, 1 Recoverable Charge, Lockout (cannot use Line-Gun's other powers until Charge is recovered, -1), Range Based On STR (-¼), Cannot Create "Walls" (-¼)(30/1)[1rc]

Mini-Hang Glider: 8" Gliding 8", OAF (4)

Running: +2" (8" total) (4) [1/5"]

Superleap: +3" (7" forward, 4" upward total) (3)[1/5"]

Swimming: +1" (3" total) (2) 1/5"

Sense Mentalist Abilities:

Detect Mentalists 13- (3)

Mental Awareness, Targeting Sense (23)

Mental Defense: 20 pts (16)

Background Skills:

Contact: Genocide, 11- (2)

Money: Well Off (5)

Acrobatics 14- (3)

Breakfall 14- (3)

Climbing 14- (3)

Combat Driving 14- (3)

Combat Piloting 8- (1)

Computer Programming 8- (1)

Demolitions 11- (3)

High Society 12- (3)

KS: Mentalism 13- (3)

KS: The Psionic World 13- (3)

KS: Genocide 8- (1)

Stealth 14- (3)

Streetwise 12- (3)

TF: All Ground Vehicles (2)

WF: Small Arms (2)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 233

Total Character Cost: 366

Disadvantages: 100+

DNPC:

"Retarded" younger brother, incompetent, 8- (15)

Hunted by:

PSI, more powerful, NCI, 8- (20l)

Hunted: FBI, more powerful, NCI, 8- (20)

Psychological Limitation:

Hatred Of mentalist and mentalism (Very Common, Total) (25)

Casual killer (Common, Total) (20)

Reputation:

Killer of mentalists, 11- (limited group: mentalists, mutants) (10)

Secret Identity: James Stern (15)

Watched by:

Genocide, more powerful, NCI, 8- (10)

Villain Bonus (131)

Total Disadvantage Points: 366



136

Mordecai Mentos

Background/History: At age 28, Mordecai Mentos seemed to have it all. The son of Greek immigrants to the United States, he was smart enough to qualify for a scholarship so that he could attend college. He studied business, a subject he took to like a fish to water, and went on to earn an M.B.A. at the Wharton School. He was hired by a Wall Street stock brokerage right out of business school and quickly became the firm's hottest "young gun." He was on top of the world, and he knew it.

But he still wanted *more*. No matter how much he had, it was never enough. He had to keep progressing, moving ever upward, or he'd stagnate. He soon found the key to doing just that. One day, while walking around Wall Street on his lunch hour, he realized that he could hear bits and pieces of the thoughts of people standing nearby. Concentrating, he found that he could read their minds just like he could read *The Wall Street Journal!*

He was so amazed, he didn't even go back to work that day. He just sat on the street, reading people's minds. He learned some incredible things—business deals that were about to take place, insider trading schemes, who was being investigated by the Securities and Exchange Commission, and who *ought* to be investigated.

Using that information, and information he gained from reading other peoples' minds, Mentos quadrupled his personal fortune in the space of a month. Soon he was bringing in more money than he could count, and not just from financial deals—from blackmail. No one ever learned how he knew what he knew, but they were willing to pay handsomely to prevent him from telling anyone about it. Mentos found that wielding power over people this way was even more fun than making money.

He's kept at it to this day. Mentos will soon be one of the richest, if not *the* richest, men in the world. But for him, it's still not enough. Heaven only knows what prize he'll set his eyes on next.

Personality/Motivation: Although he is superficially charming, and can be quite kind if he wants to, Mordecai Mentos is actually a greedy, deceitful little weasel. He'd sell his own grandmother to a biker gang if he thought he could make a good profit on the deal, and he thinks nothing of crushing anybody who stands in his way. He loves being able to find out secrets about people and use them as a hook to get them to do what he wants. He has extorted all sorts of "favors," financial, political, and sexual, in this fashion.

Quote: "I think you want to do me a favor."

Powers/Tactics: Mordecai Mentos possesses only two mental powers, but they are two extremely useful powers. One is a moderate-strength telepathy. Mentos always attempts to achieve a +20 "undetected" effect, so that his targets will not know that he is

reading their minds. The second, a sort of "reversal" or "extension" of the first power, is the ability to make it appear as if he is not around. He will still show up on cameras and the like, but any humans in the vicinity will be unable to see him (unless they have Mental Defense, in which case this power will not work against them at all).

Mentos possesses a wide variety of social skills. These are not the result of long experience in the social arena, but rather are subconscious uses of his telepathy—he reads what a person wants and expects of him, and responds accordingly. This is why persons who have not been directly victimized by him usually have a fairly high opinion of him.

Appearance: Mordecai Mentos is a handsome, middle-aged man with salt-and-pepper hair. As befits a man of his wealth, he wears very expensive hand-tailored suits.

Campaign Use: As written, Mentos works best as a low-powered villain in high-powered campaigns. To use him in lower-powered superhero or psionics campaigns, or Dark Champions campaigns, reduce the effects of both of his powers considerably.

Designer's Note: In a psionics campaign or other campaign with lots of mental powers, the Limitation "Will Not Work Against Characters With Mental Defense" would be worth considerably more than $\frac{1}{4}$, but in a normal *Champions* game, that value is sufficient.



Mordecai Mentos

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
8	STR	-2	11-	75 kg; 1½d6 [1]
10	DEX	0	11-	OCV: 3/DCV: 3
12	CON	4	11-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll 13-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack 4d6
20	COM	5	13-	
2	PD	0		
2	ED	0		
3	SPD	10		Phases: 4,8,12
5	REC	2		
24	END	0		
20	STUN	0		

Total Characteristics Cost: 59

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Powers & Skills:

Mind Reading: Telepathy, 9d6, Invisible (+½), ½
END Cost, Concentration (0 DCV) (52) [4]
Organic Invisibility: Invisibility to Sight Group;
Only Affects Minds, Not Technology (-½), Will
Not Work Against Characters With Mental
Defense (-¼) (17) [3]

Background Skills:

Money: Filthy Rich (15)
Bribery 13- (3)
Conversation 13- (3)
High Society 13- (3)
KS: High Finance 13- (3)
KS: Real Estate 13- (3)
KS: The Good Dirt 13- (3)
Persuasion 13- (3)
Seduction 13- (3)
Stealth 11- (3)
Future Development Points (20)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 131

Total Character Cost: 190

Disadvantages 100+

Age: 45 (5)
Normal Characteristic Maxima (20)
Psychological Limitation:
Greedy (Common, Strong) (15)
Backstabbing Little Worm (Common, Strong) (15)
Reputation:
Cutthroat financier, 11- (10)
Secret Identity
(is not known to be a mentalist) (15)
Watched by:
the SEC, more powerful, NCI, 8- (10)

Total Disadvantage Points: 190

Psiphon

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	100 kg; 2d6 [1]
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
18	CON	16	13-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll 13-
21	EGO	22	13-	ECV: 7
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack 3d6
18	COM	4	13-	
6	PD	4		
8	ED	4		
5	SPD	20		Phases: 3,5,8,10,12
6	REC	0		
56	END	10		
30	STUN	6		

Total Characteristics Cost: 131

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Powers & Skills

Combat Skill Levels: +3 Levels w/ Mental Powers (9)
Mutant Powers:

Mental Powers Multipower: 30 point pool (30)
u - Mental Domination: Mind Control 6d6,
Visible (30/2) [3]
u - Mind Reading: Telepathy 6d6, Visible (30/2)
[3]
u - Mind Blast: Ego Attack 3d6, Visible (30/2) [3]
u - Will Sapping: Drain 1d6 EGO (vs. Power
Defense), BOECV, Ranged (25/2) [2]
u - Vitality Sapping: Drain 1d6 STR (vs. Power
Defense), BOECV, Ranged (25/2) [2]
u - Agility Sapping: Drain 1d6 DEX (vs. Power
Defense), BOECV, Ranged (25/2) [2]

Power Boosting: Aid 6d6, fades 5 CP/Turn, Any
Mental Power (including BOECV powers) One At
A Time (+¼), Only Works When Psiphon Has
Another Mind To Use To "Focus" Her Powers (-
½) (25)[4]

Mental Defense: 7 pts. (3)

Power Defense: 10 pts. (10)

Acrobatics 13- (3)

Mental Stealth 13- (3)

Stealth 13- (3)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 98

Total Character Cost: 229

Disadvantages: 100+

Distinctive Features:

Mutant, registers on mutant detection devices (small
group; noticeable, causes prejudice) (5)

Hunted by:

Genocide, more powerful, NCI, 8- (20)

Psychological Limitation:

Looks Out For Herself First (Common, Strong) (15)

Psychological Limitation: Paranoia
(Common, Strong) (15)

Secret Identity: Kathy Germaine (15)

Unluck: 2d6 (10)

Vulnerability:

2x STUN from electrical attacks (20)

Villain Bonus (29)

Total Disadvantage Points: 229



138

Psiphon

Background/History: The known early history of the supervillainess Psiphon is sketchy; law enforcement authorities were unaware of her until captured Genocide documents revealed her existence to them. According to the Genocide file, Psiphon is a mutant with mental powers, including several common abilities and the rarer ability to drain a person's willpower, strength, or agility with but a thought (Genocide scientists claim that she does this by interfering with the subject's nerve responses, but the source of their information is unclear). Her present location and employer are likewise unknown; according to Genocide, she has been detected by them most often in the BosWash corridor; she has worked in the past for or with Neutron and the Conquerors, Mechassassin, and IMAGE.

Personality/Motivation: Psiphon is a relatively stable person, for a superhuman. She has normal likes and dislikes, and generally acts like an everyday sort of person. However, she is greedy to a fault—the reason she got into crime in the first place—and as a result of being chased constantly by Genocide, has become quite paranoid and suspicious. It's been years since she's really been close to anybody; she may even have forgotten what it's like to open up to someone.

