

SOLIPSIST

by David Donachie



**A Role-Playing Game
About Changing Reality**



**Box
Ninja**

Imagine that someone offered you a door to an alternative world in which everything you ever dreamed of was fact.

Would you go?



There are **people** who think so **strongly** and **individually**, that they can literally **change reality**, teasing out the fabric of the consensus and changing it. They are called **Solipsists**.

In this game you and your friends play a group of balanced Solipsists, struggling to **fulfil** your **grandiose dreams**, retain your **desperate grip** on reality, and **fight the un-making** of the **Shadows** before they can end the world for good.

A **role-playing game** about **changing reality**.

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PDF

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Diceless
Genre
Modern
Players
2+
Age
12+

Price
\$10

SOLIPSIST

DAVID DONACHIE

"To them, I said, the truth would be literally nothing but the shadows of the images."

Plato, The Republic (Book VII)



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Dedication

To Gregor Hutton, for suggesting this book;
To Victoria, for putting up with it;
And to my Dad, for giving me the gift of imagination.

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Throughout this book you will find quotes and comments in this footer. We hope they are entertaining and useful.

SCHEPESIST



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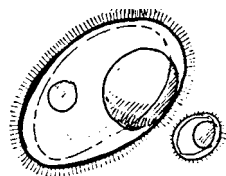
"There are in the world some people who think so strongly and individually that the animacules flock to them and respond to their desires individually. Such people can literally change their own reality..."

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INTRODUCTION

The great Greek philosopher Plato once asked whether all the world, everything we saw and took as real, was in fact no more than shadows cast on the wall of a cave from some more real thing we could not see. Whether, indeed, if there was such a thing as concrete reality at all. Later philosophers had more belief in the solid, and proposed the theory that all things were composed of an essential smallest component, the atom. When the original microbiologist, Van Leeuwenhoek, first looked down his microscope and saw the things that swarmed and multiplied in a drop of water, he had no way of knowing that these creatures, these animacules, were not the philosopher's atoms, the smallest building blocks of matter. Later scientists classified these animacules as animals instead, and delved down to still smaller scales to find their atoms until at last, with the quarks and strings of modern physics, they conceived of particles so small that even a thought might disturb and change them.

What none of these great minds suspected was that Plato was more right than even he knew. Everything that we see around us, the Sun, the stars, the places and people, even the physicists' atoms, are no more than phantoms produced by those smallest elements of reality: the animacules.



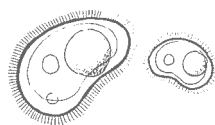
"Perception is reality."

Immanuel Kant

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SCHEPSIST



Although we cannot see them the animacules crowd around us everywhere. A great cloud of them fills all of reality, spinning and swarming, responding to the impulse of our thoughts upon them. It is in response to these thoughts that the animacules manifest solid objects, people, places, even the laws of nature and our own bodies. Nothing exists except that someone has desired it and caused its generation.

And yet to most of us the world seems solid, rational, and consistent. Why? Because we are blind, grounded, ensnared in the reality the animacules create for us. For most people it is not their own individual thoughts that shape the world, but the shared and accepted consensus of hundreds and thousands of people who each see the world the same way and think "This is the way it is". Only when a single thought is thought by many do the animacules stir out of their sluggish ways and change. Even then, since belief comes before fact, we do not notice. One day we begin to believe that terrorists are everywhere, the next day they truly are everywhere, created from nothing to lurk behind the closed curtains of suburbia. Our belief whips the animacules into waves of action, spreading out from the first occurrence in ripples that move across reality till they reach too far from thinking minds and fade away. In their path they leave a new reality, one in which the terrorists have always been there. New minds are created from the void, the very facts of the world change... and no one notices.

Well, almost no one.



THE SOLIPSISTS

There are in the world some people who think so strongly and individually that the animacules flock to them and respond to their desires individually. Such people can literally change their own reality, teasing out the fabric of the consensus and changing it. Sometimes others are dragged along with them into this new world, but most often they go alone. It is for this reason that we call them Solipsists, for they think only of themselves. A Solipsist is the most important thing in their own world. All their thoughts are directed to what the world owes them, to what they should be. Like the *Red King* from Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass* they believe, consciously or unconsciously, that they are the only truly real thing, and certainly the only thing that really matters. They are the ultimate selfish beings.