Powers/Tactics: Psiphon's mental abilities are fairly low-powered, but she possesses an additional power that makes up for it. By "Focusing" a particular power through another person's mind, she can increase the strength of that power considerably. The "focus" feels no effects from the power, but he must be standing in between Psiphon and her intended target (the three of them must be in a more-or-less straight line, but the use of the "focus" in this way should not be considered as interfering with Psiphon's Line Of Sight on a target). Her mental power is then "boosted" by the focus's brain before it travels onward to strike its intended target. Psiphon can use any mind, even one hostilely disposed to her, as a focus. For this reason she prefers to have plenty of people around when committing a crime or fighting, and she won't hesitate to take a hostage if necessary.

Unlike most mental powers, Psiphon's are visible; they give off a green glow when she uses them (this light effect connects her mind to her focus's mind and the target mind). Her mutant physiognomy also renders her vulnerable to electrical attacks. The Genocide files do not provide any explanation for either of these harmful side effects.

Quote: (Said to an innocent bystander as the police rush up to arrest her) "Would you mind taking a couple of steps that way?"

Appearance: Psiphon's costume is a two-tone green that matches the appearance of her mental powers: dark green boots, gloves, mask, and sash; light green mid-thigh-length tunic and fishnet hose. Her mask is a half-face mask that keeps her long brown hair free.

Campaign Use: Psiphon is appropriate for superheroic campaigns as is; she could also be used as a psionic alien in a *Star Hero* campaign. By decreasing her powers somewhat and getting rid of the costume, GMs could adapt her to psionics campaigns or paranormal *Dark Champions* campaigns.

Solitaire

Background/History: From the diary of Irene Bradford, Vril-Ya of the Vril Society:

February 25, 1970: I found out today that I am pregnant. What an opportunity! The Seven Fools have all mocked my theories about the effects of pre-natal telepathic conditioning; now we'll see who's right!

August 3, 1970: The conditioning works!! I made the first telepathic contact with the baby today. She's a girl, thank God. Her mind is unusually strong—the result of the conditioning. I told her her name was Elaine.

October 31, 1970: Elaine was born today. The pain of labor was more than worth it; when I'm done with her, none of the Seven Fools will dare to mock me again.

* * *

"Now, child, listen to me carefully."

"Yes, Brother Gustav," Elaine said, surprisingly obedient for a five-year-old.

"I want you to concentrate on the force we've been talking about, the vril. Can you feel it?"

Elaine's face screwed up as she thought hard about vril. After a few seconds she could feel the little tickle in the back of her mind that she had learned meant contact with vril. "Yes, sir."

"Good. Now, I want you to gather up as much vril as you can and 'shoot' it at that target over there." Brother Gustav pointed at a wooden silhouette of a man on the other side of the Training Room. Can you do that for Brother Gustav?"

"I'll try," the little girl said. She thought really hard and tried to collect as much vril as she could. The tickle in her mind got stronger, so she knew she was doing it right. When it got to the point where the tickle was beginning to make her ears itch, she pointed her hand at the target and let the vril go. Suddenly, a bolt of energy came out of her hand and blasted the target into smithereens! Elaine jumped back in shock, her eyes wide with the enormity of what she'd done.



Underneath his hood, Brother Gustav's eyes were as wide as hers. *Dear God, such power in a child!* he thought. *She can do half as much as I can, but with only a fraction of my training! How?* His eyes narrowed, looking at her with new suspicion.

"I did it! I did it!" Elaine shouted, jumping and running around the room.

Brother Gustav could sense her starting to gather in vril so she could try it again. "No, child," he said firmly, and she stopped. "Now be quiet a moment."

He turned away from the girl and placed a hand to his forehead. *Esteemed Vril-Ya*, he said telepathically.

Yes? Irene Bradford replied brusquely.

A few moments of telepathic contact were all that was required to tell the story—and to change the Vril-Ya's tone. *Keep me informed of all such developments in her training*, she said, a note of triumph in her "voice."

* * *

"I get to put on *makeup*?" Elaine asked, hoping beyond hope Brother Stephen wasn't playing tricks on her.

"Yes, dear," he said patiently, "but not quite the kind you're thinking of. This is makeup like movie stars wear."

"What's a movie star?" she asked.

Stephen cursed himself silently for forgetting that she wasn't supposed to learn anything about the world outside the Society. But there was no going back. "Uh, er, well, dear, you know the pictures you've seen on the Vril-Ya's wall? A movie is like a whole series of those pictures connected together, hundreds and hundreds of them, so when you see them, one after another, the people in them seem to move and talk and do all kinds of things. A movie star is someone who's in a movie."

"Wow!" Elaine said. "That sounds really neat. Are there any here?"

"No, dear," Brother Stephen said gently, regretfully.

"Oh," she said, obviously disappointed.

"Now, dear, let me show you the first things about how to put on makeup."

* * *

"Are you ready, Elaine?" Mistress Irene asked.

"Yes, Mistress." When Elaine was eight, Mistress Irene, the Vril-Ya herself, had begun taking part in some of her training. Elaine didn't like it much—Mistress Irene was hard to please, and often punished her—but she knew it was an honor, so she did her best.

"Then begin."

Elaine quickly gathered her vril together and began projecting it at Mistress Irene, hoping to find a chink in her armor. She didn't. The two sparred, sending waves of psychic energy back and forth, hoping to find a weakness and strike a telling blow. At last, Elaine found one, and lashed out at Mistress Irene as hard as she could!

Mistress Irene's face went pale suddenly, and she staggered back against the wall of the Training Room. Elaine dropped her guard and ran forward. "Mistress Irene, are you all right?" she asked worriedly.

The response she received was a painful psychic blast which caught her in its grip and forced her to ground in agony. "Idiot!" Mistress Irene said. "Your attack was clumsy and stupid. Had you done it properly, you could have knocked me out entirely, not just stunned me. And *never* drop your guard and offer to help an enemy! Into the Closet!"

Elaine got to her feet, trembling as much from the thought of the Closet as from the remnants of pain. Her head hung low, she walked across the training room, opened a door that led into a small, dark room, and went inside. A few hours later one of the Brothers came to let her out.

* * *

Elaine was twelve. She was in the Library. The Library was her favorite place in the world. Brother Joseph was talking to her, telling her more about Good and Evil.

"So you see, Elaine, that the most important thing in the world is for you to do Good. You must never do anything Evil. The group we belong to, the Vril Society, is dedicated to promoting Good throughout the world, and it's our job to serve it."

"But how do I know if something is Good, Brother Joseph?" Elaine asked.

"That's the hardest thing in the world to know, Elaine. You must study very hard to learn the nature of Good and Evil, so that you never do anything that is Evil. For example, is it Evil to kill someone?"

"Yes," Elaine answered, pretty sure that killing was wrong.

"Incorrect. It would be Evil to kill someone who is Good, true. But is it Evil to kill someone who is Evil?"

"Well..." Elaine hesitated, unsure of the answer.

"Of course it isn't, child. Ridding the world of Evil is always Good, isn't it?"

"I guess."

"You've got to do more than guess. You've got to *know*."

"But, Brother Joseph, couldn't something be sort of Evil, but kind of Good, too?"

"No. Absolutely not. You must put such thoughts out of your mind entirely. If something is not entirely Good, then it is wholly Evil. Think of it this way: black is not white, and white is not black. Is gray white?"

"No."

"Then if it's not white, it's black."

"But it's not black, it's gray!" Elaine protested.

"No. It's simply a shade of black. Remember, if it's not white, it's black, regardless of how it looks. If it's not Good, it's Evil, no matter how it seems."

"Yes, Brother Joseph."

"Good girl. Now, read Chapter Four in your book."

Elaine settled down in her chair and began reading. A few minutes later, she looked up from her book. "Brother Joseph, who were my mother and father?"



"I don't know, child," he said calmly, as if it were his job to answer her strange questions. "Don't let it concern you. You are a child of the Vril Society. It's going to be your job in life to help us bring Good to the world."

"Yes, sir," she said quietly, and returned to her book.

* * *

"Superb!" Sister Julietta exclaimed as she looked at Elaine. Sister Julietta was older than Elaine, but treated her just as if they were twin sisters. She had been teaching Elaine makeup and acting for many years. Elaine hadn't seen her first makeup teacher, Brother Stephen, since the day he had told her about movies.

Elaine basked in the glow of the compliment. She didn't even recognize herself when she looked in the mirror. Her face, hair, eyes, and carriage were all different.

"Well, you've learned everything I can teach you, I think," Sister Julietta said. "C'mon, let's get you out of that gunk."

With Sister Julietta's help, the makeup was soon removed and Elaine was once again wearing her Society robe. Julietta looked at Elaine's face in the mirror as she combed her young charge's hair, and sighed. "It's a shame you have to learn all this disguise stuff. You have such a beautiful face. But I guess it's all for the good of the Society, isn't it?"

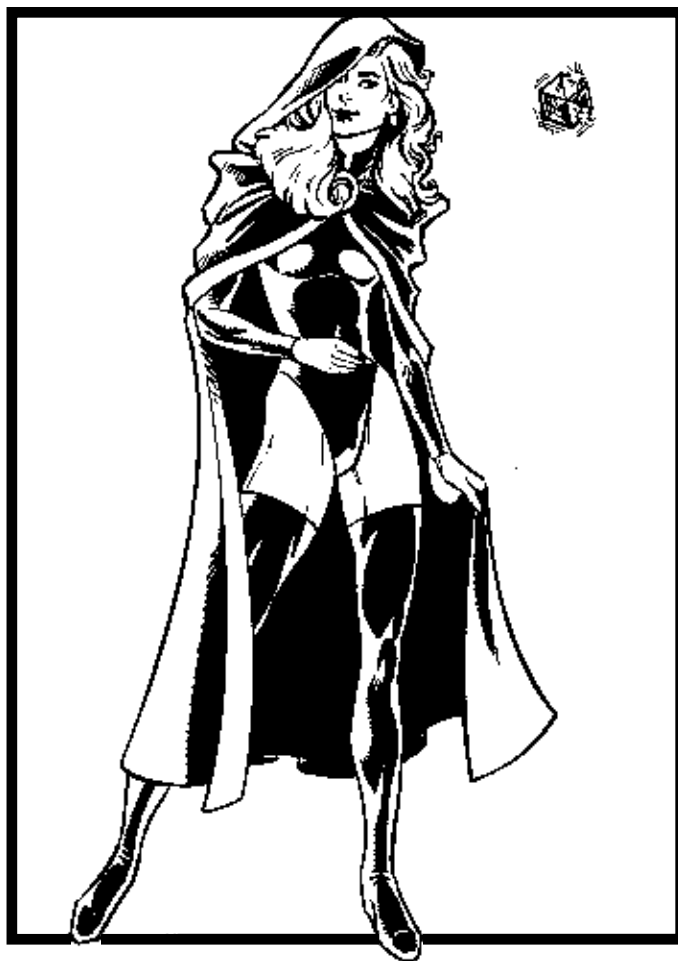
"Yes. It's an honor to be able to serve the Society. I wish I knew what I was going to have to do, though."

"Maybe they want you to seduce some politician," Julietta said impishly. When Elaine blushed beet red, Julietta collapsed into a fit of laughter.

* * *

"Lift that block," Mistress Irene commanded.

Elaine looked at the block of stone and concentrated. She'd never picked up anything that heavy before. After a few seconds, the block began to shake, and then, ever so slowly, it began to rise about the floor, an inch at a time, until she had lifted it a full foot.



"Very good. Put it down."

Elaine lowered the block more quickly than she'd intended, causing it to crash into the floor. Mistress Irene glanced at her disapprovingly.

"Sorry," Elaine said.

"Defend yourself!" Mistress Irene shouted suddenly, flinging a knife at the girl. Without even thinking about it, Elaine raised her Vrilshield, and the knife bounced harmlessly away.

"Find Brother Anthony and make him come here."

Elaine projected her mind outward, seeking Brother Anthony's mind. It didn't take her long to make contact with it. Before he

could raise his shields, she said, *Come here!* Bereft of self-control, Brother Anthony left his books behind and walked at once to the training room. A hint of a smile tugged at Mistress Irene's mouth when he opened the door and walked into the Training Room. He had that blank look on his face that Elaine had come to associate with her use of her powers of mental control.

"Release him," she said.

She did. In a moment the blank look went away, and Brother Anthony shook himself. "Where am... oh, hello, Vril-Ya," he said to Mistress Irene, bowing low. "Is there something you want of me?"

"No," she replied. "Return to what you were doing."

After he left, she said to Elaine, "Now, for your last test, destroy that block."

Again Elaine concentrated, and one after another, bolts of mystic energy were sent against the stone. To show off her control of vril, she varied them, from fire to cold to light to a dozen other forms of mystic energy. After a few minutes, there was nothing left of the block but flinders.

What power! Mistress Irene thought to herself. *My experiments have worked! Elaine will be the most powerful agent and assassin the Vril Society possesses—and she is mine to command! The Seven Fools are about to learn a thing or two about true power.*



"Congratulations, Elaine," she said to the girl. "You have passed every single test. You have learned well over the past seventeen years, and the Vrill Society and I are very proud of you. You will be a great help to us in the coming years, as we strive to advance the Good."

"Thank you, Mistress. I am honored to serve."

"As a reward for your diligence and loyalty, I have a gift for you. Behold!" And as she spoke the last word, Mistress Irene brought forth from her robe a shimmering crystal globe that floated into the air and began circling Elaine's head.

Hello, Elaine the crystal said to her, in her mind.

Elaine was enchanted. She'd never seen anything so beautiful in her life! And it *talked* to her! *Hello, . . . uh, what do I call you?*

Call me whatever you like the crystal replied. Was that a note of humor in its voice?

I think I'll call you. . . Widget! Elaine said, delighted to have a new friend.

Widget it is

* * *

Elaine was fidgeting in the back of the cab. It was her first mission, and it was an important one. An Evil man, a Senator, was threatening to undo much of the Good the Society had done over the past several years, and Mistress Irene had given her the task of eliminating him. She didn't dare fail!

Don't worry, you'll do fine

The cab pulled up in front of the Senator's house. Elaine emerged, mentally controlling the cabby to make him forget that he'd taken her there. Then she walked onto the grounds, mentally scanning for guards. There weren't any. So far, so good.

The front door was locked. Again, she reached out with her mind, and scanned the house. She found only two minds, the Senator and his butler. The Society's intelligence agents were correct, the rest of the Senator's family was away for the weekend.

Open the front door she told the butler through her mental link with him. A few moments later, he did so. She reached out lightly with her hand and touched him on the forehead, putting him to sleep. Then she walked upstairs to the Senator's office.

This time she didn't bother with subtlety. A Vrill Blast smashed the office door off its hinges. A second blast knocked the startled Senator out of his chair and onto the floor.

The Senator clutched his ribs, grimacing in pain. "Wh-who are you? What do you want?"

"Senator Jeremiah Relm, for your abuse of power and crimes against Humanity, you must pay the ultimate penalty!" Her hand crackled with energy as she pointed it towards him, ready to blast him into oblivion.

"Wait? What crimes? I've never committed any crimes! What is it that you think I've done?"

"First, you gave money to death squads in Central America."

"I did no such thing! I've never supported any 'death squads.' My vote is a matter of Senate record. We sent humanitarian aid to El Salvador, aid to prevent Communist aggression there. Do you want Communism to overrun the Americas?"

Elaine definitely didn't want that. Her masters in the Society had explained Communism to her, and how Evil it was. "Well, you supported corporations that are destroying the environment."

"Someone's feeding you the wrong information, Miss," the Senator said somewhat more confidently. "I didn't do anything to harm the environment at all. I supported some corporations that are going to be creating thousands of jobs in the Northwest. Without those jobs, people will go hungry, they'll have to do without the basic necessities of life. Do you want that?"

No, Elaine thought to herself. Forcing people into starvation was clearly Evil. "Well, you..."

And so it went for almost an hour. For every crime Elaine charged him with, the Senator had an explanation, or an alibi, or a reason why it was a better thing to do than what Elaine had suggested. Finally, so thoroughly confused that she almost couldn't think, Elaine left the Senator alive and returned to the Society to straighten things out.

* * *

Irene Bradford was furious. She was watching Senator Relm's press conference on TV. Elaine had failed! She almost couldn't believe it, but there was the Senator, sitting in the middle of his smashed-up office, explaining what had happened.

"Vrill-Ya?" came an Adept's hesitant voice from the doorway.

"What?" she snarled back at him.

"Esteemed Vrill-Ya, the Adept Elaine is here."

"She's *what*?" Bradford asked, unable to believe her ears.

"She's here, Vrill-Ya. She wants to speak with you about something."

"You fool! She's been corrupted by the Senator. She's obviously returned to spy on us, or betray us to the authorities. Kill her!"

"At once, Vrill-Ya," the Adept said.

* * *

At least she'd been able to keep herself from crying while she was out in public—so far. Elaine was alone, miserable, and scared. Her world had ended.

She couldn't believe it when Widget warned her that her friends were coming to kill her. But then she saw it for herself in their minds. Using her superior abilities, she was able to fight her way out of the Society's secret enclave and escape. Now she was on a bus going to New York, with no friends, no job, almost no money, and little knowledge of the world outside the Society.

Things will be all right Widget said, trying to comfort her. It didn't work.

She had done her best to be Good, to live up to the Society's expectations—but the Society had attacked her. She was Good—did that make the Society Evil?



Had the Society merely been trying to use her for its own Evil ends? She tossed these questions back and forth in her mind for a long time, but there was no escaping the obvious answer to both of them—Yes. She realized right then and there that she could never have anything to do with the Society again.

But she knew that there had to be some way she could use her abilities for Good. While pondering this dilemma, she happened to glance at the headline on the paper one of the other bus passengers was reading. CHAMPIONS FOIL VIPER ATTACK ON BANK it said. She'd heard of the Champions; Brother Joseph at the Society described them as thoroughly Evil people with powers like hers. But if the Society said they were Evil, wouldn't that make them Good?

When the other passenger put the paper down, Elaine picked it up and read the story. The Champions had stopped this other group, VIPER, from stealing money from a bank, and had protected several bystanders in the process. They definitely didn't sound Evil. Once again, the Society had tried to deceive her. This was a way she could use her powers for Good—she could join the Champions!

* * *

"Let me get this straight. You want to join the Champions?" the man in the red, blue, and silver armor asked her.

"Yes," Elaine replied, trying to sound confident.

"Just like that?" Defender asked, snapping his fingers.

"Yes."

"Well, Ms.... King, was it?" Defender said, "none of us have ever seen you before—but you claim to be a superhero?"

"Yes, that's correct," she said, silently thanking Sister Julietta for the hours of acting lessons that allowed her to look so poised now, when she was shaking like a leaf on the inside.

"What *nom du guerre* do you use?"

Elaine was ready for that question. "Solitaire," she said. Since she felt so alone, she might as well choose a name that reflected the fact.

"What type of powers do you have?" an extremely large man with jet-black skin and a golden band around his head asked her.

"Well, it's difficult to explain. I can do many things—read people's thoughts, control them, project bolts of energy..."

"So you're a psionic?" the black woman in the blue costume asked.

"Sort of. Something of a mage, too."

"Very well, Ms. King," Defender continued. "Let's see what you can do."