Others occasionally know such Solipsists as great and despotic leaders. More commonly we know them as sorry cases locked in sanatoriums or mad-houses, mumbling their divinity to blank walls; or lying catatonic, long gone from thought and reality. In fact these Solipsists really are in a world of their own, a reality different from ours in which their Obsessions, their Vision, is dominant. Warped and excited by the overwhelming desires of the Solipsist the animacules create a new reality, one which cannot co-exist peacefully with our own. Under the strain of this contradiction the fabric of reality develops "Tears" until finally the new reality rips off and becomes its own, maintained by its own cloud of animacules. What remains behind, in our mental hospitals, is merely a shell, something which exists because our own consensus insists that people do not simply vanish. The real mind of the dreamer is far away, in its own world.

To believe weakly condemns one to the common solid world, where everything is as our neighbours see it and our leaders insist on it, while to believe strongly drags one away into a private world where everything is as we wish it but no one else exists. For some few, however, there is a middle way.



BALANCE AND HESITATION

A few Solipsists find a place of balance between their Vision and the consensus world. Sometimes this balance is attained through self-discipline and the embrace of esoteric philosophy, but more often it is because the Solipsist cannot overcome their own internal flaws and Limitations to achieve transcendence.

For these Solipsists something within them resists their own dreams. Perhaps it is guilt over a past transgression, or a lack of self-confidence, or an attachment to a loved one in the outside world that holds them back; something that they cannot, or will not, simply re-create for themselves in their own world.

How can this be?

Imagine that someone offered you a door to an alternative world in which everything you ever dreamed of was fact. Imagine that all you had to do to get it was to step through the door. But imagine also that the person you love the most, be it your wife, your mother or your child, couldn't go with you. There might be someone there who looks like them, and sounds like them, but they won't *be* them, they won't be anyone at all, just scenery. Would you go?

If you would then you are like the many Solipsists who happily fall through the Tears into their own reality; but if you hesitate then you understand the emotional ties that keep some Solipsists in our world.

Imagine again that the one thing that always held you back from achieving your greatest ambitions was your own lack of confidence, the bowel shaking fear that always stops you before you can ask for a raise, or speak to a stranger, or enter that contest. Even in your ideal world could you imagine yourself past that fear? Even if you suspected that things might be made to go your way could you bring yourself to take the risk and try?

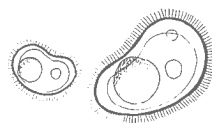
SOLIPSIST

If the answer is yes then you are like all those Solipsists who throw their deepest fears aside and become the *Red King* in their own dream Empires; but if not then you know the weakness that holds some Solipsists back.

For all Solipsists who stay in our world their deepest loves and fears are constantly at war with their own dreams and obsessions. Sometimes such Solipsists are grounded, managing to co-exist with consensus reality, sometimes they must struggle through wild rides of onanistic reality before they can regain their balance. Sometimes they never regain their balance at all.

Amongst these few balanced Solipsists a certain minority seek out the company of others of their kind. Working together it is possible for a small group of Solipsists to help each other retain their state of balance, restraining the excesses of their companions and helping them to retain their grasp on reality.

It is these groups that concern us in this game.





THE SHADOWS

There is another force at large in our world, a force even stranger than the animacules and the Solipsists, and far more sinister. This force is the Shadows. What are the Shadows? Where do they come from? No one knows for sure. The best guess of those few Solipsists who have encountered them directly and survived is that they may be creatures from outside reality entirely; not simply the reality of the consensus world, but of that of the Solipsists as well. Some have suggested that they are predators of the animacules, others that they are Solipsists from another world breaking into this one!

Whatever the truth it is clear that the Shadows are inimical to the whole of our reality. Where the animacules create, the Shadows un-create. In the presence of the Shadows reality unravels. Solid things become plastic. Cause and effect, linear time, consistency, all such things can fall apart where the Shadows are strong. A Shadow incursion may start with a tiny inconsistency, an area of the city where the geography is a little odd, a creepy tower block where people go missing, a government department from which strange decisions issue. If left unchecked, however, the unmaking will expand until all normal rules break down and part of our reality is sucked away into the realm of the Shadows through a Tear. It is perhaps no coincidence that this process seems to be the same as the one by which un-balanced Solipsists vanish into their own realms.