For the next hour, they put her through her paces. Then for another hour after that she talked to some doctor and took a lie-detector test. Meanwhile, the Champions were meeting:

"I like her," Defender said.

"So do I, but so what?" Quantum said. "That doesn't mean we want her on the team. How do we know she can be trusted?"

"I sensed no dishonor in her," Obsidian replied, his deep bass voice shaking the table.

"Neither did I, and besides, she fits a gap in our team perfectly. We don't have a psionic, and we don't have a mage. She can fill both roles," Defender added.

"And she's bloomin' cute!" said Seeker.

Quantum glanced witheringly at the Australian, then turned back to Defender. "All right, all right, I can see that I'm outvoted. I guess you're right, though."

"Good. All in favor of probationary membership for 'Solitaire,' a.k.a. Elaine King?"

Everyone raised his hand.

Personality/Motivation: Elaine King (she chose the last name on the spur of the moment prior to her interview with the Champions) was raised to be a tool of the Society, and it shows. Her upbringing included extensive lectures on the subject of Good and Evil and her responsibility to promote "Good." The Vrill Society intended to "brainwash" her into doing its bidding this way, but they did their job better than they expected—she actually believed what they were telling her, and patterned her life accordingly.

This, in combination with the almost total isolation in which she was raised, has given her a very Manichean view of the world. She sees everything in terms of black and white, Good and Evil, right and wrong. She is determined to live her life in the most morally correct way possible, and analyzes her every thought and action to make sure that she abides by her own rigid rules. She applies the same analytical tools to the actions of her friends and enemies, and is quick to speak out against, or take action to stop, immoral or "Evil" actions.

This is not to say that Solitaire is a prude, or that she does not allow for human failings. Her constant "morality" can be a little taxing to some of her more cynical and "practical" friends, such as Quantum and Jaguar, and she is frequently judgmental. But she has, slowly but surely, realized just how far from perfect the world really is, and tries to allow for this.

Even though she is usually regarded as shy, retiring, and kind (and in fact is all of those things), in some ways Solitaire's philosophy of life makes her one of the most ruthless of the Champions. She is quick to condemn and combat Evil and immorality, and her actions can be harsh, particularly when innocents have been or may be harmed. If it weren't for her disgust at the way the Vrill Society tried to turn her into an assassin, her fear of making an irreversible mistake, and her compassion, Solitaire could easily have become a vigilante instead of a more typical "superhero."

During her training, Solitaire was brutally punished whenever she would make a mistake—Mistress Irene did not tolerate failure. As a result, to this day Solitaire is extremely scared of making mistakes or failing in her chosen tasks. She believes, quite wrongly, that her friends would abandon her if she fouled up too badly. Therefore she generally refuses to confront her mistakes and always tries to correct them herself, without drawing her friends' attention to them.



The Society also taught Solitaire to be complacent and obedient, and as a result she lacks a lot of self-esteem, and is uncomfortable with strong emotions, spontaneous shows of affection, and getting close to people. She tends to be shy and reserved, and to avoid the limelight; she is quite content to live in the shadow of her more flamboyant teammates. She is the quiet, stolid, dependable sort of hero that other heroes, such as Defender and Quantum, rely upon to keep them on an even keel. She has spent a lot of time settling disputes between the members of the team, and even between other heroes she knows; while she is glad to help out, secretly this responsibility scares her, for she is more afraid of making a mistake in this arena than in any other.

(Paradoxically, for someone so shy, Solitaire's chosen professions—model and actress—are ones that make her the center of attention. Again, this is a result of her training, which taught her to accept and work with “roles,” no matter how much they conflicted with her personal inclinations. The fact that she guards her private life from the media so jealously shows how shy she can be. Also, her work satisfies whatever need for “attention” she may, from time to time, have.)

Despite the fact that her moralizing and judgmental attitude often grate on her teammates, Solitaire gets along very well with them; they are the only “family” she has ever really known. Quantum and she are as close as two sisters, even though they come

from very different backgrounds. Quantum relies on Solitaire to help her keep her temper in check, and in turn tries to shield Solitaire from some of the uglier things in life.

Solitaire and Obsidian have become good friends. His “princely” upbringing and noble ideals are more similar to her childhood as a “chosen one” and her moralizing than to the outlook and attitudes of any other Champion.

Since he knows how “fragile” she can be, Obsidian often makes a special point of trying to protect her in combat.

Solitaire and Jaguar have relatively little in common, and don't often talk with one another, but are still friendly.

Seeker and Solitaire share something of a special bond with one another, despite the fact that his flirtatious comments often leave her blushing. Her desire to divide the world into Good and Evil camps bears some similarity to his quest for “the Truth,” and the two of them have often discussed this. On more than one occasion the other Champions have come downstairs in the morning to find Seeker and Solitaire still immersed in the same conversation they were carrying on the night before!

However, out of all the Champions, it is Defender that Solitaire feels the closest to. The two of them have felt a strong attraction to one another for years, almost from the moment they met. Several times they have almost become involved in a personal relationship, but they have always pulled back at the last minute. Defender knows that Elaine is inexperienced in the area of personal relationships (she has never dated or been intimate with anyone), and is concerned that she will get hurt in the end if the two of them were to become involved. For her part, Solitaire feels that it would not be entirely morally correct to date a teammate. She cares more about Defender than she would care to admit, and he likewise. Moreover, both of them are scared of damaging their friendship. Quantum has been working on Solitaire, and Seeker on Defender, to try to get the two of them together; their friends realize what a fine couple they would make, even if they don't quite see it yet.

Solitaire would very much like to find and meet her “real parents,” and has spent a good bit of time and money looking for them—with no results. She does not even suspect that Vril-Ya Irene Bradford is her mother (her father is Alec von Kaminoff, a handsome Russian nobleman and Adept in the Vril Society).

Quote: “But that's not right!”

Powers/Tactics: Due to the *in utero* telepathic conditioning she received from her mother, Solitaire is an especially capable manipulator of the magical force “vril.” Vril can be converted into nearly any form of energy (as Solitaire's Variable Special Effects EB shows), but is particularly suited for conversion into psychic energy. Thus, Solitaire possesses a number of mystical mental powers. These are not “spells,” per se, but rather a reflection of her magical ability to convert vril into psionic energy. Thus, they do not require the sort of Limitations commonly seen on magical spells (Gestures, Incantations, Concentrate, and so forth).

Solitaire's powers run the gamut from standard mental abilities and mystic energy blasts to some more unusual powers, such as the ability to telekinetically “rigidify” someone, forcing him to stand stock-still. On a few occasions, in moments of extreme stress, she has manifested the ability to spon-



taneously disintegrate objects, but as yet she has no control over this power. It is likely that she will develop further powers in the future.

Solitaire is assisted in her magic by a special Vril Crystal which she calls “Widget.” The crystal is intelligent and can talk to her telepathically (a fact that Irene Bradford did not know, else she would have kept it for herself and given Solitaire an ordinary, non-intelligent Vril Crystal). Widget makes it easier for Solitaire to manipulate vril; he glows when Solitaire draws on his power to do this. He can also “look” around her and keep her notified of what is going on (as reflected by her 360 Degree Vision and Danger Sense), but he does not glow in this case. In order to work, Widget must be allowed to freely orbit Solitaire; if confined or taken away from her, Widget seems like an ordinary lump of crystal (although when Solitaire keeps him hidden, he can still “talk” to her). Solitaire has established a strong psychic bond with Widget; so strong, in fact, that she will suffer any damage that he suffers. Because she is often carrying on telepathic conversations with Widget, Solitaire can seem distracted and inattentive. The fact that she sometimes speaks to Widget out loud instead of with her mind is regarded as an “eccentric” mannerism by her teammates, her fans, and the media.

Even though at present her powers are devoted mainly to mental abilities, Solitaire is on the verge of becoming more of a full-fledged vril wizard; had she not left the Society, she would have reached that point long before now. As it is, she is so phenomenally gifted when it comes to vril manipulation that she is teaching herself what she needs to know, one cautious experiment at a time. (In game terms, she will become a fully-trained vril wizard when her Multipower is converted into a Vril Variable Power Pool.)

In combat, Solitaire usually takes a “support” role, using her Telekinesis to hold enemies in place so someone else can blast them, mentally controlling lesser villains into surrendering so her teammates can concentrate on more dangerous threats, and so forth. She is also skilled at using her acting abilities (such as Mimicry and Ventriloquism) to confuse her enemies. Still, she has a lot of raw power at her command, and if she gets angry enough she can really “let loose” and let someone have it.

In noncombat situations, Solitaire’s stealth and disguise skills make her extremely good at infiltrating enemy organizations. She and Seeker and Jaguar have pulled off several memorable “capers” using their infiltration skills.

Solitaire does relatively little “patrolling”; her heroing is done mostly with the group. Ironically, the shyest member of the Champions is also the one with the most “outside life”—between her modeling career as Elaine King, and her acting career as Rowena Page, sometimes it’s a wonder that Solitaire has time to spare for the Champions. Still, heroing is the most important part of her life, and she would give up her other careers before she gave up crime fighting.

It is worth noting that Solitaire does not wear a mask. Since she relies on just a hood (and the occasional use of her powers) to hide her features, which are well-known to the general public, it is only a matter of time before her secret identity is revealed.

Solitaire’s greatest archenemies include:

The Vril Society. The Society still wants revenge on Solitaire for her “defection” and would like to capture her and thoroughly brainwash her so she never escapes their clutches again. Not only is she a “mistake” they would like to correct, but she knows more than enough to completely blow their cover if she so chose, and therefore she must be recaptured or destroyed. For now, they have contented themselves with placing a curse on her (Solitaire’s Unluck). Solitaire’s mother, Irene Bradford, suffered a great loss of prestige as a result of Solitaire’s failure as a field agent, and is eager to gain that prestige back by capturing and/or eliminating her daughter. Equally as important, Irene *fears* her daughter; the experiment worked well, too well, and Irene knows it. She is terrified that Solitaire may someday get her hands on one of the Society’s Vril Rods and taste true power. However, Solitaire still has one friend in the Society, Sister Julietta, with whom she stays in infrequent contact.