Those few balanced Solipsists who have banded together fear the Shadows. They fear what the Shadows might do to the consensus reality they still hold dear and, of course, they fear what the Shadows might do to them! It is for these reasons that some bands of Solipsists draw aside from their own Obsessions to oppose the incursions of the Shadows. It is a war which they alone have the weapons to win. By opposing the Shadows with their own control over the animacules the Solipsists can sometimes... sometimes... repair reality and banish the Shadows. For a little while.

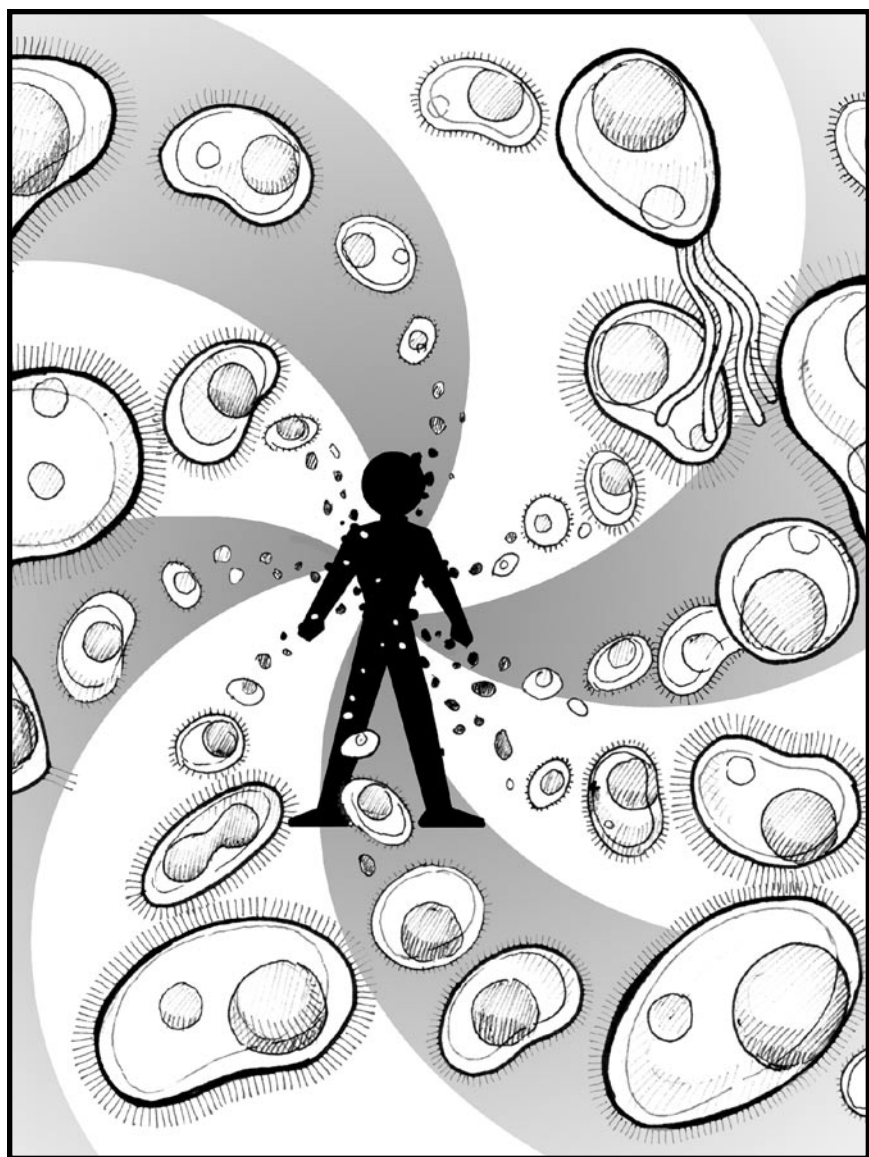
SOLIPSIST



*"In the presence of the Shadows reality unravels.
Solid things become plastic."*

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SOLIPSIST

PLAYING THE GAME

WHAT THIS GAME IS ABOUT

In *Solipsist* you play one of a group of balanced Solipsists, working together to walk the fine line between mundanity and madness. Sometimes a session of *Solipsist* will focus on a simple situation, such as going to a public event, or dealing with some local thugs, which spirals off into a weird and hallucinatory reality distortion as the Solipsists consciously and unconsciously change the world around them. Often it will be the insidious influence of the Shadows that is the driving force behind the plot.

To begin a game of *Solipsist* the players should first agree on the setting for their game (see the “Play” chapter on p. 43 for some notes on this), pick one of their number to be the Game Master (GM), and then create their characters together. Once all of this is done the game is ready to play.

Note that in this section terms in bold are defined in the Glossary (pp. 16–19), and discussed in detail in the next few chapters.



CORE CONCEPTS

The core concept of *Solipsist* is that characters influence the world and make things happen, not by mundane means (such as exerting force, or persuading people of their point of view), but by Changing Reality at an unconscious level so that things go the way they want them to go. Even such fundamental things as walking, talking and breathing are only a veil over the swarming animacules. Most actions do not require conscious exertion of the Solipsist's will, because they go with the general flow of the animacules that make up consensus reality. Where a Solipsist find their desires opposed by an obstacle however, or wishes the world to be very different from its current state, they must apply a far greater effort of will to make the animacules move. This is called **Changing Reality**.

If a Solipsist wishes to get through a locked door then they do so by Changing Reality so that they go through it. It doesn't matter whether this change manifests itself as them picking the lock, breaking the door down with their bare hands, having the door opened by someone, or by having the key to the door all along. The how is merely part of the effect, the why is because the Solipsist wants it to be that way.

For this reason there is just a single mechanic in *Solipsist*, which involves the character Changing Reality to match their desires. This change is affected by the character's **Obsessions**, **Limitations**, and by how much attention they have currently attracted from the animacules. This last factor is measured by the character's **Infestation** score.

Of course not every Change requires a mechanical test. Even though nothing happens in the Universe, not even crossing the road, without the action of the animacules, some things happen at an instinctual and unconscious level, requiring only the slightest stirring of the Solipsist's animacules to achieve. So long as what the Solipsist wants to do goes with the flow of consensus reality, it is achieved easily; only when the world opposes their goals must they exert themselves.



The next four sections expand these core concepts into actual rules. First is a glossary of important terms. Following this are instructions on how to create a character (p. 21), and how to use those characters to do things in the *Solipsist* world (p. 29). Finally the Play chapter (p. 43) explains how to put those characters and rules together and actually play *Solipsist*. At the end of these four sections is an extended example of play. Following this is a chapter on the Shadows, with extra rules for the GM on how to use them in play.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

To play you will need between two and five players. One of these will take the role of the Game Master, the others will create one *Solipsist* character each to play. You will also need character sheets on which to record details of these *Solipsist* characters. (You can find one on p. 27 and at the back of this book, which you may freely copy for your own use, or you can download them from our website.)

Although you can mark down current Infestation or **Shadow Tokens** on paper you will find it a lot easier to have a good supply of at least two different colours of token. If possible you should have at least ten tokens of one colour per player for Infestation, and around 10 to 20 tokens of other colours for the GM. Finally, at least one pencil for recording changes to the character sheets is a must.



GLOSSARY

Animacules

Invisible swarming entities that create the substance and feel of reality from out of their own movements. Everything in reality, except conscious minds, are really just animacules.

Ascend

A Solipsist Ascends when he vanishes into his own reality and fulfils his Vision.

Change Reality

A Solipsist Changes Reality every time they impose their will on a scene, rather than working with what has been presented by the narrator. If you are talking in character you should say "I Change Reality so that..." or "My character Changes Reality so that..." and then describe your intended Change. If you aren't talking in character then just explain how you want things to turn out. The GM should always check that the player intends to Change Reality before they do so if it isn't clear.

Consensus Reality

The reality created by the animacules as they follow the weak minds of normal people. When a Solipsist Changes Reality consensus reality is dragged along behind, changing things for everyone else.

Game Master

The Game Master (or GM) is the player responsible for setting Scenes and narrating those things outside the control of the Solipsists, such as failed Changes and the Shadow. The Play chapter (p. 43) contains lots more information on the GM's role.

Throughout the text we refer to Solipsists, players and the GM using "he", "him", "his", etc. This is just a convention we've used in the book.

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Grounded

A Solipsist becomes Grounded when they re-connect with the elements of consensus reality that they hold to be important, otherwise known as their Limitations.

Incursion

A manifestation of the Shadow intruding into consensus reality.

Infestation

A measure of how thickly the animacules are flocking to a given Solipsist. This is sometimes measured using tokens.

Limitations

Traits that define the things that hold a Solipsist back from achieving his Vision and vanishing into his own reality.