VIPER. Like the rest of the Champions, Solitaire has interfered with VIPER’s schemes so many times that the villainous organization is gunning for her every chance it gets.

Howler. On a couple of occasions Solitaire has beaten Howler and humiliated her, and Howler wants revenge. Since Solitaire’s power continues to grow and Howler’s is relatively stagnant, Howler is going to have to plan carefully to have any hope of really getting back at Solitaire.

Note: further information on the Vril Society can be found in *The Ultimate Supermage*, by Dean Shomshak.

Appearance: Solitaire is a beautiful young woman who stands 5’10” tall. She has green eyes and auburn-colored hair. Her features are exquisite, and somehow she always manages to come through dangerous situations without having them marred. She wears a dark rose-red ankle-length hooded cape and thigh-length boots. Her bodysuit, which is similar to a one-piece bathing suit with long sleeves, is a similar color but is more shiny and reflective. Her cloak pin is made of gold with a large, red crystal set in the center (villains may think this is a Focus; it is not). She does not wear a mask or gloves. Her Vril Crystal, Widget, is a iridescent globe of crystal which orbits her body; its color often shifts to match her mood.



Solitaire

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	200 kg; 3d6 [1]
23	DEX	39	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
23	CON	26	14-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
23	EGO	26	14-	ECV: 8
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack 3d6
18	COM	4	13-	
8	PD	5		
8	ED	3		
6	SPD	27		Phases: 2,4,6,8,10,12
10	REC	4		
60	END	7		
40	STUN	10		

Total Characteristics Cost: 164

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Swimming: 2"/4"
Teleport: 15"/30"

Powers & Skills

Combat Training:

Combat Levels: +1 Level w/ Vril Powers
Multipower (3)

Vril Powers:

*: OAF ("Widget," -1). The cost for the "Reduced END" Advantage for these powers is based on Solitaire's Widget (Widget has DEF 17 and is DCV 12). Widget glows and glistens when Solitaire uses it to reduce the END cost of her mystic powers.

Vril Powers Multipower: 87 point pool

- u - Vril Blast: EB 14d6, ½ END Cost* (87/8) [3]
- u - Vril Beam: EB 7d6, BOECV (vs. ED), Variable Special Effect (any magic-based effect), ½ END* (87/9) [4]
- u - Mental Blast: Ego Attack 7d6, ½ END* (87/8) [3]
- u - Mental Control: Mind Control 11d6, Telepathic Commands, ½ END Cost* (82/8) [3]
- u - Mental Illusions: Mental Illusions 14d6, ½ END Cost* (87/8) [3]
- u - Telepathy: Telepathy 14d6, ½ END Cost* (87/8) [3]
- u - Psychokinesis: TK, STR 40, Fine Manipulation, ½ END Cost* (75/7) [3]
- u - Psychokinetic Paralysis: Entangle 5d6 DEF 5, Entangle And Character Both Take Damage (+¼), ½ END Cost* (75/7) [3]
- u - Vril Healing: Aid 5d6 to any Characteristic below starting value (+2), ½ END Cost*; Only To Starting Value (-½) (81/5) [4]
- u - Disintegration: RKA 2d6, Continuous, Penetrating, ½ END Cost*; No Conscious Control (82/2) [3]

Vril Magics Elemental Control: 15 point base (15)

- a - Vrilpath: Teleport 15"; x2 END (10) [2/5"]
- b - Vrilshield: Force Field +15 PD, +15 ED, 0 END (30) [0]
- c - Mental Eye: Mind Scan 14d6, ½ END Cost* (63) [3]

Mental Defense: 20 pts. (15)

Power Defense: 10 pts. (10)

Widgetvision, IAF (Widget):

360 Degree Vision (7)
Danger Sense, 12-, Detect danger out of combat, any attack, any area (18)

Background Skills:

Contact: U.S. Senator Jeremiah Relm 14- (5)

Contact: Sister Julietta,
Adept of the Vril Society 11- (2)

Donation for Homestead,
the Champions' base (1)

Donation for Slingshot II,
the Champions' plane (4)

Bump of Direction (3)

Acting 12- (3)

Disguise 11- (3)

KS: The Vril Society 12- (3)

KS: Vril Magic 12- (3)

KS: Arcane & Occult Lore 11- (2)

KS: Soap Operas 12- (2)

Mimicry 11- (3)

PS: Actress 14- (4)

PS: Singing 13- (4)

Sleight Of Hand 14- (3)

Stealth 14- (3)

Ventriloquism 11- (3)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 380

Total Character Cost: 544

Disadvantages: 100+

Distinctive Features:

Talks to Widget (easily concealable,
causes major reaction) (10)

Powerful psychic/mystic aura (detectable by limited
group; strong reaction) (10)

Hunted by:

VIPER, as powerful, NCI, 8- (15)

The Vril Society, as powerful, NCI, 8- (15)

Howler, less powerful, 8- (5)

Physical Limitation:

Takes any damage that widget takes
(Infrequently, Greatly) (10)

Psychological Limitation:

Manichean viewpoint (sees the world as black and
white, a struggle between Good and
Evil)(Common, Strong) (15)

Refuses to confront her mistakes; is afraid her friends
will abandon her if she makes a mistake
(Common, Strong) (15)

Obsessed with performing morally correct actions
(Common) (10)

Reputation:

Solitaire, member of the Champions/Elaine King,
famous model/Rowena Page, famous actress,
11- (concealable with effort, causes major
reaction) (10)

Secret Identity: Elaine King, model/Rowena Page,
actress (15)

Unluck: 1d6 (5)

Experience (309)

Total Disadvantage Points: 544



146



APPENDICES



APPENDIX A: BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following list contains comics, works of fiction, movies, and other “source material” which are notable for their use of mental powers.

Since it is impossible for any one person to read and/or see everything out there, the author would like to acknowledge the assistance of everyone who gave him suggestions for items to include in this Bibliography. Thanks, guys! Reference should also be made to the appropriate section of the *Star Hero* bibliography.

COMICS

The Avengers (primarily characters such as Moondragon, Dr. Druid, and the like) (Marvel Comics)

Mai the Psychic Girl

Nightmask (Marvel Comics)

The Uncanny X-Men and related titles (Marvel Comics)

BOOKS

Bester, Alfred. *The Stars My Destination*. Teleportation in a near-future science fiction setting, and what it means to man and society.

Bester, Alfred. *The Demolished Man*. A murder in a futuristic world of telepaths? How can you pull it off? A science fiction classic.

Blish, James. *Jack of Eagles*. This is a classic novel by one of the masters of science fiction, showing an ordinary man gaining vast psychic powers in a modern setting.

Bradley, Marion Zimmer. *Darkover* novels and stories. This world of psychic powers in a science fiction universe is one of the classics of science fiction.

Browne, Gerald A. *Hazard*. This novel is about an agent who uses ESP. Useful for modern-era campaigns, showing how limited psychic powers can be integrated into a campaign.

Farris, John. *The Fury*. Excellent novel of psychic powers in a modern heroic-level setting, with shadowy corporations and government involvement. The movie was pretty good, too.

Foster, Alan Dean. Flinx novels, including *The End Of the Matter*, *The Tar-Aiym Krang*, *For Love Of Mother-Not*, *Flinx in Flux*, *Orphan Star*, and *Bloodhype*. These novels are set in a well-developed universe of the far future. The hero is a boy with some powerful psychic abilities, and his venomous mini-dragon. Great SF roleplaying material.

Foster, Alan Dean. *Slipt*. An old man and a young girl with psychic powers outfox a corporation bent on discovering their secret.

Hardy, Lyndon. *Master of the Five Magics*.

Herbert, Frank. *Dune* and related works. Shows incidental use of psychic powers in a science fiction setting.

King, Stephen. *The Dead Zone*, *The Shining*, *Carrie*, *Firestarter*.

Kirby, William S. *Iapetus*. A science-fiction-detective novel set in the solar system. An interesting take on telepaths and their motivations.

Kurtz, Katherine. The “Deryni” series of novels.

Lanier, Sterling. *Hiero's Journey* and *The Unforsaken Hiero*. Excellent roleplaying ideas, these novels are about a priest/telepath/warrior in a post-holocaust world. Lots of different uses of psychic powers, with interesting mental combats and special effects.

Lumley, Brian. *Necroscope* and some related works. *Psychosphere* and *Psychomech* show psychic powers as super-powers, essentially.



May, Julian. The *Exiles* series, including *The Many-Colored Land*, *The Golden Torc*, *The Non-Born King*, and *The Adversary*. Psychic powers taken to incredible levels, allowing almost any effect to occur. Very enjoyable series with good descriptions of psychic power use.

Niven, Larry. *The Long ARM of Gil Hamilton*. Excellent example of limited psychic powers providing some interesting capabilities, yet not overwhelming the stories.

Schmitz, James H. Telzey Amberdon stories and novels. Especially *The Telzey Toy*, *The Universe Against Her*, *The Lion Trap*. A science fiction setting in a galactic civilization, where the 16 year old heroine wields immense psychic powers. Terrific descriptions of the use of psychic powers and skills.

Schmitz, James H. *The Witches Of Karres*. A fun romp in a science fiction universe, with a starship captain overwhelmed by three young “witches” with unusual psychic gifts. High-powered psionics.

Smith, E. E. Various, including the “Lensmen” series. Among other works, *The Galaxy Primes* shows psychic powers at their peak, far beyond what most superheroes even dream of.