Narrator

The narrator is the person who has the “rubber stamp” on exactly what happens in the story. This role passes among the players and the GM during the game. The narrator of a scene is the person responsible for describing what is happening as a scene starts. For example, in the opening scene of the game the narrator is the Game Master. When a Solipsist Changes Reality perfectly the player is the narrator of the result. Note that the narrator does not have to do all the talking. Other players can, and should, contribute to the fiction, make suggestions, or may even do all the talking (when, for example, they have a great idea about how something should work out and the narrator agrees with it all) but the narrator always has the final say (or Veto).



Obsessions

Traits that define the elements of the Solipsist's Vision that are the most important to him.

Overshoot

Succeeding at Changing Reality so completely that your Obsessions run away with you and the Change goes out of your control.

Player

Anyone who is taking part in a game of *Solipsist*. One player is the GM, other players create and control one Solipsist character each.

Push

Voluntarily taking a Tear in an attempt to force a Change to succeed no matter what.

Scene

A scene is the basic unit of action in *Solipsist*. A scene is introduced by the current narrator, who describes the setting and how the scene opens. The players can then interact with the scene or Change it.

Shadow

The Shadow is a mysterious force that Solipsists perceive as being in opposition to them. More can be read in the Shadows chapter (p. 66). Shadow Tokens are like Infestation for Shadows (p. 72).

Solipsist

A character with the ability to Change Reality with their own force of will. Most Solipsists in the game are played by a given player.

SOLIPSIST

Tears

A Tear (pronounced like a rip, not something you cry) is a contradiction between Consensus Reality and a Solipsist's (or Shadow's) reality. It is a measure of how much a Solipsist has separated from consensus reality. The more Tears a Solipsist has the closer he is to vanishing into his own reality. (See Ascend.)

Thread

A Thread is an element of a Shadow incursion; something which a Solipsist can affect (by destroying, finding or preserving it) to help repair the incursion.

Trait

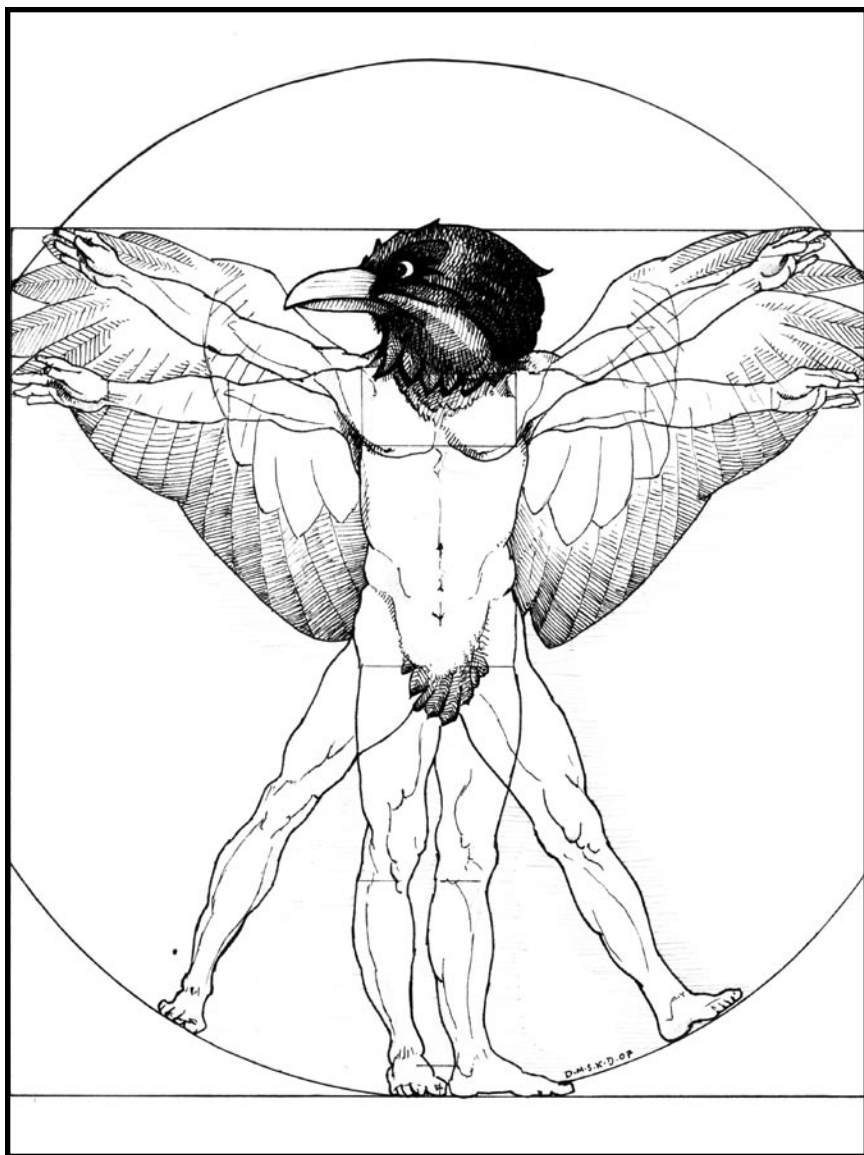
A term covering both Obsessions and Limitations.