Weber, David. *Path of the Fury*. A psychic being, telepathy and mental illusions make this science fiction book of interest. Interesting revenge story; good characters.

Zelazny, Roger. *Lord of Light*. Psychic powers enhanced by technology make people into gods on a distant planet in the future.

FILMS AND TELEVISION

Movies made from the Stephen King novels cited above.

Akira

Friday the 13th—The Series

Scanners

The Star Wars Trilogy

The X-Files



APPENDIX B: CHECKLIST OF OPTIONAL MENTAL POWERS RULES

Character Creation And Mental Powers In General

Characteristics

EGO cannot be used to resist Presence Attacks.	YES	NO
“Cannot Be Used In Certain Phases” Limitation can be applied to some Powers other than Movement Powers.	YES	NO

Talents

Lightning Reflexes: Mentalists must buy Lightning Reflexes for either their DEX or EGO to make those two Characteristics equal. YES NO

Powers

Generally

The following Powers are considered Mental Powers::

Optional unsuccessful mental attack system is in use; characters must make EGO Rolls when unsuccessfully attacked with mental powers. YES NO

Optional Competing Mental Powers Bonus Table will be used. YES NO

Characters automatically get an additional Breakout Roll when a friendly mentalist tries to help him escape from a continuing-effect Mental Power. YES NO

Line Of Sight

LOS is defined as:

- _____ Speck on the horizon
- _____ Individual recognizability
- _____ Recognizability by species

Will penalties to ECV and/or PER Rolls be required in some situations to determine if the character has LOS? YES NO

Notes::

A mentalist can attack characters he has no LOS on at half OECV. YES NO

Mentalists use the “Indirect” Advantage to achieve LOS with Clairvoyance. YES NO

Astral Form

“Must Return To Body Within 24 Hours” is a separate Limitation. YES NO

In addition to “Affects Desolidified” barriers, astral forms are blocked by: _____Mental Shields (MD Force Walls)
_____Other:_____

Clairsentience

“Can Only Sense Through The Senses Of Others” Clairsentience is blocked by 10+ points of Mental Defense. YES NO

Ego Attack

“EGO Damage” rule will be used. YES NO

EGO Damage attacks do not affect EGO for ECV purposes. YES NO

Ego Attacks can be Spread. YES NO

Mental Defense

MD is a Characteristic. YES NO

Mental Illusions

Mental Illusions automatically do appropriate damage. YES NO

Mental Illusions can only cause damage if they are EGO +10-level illusions or greater. YES NO

In addition to PD or ED (as appropriate), Mental Defense also protects against the damage done by a Mental Illusion. YES NO

Characters affected by combative EGO +30 Mental Illusions have ____½ DCV ____full DCV
____other:_____

Characters subjected to combative EGO +30 Illusions will have their full DCV. YES NO

Extreme time distortions are ____allowed "for free" ____require a +10 level of effect

Characters may create "unusual effects" with illusions with a +20 modifier to the Effect Roll. YES NO

Mental Senses

Astral Awareness allows characters to view aspects of the Astral Plane
other than characters in astral form. YES NO

Lack of Mental Awareness is a 3-point Physical Limitation,
not Limitation on the cost of Mental Powers. YES NO

The appropriate defense for Mental Sense Group Flash attacks is ____Mental Sense Group Flash Defense
____Mental Defense ____both ____other:_____

Mind Control:

Mind Control is automatically "telepathic." YES NO

Characters take damage if ordered to "Die!" YES NO

Mind Link

Can be bought with the -1 Limitation, "Feedback." YES NO

Mind Scan

When lock-on is broken because target has left the area being searched, mentalist may make an EGO Roll to have a vague
idea about where to start searching for the target. YES NO

Mentalist can only achieve effects with powers used through a Mind Scan lock-on equal to or less than in effect to the
Mind Scan Effect Roll. YES NO

Mentalist can limit area of scan by height/altitude. YES NO

Restrictions on narrowing the search area:

Mind Scan gives vague impressions of the mind being scanned. YES NO

Telekinesis

Movement Powers can help characters to escape from Telekinesis,
at the rate of +1 STR/2" movement. YES NO

Characters can purchase "Flight-Capable" (+½)
Advantage for TK and use it to "fly." YES NO

Telekinesis can be "Spread." YES NO

Telepathy

Memories are harder to locate the older they are; telepath must make a PER Roll
using the Time Chart as a modifier to find memories. YES NO

At EGO +40,
telepath can read into subject's collective unconscious. YES NO

Animals:: ____Some species of animals experience sentient thoughts

____All species of animals experience sentient thoughts

Psychic trauma: _____Is not used in the campaign _____Affects all telepaths
_____”Experiences Psychic Trauma” is a -1 Limitation for Telepathy
_____Exists only as a form of Mental Damage Shield
Skin-to-skin contact grants bonuses to Effect Roll. YES NO

Desolidification

Desolidified characters with Mental Powers
can automatically affect the physical world with them at no additional cost. YES NO
Characters can buy Desolidification “Only To Protect Against Mental Powers” (-1). YES NO

Flash

Psychic Flashes work against Mental Defense: _____By default (at 0 cost) _____As a form of AVLD (+1 ½)
_____As a Limitation.

Force Wall/Mental Shield

“Self Only” is a _____house rule for Mental Shields _____a -½ Limitation for Mental Shields

Skills/Programmed Skills

Style Disadvantage for programmed Martial Arts is worth +5 points. YES NO

Transform

SC: Psionic Surgery is required to perform all but the simplest forms of Psionic Surgery. YES NO

Power Modifiers

Area Of Effect

Area Of Effect Mental Powers
must be bought Selective or Nonselective. YES NO
Area Of Effect continuing-effect Mental Powers may have different effects on different people in the Area Of Effect:
_____If the Advantage is bought “Selective” _____If the character pays for an extra +
_____ Advantage _____ Not Allowed.

Sticky

This Advantage can be purchased for Mental Powers. YES NO

Mental Powers Based On Characteristics Other Than EGO

“Mental Powers Based On INT” are targeted with
Intelligence Combat Value (ICV) rather than ECV. YES NO
“Mental Powers Based On PRE” are targeted with
Presence Combat Value (PCV) rather than ECV. YES NO

Mental Combat

Mentalists can Brace when using mental powers with Range. YES NO
Mind-To-Mind Combat
is run in a different time-frame from physical combat. YES NO
Mentalists can
make Placed Shots with continuing-effect Mental Powers. YES NO
Mental Damage Classes add to continuing-effect Mental Powers. YES NO

APPENDIX C: CONVERSIONS

The Ultimate Mentalist is designed to be used with any roleplaying system, as a complete and comprehensive way to handle psionics. We've used the Hero System as the basis for this book, because of the Hero System's ability to describe powers with great precision and flexibility. This Conversions appendix shows you how to use this material in popular roleplaying systems.

There are two main ways to use *The Ultimate Mentalist* in your existing non-Hero System game (aside, that is, from getting your own copy of the Hero System and starting up a campaign based in that system, which of course we recommend highly). The first is to use the Hero System mechanics presented here as a complete psionics game system that's added on to your current game system. All you need to do is pick a Characteristic in your RPG system that most closely corresponds to EGO in the Hero System, and convert it to a value in the same scale as the Hero System. Then you can use the Hero System mechanics for determining the effect of mental powers, adjudicating mental combat, and the like. All you need to do is to convert any damage that may occur from Hero System terms into your game system. Notes on both of these processes are included in the specific game sections further on. You can also just add Ego

as a Characteristic to the standard set of Characteristics for your game system.

Yes, this method means that mental powers will feel distinctly different from the rest of your game system, but isn't that a desirable effect?

The second method is to convert the powers and the mechanics more closely to your roleplaying system. This requires a bit more work, but then everything fits more neatly into your gaming. This method is also covered in the sections on different game systems.

Whichever method you choose, the GM has the final say in all conversion matters and rules.

Buying Powers

Powers and Skills in the Hero System are purchased with points. While you can just hand out abilities, it's better if the GM gives the players some points to use for character abilities. These points are used only for purchasing the Hero System powers, of course, and cannot affect any other aspect of a character. For a low-powered campaign, individual powers should be limited to no more than 30 points, and that usually with some Limitations (more on that later). A medium-powered campaign should allow points to go up to 45 or 50 in a power, while a high-powered campaign may have limits in the 70's or 80's, or even more.

The GM should give each character some points to buy Powers and other abilities. More points can be

granted as the character earns experience, or the GM can just occasionally adjust the character's mental powers to reflect added experience. In a level based system, it's probably best to just adjust all of the characters powers upward by one increment to reflect their overall improvement.

The Listings

The following tables list the new modifiers, maneuvers, skills, and powers presented in this book in a condensed form. Explanations can be found in the relevant sections of this book. Detailed explanations of powers and rules can be found by referring to the Hero System Rulebook, though basic explanations of the rules are provided here (either in this section or elsewhere in this book).

These tables are also a useful guide for Hero System players and GMs, since they list most of the new material presented in this book in one place.

Specific conversion notes are listed in the sections following these tables.