Veto

A player exercises a Veto when he feels that he disagrees with some element of the description and he is the narrator. For example, if the Game Master has described a scene like this "You are in a small office, full of filing cabinets and stacks of paper." And a player responds "I pull open a cupboard into a secret room full of mind-control devices" the GM may use his Veto to say "Actually there is no secret room, sorry." In this case the player must accept this, or Change Reality.

Vision

The essence of what a Solipsist would be in their ideal world if it were to be realised. The Vision describes what the Solipsist would be like if they let themselves vanish into their own reality. The Vision is crucially centred around the Solipsist and their desires.



SOLIPSIST

CHARACTER CREATION

All *Solipsist* player characters are balanced, or grounded, Solipsists. This means you play a character who knows that they have the power to reshape reality, but has chosen to remain part of it. This section describes how to go about creating your character.

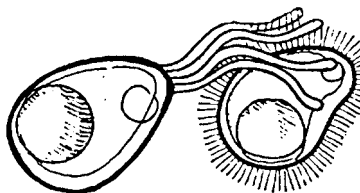
PROCESS

Step 1 : Choose a Vision

The first step is to choose a Vision. The Vision is the view of the Universe as the character would want it to be if only their greatest dreams were realised. If the Solipsist was to be sucked into their own reality then the world they would find themselves in would be described by the Vision.

The Vision is a sentence (or a few sentences if you are feeling loquacious), starting with “My Vision is of a...”, describing the world that the Solipsist wishes to live in. This description must focus on the Solipsist and his place in the world, because the Solipsist is the thing that matters most to himself.

Your Vision may be very abstract, but it should contain a number of aspects which are distinctly different from consensus reality, by which the Vision world can be distinguished from the normal one. Some of these will be inspirations for your Obsessions in the next step.



*The most important thing about the Vision is that it **must** be all about you.*

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SOLIPSIST

Here are some example Vision ideas



My Vision is of a world where I am the single despotic ruler, served by thousands of slaves.

My Vision is of a world of high-drama spy fiction, where I am the heroic super-spy around whom every adventure revolves.

My Vision is of a quiet English village in which everyone knows my name.

My Vision is of a world of fantastic adventure where I slay dragons for the hand of the Princess. (Or a world where I am the Dragon.)

My Vision is of a fairytale of elves and sugar where I marry the prince in his castle of cobwebs.

My Vision is of a world where I prove the conspiracy behind the world's governments.



Step 2: Choose Obsessions

The next step is to choose five Obsessions. Obsessions are things which, if achieved, would drag the Solipsist into his Vision world. By definition they are not currently true.

Each Obsession should start with the phrase "I want" (or "I can", "I will", "I have") and express something that your Solipsist wants to be true about the world, or himself. Realising all of these Obsessions would be the same as turning the world into your Vision. You may want to end each Obsession with a phrase starting "because" to explain why you want it, but you don't have to.

Remember most of all that your Obsessions are statements of the things your character wants most. Every Change of Reality you make will involve one of your Obsessions, and you will use your Obsessions to resist the Shadow as well. Each Obsession is also a hint to the GM and the other players about what sort of things you would like to happen to your character; and the things you don't have.

Be aware that the GM may (and will) base scenes around your Obsessions, and the Shadow can do the same. By choosing an Obsession you are choosing to encounter situations and stories related to it. Also be aware that satisfying an Obsession fully takes you dangerously closer to your Vision, you may not want to pick Obsessions that will come true too easily. If you are stuck for an Obsession then expand on a minor aspect of your Vision.