Mental Combat Modifiers

Modifier	Notes
Area Of Effect	Areas are ECV 3
Autofire	Same as for normal attacks
Braced	Only with Powers with Range Modifiers
Coordinated Attacks	Only with Powers that directly cause damage
Multiple Attackers Bonus	-1 DECV per attacker, maximum ½ DECV
Sleeping/Unconscious	0 ECV
Spreading	Only with Ego Attacks (GM's option)
Surprised	½ DECV, 2x STUN or +10 effect
Target Size	May make achieving LOS harder

Mental Combat Maneuvers

Maneuver	Phase	OECV	Notes
Coercion	½	—	Incremental Mind Control
Defensive Concentration	1*	—	+3 Mental Defense or +1 DECV
Defensive Effort	½*	—	Lose sensory awareness; +3 Mental Defense or +1 DECV
Defensive Push	0	—	+1 Mental Defense/+1 END; Must make EGO Roll (additional +1/1 pt. EGO Roll is made by)
Defensive Stand	½*	—	DCV 0; +3 Mental Defense or +1 DECV
Fast Attack	1	-2	Lets character get back behind cover
Mind Bar	½	—	OECV vs. OECV, +1 OECV/10 active points, blocks same Power; pay full END
Mind Lock	½	-1/power	OECV vs. DECV, Power vs. Power roll, Locks same Powers; -1 OECV per Power locked; pay full END
Mind Probe	½	—	Incremental Telepathy
Mind Search	½	—	Incremental Mind Scan
Mind Shield	½	—	+2 Mental Defense for each -1 CV/Skill Rolls, up to +6 Mental Defense
Mind Strike	½	+0	Using an offensive Mental power
Offensive Concentration	1**	—	+5 active points or +1 OECV
Offensive Effort	½**	—	Lose sensory awareness; +5 active points or +1 ECV
Offensive Push	0	—	+1 Active Point/+1 END; Must make EGO Roll (additional +1/1 pt. EGO Roll is made by)
Offensive Stand	½**	—	DCV 0; +5 active points or +1 OECV
Prepared	½	-1	ready to use power on target
Ready	1	+1	

* Can be used with other Defensive maneuvers at the same time

** Can be used with other Offensive maneuvers at the same time, along with any attack maneuver

Mental Skills

Skill	Base Roll	Base/+1 Cost	Notes
Cloak	9+(EGO/5)	3/2	"Mental Stealth"
Combat Precognition	—	—/5	8 pt. level, -½
Combat Psychokinesis	—	—/5	8 pt. level, -½
Combat Telepathy	—	—/5	8 pt. level, -½
Facade	9+(EGO/5)	3/2	"Mental Disguise"
KS: Psionic Etiquette	11	2/1	
KS: Psionic World	11	2/1	
PS: Meditation	11	2/1	
Psionic Familiarity	General	2/—	For each Skill/Power
Psionics	9+(EGO/5)	3/2	Control Roll
SC: Psionic Engineer	11	2/1	
SC: Psionic Surgery	11	2/1	
SC: Pharmaceuticals	11	2/1	
Veil	9+(EGO/5)	3/2	"Mental Concealment"
Latent Mentalist	5 points.		

Mental Powers

Name	Effect	Cost
Aid	Varies	1d6 per 5 pts., +2 maximum for 1 pt.
Astral Form	Project mental self	40 pts at -1
Clairsentience	Sense at distance	20 pts., +5 per sense, +10 per sense group
Change Environment	Trigger Danger Sense	1 hex for 5 pts., x2 radius for +5 pts.
Cyberillusions	Create false images	5 pts. per 1d6
Cyberkinesis	Manipulate machines	15 pts. for 10 STR
Cyberpathy	Read computer minds	5 pts. per 1d6
Cybertransform	Change data by mind	1d6 per 5 pts., 10 pts. or 15 pts.
Damage Resistance	Makes Mental Defense resistant	Make 2 pts. of defense resistant for 1 pt.
Drain	Drain EGO or INT	1d6 for 10 pts. for each, Drained stats return at 5 active pts. per Turn, +2 maximum for 1 pt.
Ego Attack	Causes STUN damage	1d6 per 10 pts.
Empathy	Sense emotions	
Mental Damage	Reduce effect of mental powers	25% for 15 pts., 50% for 30 pts., 75% for 60 pts.
Mental Darkness	Blinds mental senses	1" radius for 10 pts. to one sense, +1" radius for 10 pts., +1 sense +5 pts., +Sense Group +10 pts.
Mental Defense	Subtracts from mental effects	Base EGO/5, +1 MD per 1 pt, minimum 5 pts.
Mental Deflection	Deflect mental attacks	20 pts., Buy at +1 (BOECV)
Mental Dispel	Dispel mental powers	1d6 for 3 pts.
Mental Duplication	Create mental second self	5 pts. in second form for 2 pts.
Mental Illusions	Creates images	1d6 for 5 pts.

Mental Powers

Name	Effect	Cost
Mental Invulnerability	Lack of MD Weakness	-1 Find Weakness per 1 pts, minimum 5 pts.
Mental Paralysis	Binds target mentally	1d6 per 10 pts., Buy at +1¾ (BOECV, Against EGO not STR, Transparent to attacks)
Mental Senses		
Astral Awareness	Sense astral	3 pts.
Aura Vision	See auras	10 pts.
Detect	Varies	Varies
Dowsing	Sense water, etc.	5 pts.
Mental Awareness	Sense mental powers	3 pts.
Sensitive	Sense psychic	5 pts.
Mental Shield	Stops mental powers	2 DEF per 5 pts. at -½
Mind Control	Control minds	1d6 per 5 pts.
Mind Link	Mental contact	5 pts. for 1 mind, 5 pts. for a group of minds, +5 pts. for any one mind, +5 pts. for x2 minds, +5 pts. for any distance, +5 pts. for any dimension.
Mind Scan	Search for minds	1d6 per 5 pts.
Mind Transference	Swap minds	1d6 for 15 pts.
PK Blast	Physical attack	1d6 per 5 pts. vs. PD
PK Killing Attack	Mental killing attack	1d6 Killing per 15 pts.
Precognition	See the future	40 pts., Buy at -1 (Precognition Only)
Programmed Skills	Implant skills in others	Use Psionic Surgery
Psionic Immortality	Mind survives death	2 pts.
Psionic Invisibility	Invisible to sight	20 pts, No Fringe +10 pts., +5 pts. for each sense, +10 pts. Sense Group.
Psionic Surgery	Alter minds	1d6 for 5, 10 or 15 pts. (depending on nature of surgery).
Psychic Absorption	Absorb mental attacks	1d6 for 5 pts., +2 maximum for 1 pt.
Psychic Bond	Permanently links minds	+5 pts. to Mind Link cost, See Mind Link
Psychic Flash	Stops senses mentally	1d6 Flash for 10 pts., Buy at +1 (BOECV)
Psychic Vampirism	Transfer INT or EGO to self	1d6 for 15 pts., +2 maximum for 1 pt. (Buy at +1, BOECV)
Psychokinesis	Move objects	10 STR for 15 pts., +2 STR for 3 pts., Fine Manipulation +10 pts., Affects Porous +10 pts., Buy at +1 (BOECV)
Psychometry		
Psychomorphing	Change mental form	10 pts. for one personality, +10 pts. any personality of your species, +20 pts. any personality of any species
Shape Shift	Change appearance	10 pts. for one shape, +10 pts. group of shapes, +20 pts. any shape
Suppress	Suppress mental powers	1d6 for 5 pts.
Teleport	Change location	10" for 20 pts., +1" for 2 pts., 2x mass for +5 pts., 2x distance (+1 phase) for 5 pts.

Unless otherwise mentioned (or if the cost listed is a flat cost less than 10), the minimum cost for any power is 10 points.
Some powers are listed as "Buy at +1" or similar listing. This means that you must use the Advantage cost listed to buy the power.

Power Limitations

These are listed by Power; not all may be applicable at once. See the Powers section for more details.

Limitations that can be used on most Powers:

- Focus, -¼, -½, or -1 Obvious Accessible
- Requires Psionics Roll, -½
- Concentration, -½ or -1

Absorption (vs. physical or energy attacks)

Only Against Mental Special Effects, -½

Aid

Costs END, -½

Self Only, -½

Empathic Healing: Healer Takes BODY Equal To Amount Healed, -1

Cannot Be Used On Self, -½

Astral Form

Astral Form, -1

Only Usable in Astral Form, -1

Clairsentience

Can Be Affected As Either Of Two Sense Groups, -½

Can Only Sense Through Senses of Others, -½

Blackout, -½

Focusing Object, -¼ to -1

Precognition

Only Through Dreams, -1

Visions Are Vague & Unclear, -½ to -1

Distant Times Modifier, -½

Precognition Only, -1

Psychometry, requires objects/places, -½ to -1

Cyberpowers

Only versus non-intelligent machines, -½

Only against machines with EGO, -1

Ego Attack

Caused By Memory Feedback, -¼

Mental Illusions

Limited by Senses, -¼ to -½

No Conscious Control, -1

For Self Only, -1

Mind Scan

Neither mind scanner nor target can attack through link, -1

Target can attack but mind scanner can't. -1 ½

Mind Control

Emotions Only, -½

One emotion only, -½

Hypnosis Only, -½

OIF (object to fixate on), -½

No Range, -½

Extra Time (1 minute), -1 ½

Concentrate (0 DCV), -½

Gestures, -¼

Incantations, -¼

Requires Eye Contact, -½

Requires Hypnotism Roll, -½

Willing Subject Required, -1

Set command only, -½ to -1

Mind Link

Feedback, -1

PK Killing Attack

Psionic, only on targets with minds, -½

OIF (Sharp pointed objects of Opportunity), -½

Psionic Invisibility

No Effect On Cameras, Etc. -½

No Effect on Characters With Mental Defense, -¼ to -1

Psychic Bond

Only with others who have Mind Link, -1

Psychokinesis

Affects Whole Object (no squeezing), -¼

Only certain objects, -¼ to -2

Only Works On Fire, -1

Only To Increase Speed of Moved Objects, -½

Shape Shift

No Effect On Cameras, Etc. -½

Telepathy

Broadcast only, -½

Communicate only, -¼

Emotions only, -½

Language specific, -½

One emotion only, -1

Receive only, -½

Game Time

Some definitions for Hero System times: A Phase is the time it takes to perform one combat action; a character has a number of Phases equal to their SPD score in one Turn. A Turn is 12 seconds long; each second is also called one Segment. This Time Chart is used to show the major time increments used in the Hero System, which may affect some powers.

1 Segment
1 Phase
1 Turn
1 minute
5 minutes
1 hour
5 hours
1 day
1 week
1 month

Power Advantages

These are listed by Power; not all may be applicable at once. See the Powers section for more details.

Advantages that can be used on most Powers:

- Based on ECV, +1
- Area Effect, +1
- Invisible Power Effects, +½
- Trigger, +¼ or +½

Aid

Move return rate on Time Chart one level, +¼
Affects All Mental Powers & Characteristics, +2

Astral Form

Powers in Astral Form can be bought Affects Real World, +2
For real world thing to affect Astral Forms, buy Powers as
Affects Astral Form, +½

Dispel

Dispel all mental powers, +¼

Drain

Move return rate on Time Chart one level
+¼

Ego Attack

Does BODY, +1
Damages EGO, +0
Camouflaged Attack, +¼ to +½

Mental Illusions

Illusions Do Appropriate Damage, +½

Mental Paralysis

Mental Defense Adds to EGO, -½

Mind Control

Telepathic, +¼
Post-hypnotic command (Trigger), +½

Mind Scan

One-way Link, +1
Invisible Power Effects, +½

Mind Transference

BOECV, +1
Change into limited class, +¼
Change into anything, +½
Cumulative, +½
Works Against EGO,
Not BODY (-½ to +½)

PK Killing Attack

Indirect, +½
BOECV, +1
Does BODY, +1

Psionic Surgery

BOECV, +1
Change into limited class, +¼
Change into anything, +½
Cumulative, +½
Works Against EGO, Not BODY (-½ to +½)

Psychokinesis

Target must use EGO to break out, +½
Indirect, +½
Flight-Capable, +½
Area Of Effect, +1

Suppress

All mental powers, +¼

Adjustment Powers

Psychic Absorption, Aid, Drain and Psychic Vampirism can all change Characteristics or points in Powers. Roll the dice indicated, and that's the amount of Character Points that are adjusted (for instance, with a 2d6 EGO Aid, you roll a 6; you then add 3 to your EGO, since EGO costs 2 Character Points per point). The maximum amount that can be moved is the maximum of the number of dice bought; for instance, with 2d6, the maximum you can change is 12 Character Points. The maximum can be bought up separately, as listed. Adjustments fade over time, at 5 Character Points per turn; this can be altered for +¼ cost per level on the Time Chart.

Advantages

Advantages increase the cost of powers. Take the cost of the power listed (called the Base Cost), then use the following formula to find the cost with the Advantage (called the Active Cost): $\text{Base Cost} \times (1 + \text{Advantages}) = \text{Active Cost}$. Example: Buying 4d6 of Mental Paralysis is a Base Cost of 40 points times $(1 + 1 \frac{3}{4}) = 110$ points.

Limitations

Limitations reduce the cost of powers. Take the Active Cost of the power (the cost after you've applied any Advantages), then use the following formula to find the cost with the Limitations (called the Real Cost; this is what the character actually pays): $\text{Active Cost} / (1 + \text{Limitations}) = \text{Real Cost}$. Example: That same 4d6 Mental Paralysis has two Limitations totaling -¾. So that's an Active Cost of 110 points divided by $(1 + \frac{3}{4}) = 63$ points.



Level-Based Systems

While level-based systems may have some rules for psionics and mental powers, they are usually not as extensive as those described here. You can use the powers described in this book to give new abilities to your mentalist characters, or to provide a distinctly different flavor to the use of mental powers in your game.

Level based systems usually use a D20-based combat system, and are easy to convert to and from Hero System methods. Look through these conversion notes, and then you can make appropriate notes in the margins of this book where necessary to remind yourself of the conversions.

Basic Characteristic Conversions

Where Ego is used in this book, use Wisdom or Mental Endurance. Essentially, look for any other mental Characteristic besides Intelligence, especially something that represents willpower or strength of mind. The Characteristics in systems where they are generated by 3d6 rolls are essentially on the same scale as Hero System Characteristics. A rating of 20 is an exceptionally high value among normal people; only very unusual people will have a higher value.

Intelligence corresponds to IQ or Intelligence, and Strength is listed as Strength in most game systems.

Basic Combat Conversions

These listings show the Hero System value on the left and the value in level-based systems on the right.

- 1 DC = 1D2 damage
- +1 OECV = +1 To Hit
- +1 DECV = +1 Armor Class
- DCV = Armor Class

Convert Hero System STUN only damage into straight hit points, but when hit points go to 0, the target is unconscious rather than dead. The target recovers at GM discretion; at less than 10 hit points over, the target should recover in a minute or less but with half hit points when awakened. When a Killing Attack is listed in the Hero System, roll the dice and multiply by 3 to find the hit points generated.

When the rules call for an Ego Roll, make a Saving Throw versus Wisdom or other appropriate Characteristic.

GURPS®

GURPS® has a well-developed set of psionics rules; basic rules are presented in the *GURPS* rulebook itself, and the supplement *GURPS Psionics* has a more detailed treatment. *The Ultimate Mentalist* covers somewhat different ground with very different flavors. GURPS players may wish to use some of the ideas from *The Ultimate Mentalist* in order to spice up their campaign, and these conversion notes should help in that process.

The psi powers described in GURPS tend to be low-powered. The mechanics and powers discussed in *The Ultimate Mentalist* work well at a low power level, too, but they can also represent high-powered psionics much more readily than GURPS. The Mental Combat Maneuvers are highly recommended for GURPS players, as are the specialized Skills and Powers presented here.

Roughly, levels in psi powers in GURPS equal 5 active points in the Hero System. But the scaling function used in GURPS is generally a straight line, rather than the exponential function used in the Hero System. This means that it's far easier to reach high power levels in the Hero System than it is in GURPS. You can model this, if you like, by taking Psi Levels over 15 and adding +5 active points for every 5 levels (so 11-15 is 5 points per level, 16-20 is 10 points per level, 21-25 is 15 points per level, and so on).

Basic Characteristic Conversions

Where Ego is used in this book, use IQ. Essentially, any other mental Characteristic besides Intelligence, especially something that represents willpower and strength of mind. The GURPS Characteristics are essentially on the same scale as Hero System Characteristics. A rating of 20 is an exceptionally high value among normal people; only very unusual people will have a higher value.

Intelligence corresponds to IQ and Strength of course is Strength.

Basic Combat Conversions

These listings show the Hero System value on the left and the corresponding GURPS value on the right.

- 1 DC = +2 damage (or 3 DC's = 1d)
- +1 OECV = +1 Attack Roll
- +1 DECV = +1 Parry
- DCV = Parry

Ego Roll: Success Roll against IQ; better still, use the Will Roll.

END cost = Fatigue.

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Shadowrun®

Psionics can be an important part of the cybernetic world of *Shadowrun*®, taking their place alongside magic and technology as another force to be reckoned with. You can use the psionic gadgets discussed in the Sourcebook section; in fact, psionics could be built into cyberware. You can put psionics into *Shadowrun* as yet another form of magic, using Essence as the basic attribute for mental powers. But it makes it more flavorful if psionics work differently than magic, so that's the assumption made here in these conversion notes.

Basic Characteristic Conversions

Where Ego is used in this book, use Willpower in *Shadowrun*. The *Shadowrun* attributes should be multiplied by 3 to derive Hero System equivalents; conversely, divide Hero System Characteristics by three to get *Shadowrun* equivalents.

Intelligence corresponds to Intelligence, and Strength is listed as Strength; Quickness corresponds to Dexterity, and Body to Body and Constitution. Charisma equates to Presence.

Basic Combat Conversions

These listings show the Hero System value on the left and the value in *Shadowrun* on the right.

1 DC = +½ die to combat pool

+1 OECV = +½ die to combat pool

+1 DECV = +½ die to combat pool

DCV = +½ die to combat pool

Shadowrun handles damage as either Stun or Physical, which corresponds to the separation in the Hero System of damage as Stun or Body. When a Killing Attack is listed in the Hero System, stage the Damage level up one when determining damage.

When the rules call for an Ego Roll, make a Success Test against Willpower.

Storyteller®

The obvious place where *The Ultimate Mentalist* fits into the *Storyteller*® system is in the *Mage*™ game. In that game, Mental Powers would fall into the Mind Sphere for most things except Psychokinesis and related effects, which would be in the Forces sphere.

Each power should be rated as to the number of dots required; the GM should be responsible for this, using the guidelines in the Mind section of the *Mage* rulebook. For instance, Ego Attack would be three dots, and do a x3 multiplier. A basic conversion would be to assume 10 active points of Hero System power to every dot, but the GM should feel free to adjust things to suit the nature of the campaign.

Many roles can be designed around the powers listed. Some of the powers, such as Compel, might be appropriate for *Vampyre*™ characters as well.

Basic Characteristic Conversions

Where Ego is used in this book, use Wits. To convert between the number of dots and Hero System numbers, treat the first dot as 10 in the Hero System; subsequent dots are each worth 3. So a character with 3 dots in an attribute would have a Hero System rating of 16. (You can adjust these numbers a bit to reflect Hero System break points). Subtract 10 from Hero System Characteristics and then divide the remainder by 3 to derive dots. A rating of 20 is an exceptionally high value among normal people; only very unusual people will have a higher value.

Intelligence corresponds to Intelligence, and Strength is listed as Strength in most game systems. Stamina corresponds to Body and Constitution in the Hero System, and of course Dexterity is Dexterity. Charisma is Presence in the Hero System.

Basic Combat Conversions

These listings show the Hero System value on the left and the value in level-based systems on the right.

1 DC = +1 to dice pool

+1 OECV = +1 dice pool

+1 DECV = +1 Parry dice pool

DCV = +1 to Parry dice pool

When a Killing Attack is listed in the Hero System, add one success level.

When the rules call for an Ego Roll, make a Wits Roll.



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