Example Obsessions



I want to be worshipped
 I want to be ruler of the world
 I want to learn the secrets of life
 I want to live forever
 I want to prove that Odin is real
 I want to never know heartbreak again
 I want to return to that perfect day
 I want to get back with my lost love
 I want to find the lost treasure of Cortez
 I want to discover the secret of clean power
 I want to be a real magician
 I want to see the world

Step 3 : Assign Obsession scores

You must now give each Obsession a numerical score. The higher the score the stronger the Obsession is. A 1-point Obsession is weak. A 3-point Obsession is fairly potent. A 5-point Obsession is risky to use. Divide nine points amongst your five Obsessions in any way you choose. You must assign all nine points, and each Obsession must be assigned at least one point.

I advise you to have at least one Obsession rated at 3 or more.



Step 4 : Choose Limitations

The next step is to choose five Limitations. A Limitation is something that holds the Solipsist back from fulfilling their Obsessions and vanishing into the world of their Vision. Limitations are the ties that bind a balanced Solipsist to the consensus world.

Each Limitation is a short phrase (usually starting with "I am..." or "My...") describing something that stops your Vision from coming true. Each Limitation is something that holds you back from Ascension.

Limitations come in four broad types, and you should choose at least one of each, plus a fifth Limitation from any of the types. (You may, choose to ignore this rule if you have plenty of ideas for Limitations.)

Hesitations describe a weakness in yourself that holds you back from your dreams, such as "I don't deserve to be famous" or "I must repay my debts."

Attachments describe something (or someone) in the world that you love too dearly to leave behind, such as "I need to care for my Father" or "I love my wife above all others."

Disillusionments describe something about the world that you think makes your Vision impossible, such as "I am never recognised for my talent" or "My brother is out to get me."

Goals describe something that you have to do, which is worth ignoring your Vision for. A Goal is not something that is part of your Vision, if it was it would be an Obsession. Goals might be "I need to solve the mystery my friend's death" or "I must protect the world from the Shadows."

SOLIPSIST

To continue with our example, suitable Limitations for our would-be-Emperor might be “I am never recognised”, “I am never given the credit” and “I need to look after my Father”.

It is fine (in fact, it is often desirable) for a Limitation to directly oppose an Obsession.

Be aware that the GM, and you, will base scenes around your Limitations, and the Shadow can do the same. By choosing a Limitation you are choosing to encounter situations and stories related to it.

Example Limitations

My enemies are always undoing me
People think I'm crazy
My brother stole my inheritance
My talent is never recognised
My face is too plain
I'm ugly
You don't understand me
The conspiracy wants to silence me
I can't forget the day she died
No one gets my art
My past holds me back
I love him so much

Step 5 : Assign Limitation scores

This is just like Step 3; distribute nine points amongst your Limitations in the same fashion.

Step 6 : Starting Infestation

Your Solipsist begins play with five points of Infestation. Infestation is a measure of how thickly the animacules cluster around your character. You will gain and spend Infestation through the course of the game. Five points has a good chance of lasting through a whole session of play.

Don't worry too much if your Limitations don't start with "I..." or "My..." sometimes they can just be very hard to phrase that way.

SOLIPSIST

Finishing Touches

You now know a lot about your Solipsist. You know what Vision drives him, what things obsess him, and what parts of his personality, or deep convictions and loves, bind him to reality. Now you can round out your character's personality, his quirks, traits, name, appearance and so forth.

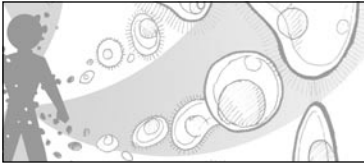
Note that your character's past life, personal possessions, job, friends, and so on, can be defined, but they will often be changed dramatically as play proceeds. With the exception of the things defined in the Solipsist's traits, which have more reality, all these things are merely weak illusions produced by the animacules and can vanish away in a moment.

What you should record are only those few signature things that are part of your character's core appearance, like *The Doctor's* sonic screwdriver, *Sherlock Holmes'* deerstalker hat or *Corwin's* Silver Rose brooch. These things will stay with your character through countless changes, because they are part of the Solipsist's image of themselves.



FVR

SOLIPSIST



VISION

TEARS



INFESTATION



OBSSESSIONS

Obsession	score	Ticks	Un-ticks

LIMITATIONS

Limitation	score	Ticks	Un-ticks

Character Generation

1. Vision
2. Five Obsessions (9 pts)
3. Five Limitations (9 pts)
4. Infestation (5), Tears (0)

Changing Reality: Difficulty: 3 (or 5); Contradictions: +1 or +2;
Shadow Tokens: +2 each; +Shadow Strength if opposing directly;
Reduce by Obsessions; Increase by Limitations; Spend Infestation.
+ve *Fail* (Tick Lim., Unticks?, Taint?), o *Perfect* (Tick Obs., player narrates),
-ve *Overshoot* (Tick Obs., gain Tear, gain Infestation, Shadow twists?)

SCOTT'S LIST



FVR

"...a fire engine full of bare-chested firemen suddenly screaming around the corner towing a clutch of giant flying snails behind it."

SOLIPSIST

RULES

The Rules section of *Solipsist* contains rules for Changing Reality (which is the sole mechanic for resolving action in *Solipsist*), for gaining or improving Obsessions and Limitations through play (see Ticks, p. 38), for causing Tears (p. 39), and for spending Infestation between episodes (see Grounding, p. 40). It also contains rules on the effects of Tears on Solipsists. For rules to do with the Shadows see the final chapter (p. 66).

CHANGING REALITY

When a Solipsist is confronted by an obstacle, something which interferes in what they want to do, or in how they want things to be, they will Change Reality. Often this ability is not deliberate, the world simply conforms to how the Solipsist knows it should be, but such instinctual Changes are usually minor. When a Solipsist chooses to exert their control, however, the animacules swarm to respond and the world can be radically Changed.

Changing Reality is the central mechanic for actions in *Solipsist*. What physical actions a Solipsist takes as part of their Change is not relevant, it is the Solipsist's will alone that is responsible for the result. In making a Change, however, they must overcome their Limitations, and run the risk of falling prey to their own Obsessions.

The mechanics of Changing Reality are as follows.

Optional Rules



Your group should agree which optional rules you wish to use, if any. Examples of these are the optional difficulty modifiers given in the section on Changing Reality (p. 33), the optional rule that increasing Tears limit Solipsist power in Questions Answered (p. 80), and the optional rules for passing Infestation to other players in this chapter (p. 34).

HOW TO CHANGE REALITY

Step 1 : Describe the intended Change

Describe how you want to Change Reality, in a way that suits your Vision.

First, the player should describe what Change they intend to bring about. This might be something as simple as the locked door in front of them actually being unlocked, or as complex as a fire engine full of bare-chested firemen suddenly screaming around the corner towing a clutch of giant flying snails behind it.

It should always be clear what the Change is intended to achieve, what it must accomplish in terms of results and how far it will go, before proceeding. If you are describing the intended Change in your character's voice you should say "I Change Reality so that ..." and then go on to describe the intent. You don't have to describe it in your character's voice though, you can discuss it with the GM and other players to your heart's content, and you may want to ask other players to help you (or they may choose to oppose you). If another player is unsure about some detail of the intended Change they can ask for clarification at this point.

Once the Change has been fully described the Solipsist is committed to the Change and cannot back out.

SOLIPSIST

There are two restrictions to the Change.

1. The Change must affect the Solipsist himself, or those things immediately around him. It's fine to alter the world massively to effect those Changes (such as making yourself President to stop the doorman turning you away), but Changing Reality is all about what you get out of it right here and now.
2. The Change must follow the principles of the Solipsist's Vision. Whatever you want to Change you should find a way of changing it that uses your Obsessions. So a power-hungry Solipsist with a Napoleon complex would choose to enter a club by being recognised by hordes of paparazzi, while a paranoid might find a way to sneak in. A Change that does not follow your Vision will require you to spend a lot of Infestation to achieve it.

For example, the players might approach a nightclub, only to be turned away at the door by a bored looking doorman who doesn't think they look the part. The Solipsist might then say "Turn me away!? But I'm far too famous to be turned away! Everyone here can see how famous I am. I Change Reality so that they let me in, because I won the lottery recently and made a fortune, the biggest win ever recorded! My name, and picture, have been in all the papers recently, how could they turn me away?" The Change has now been described, and involves fame, publicity, popularity, money, a lottery win and so on.

In contrast it would not be appropriate to say "I turn the sky green and full of giant sparkling pigeons". The Change is possible, but it has nothing to do with achieving that player's current aim of entering the nightclub. Saying "I turn the sky green and full of giant sparkling pigeons to distract the bouncers for long enough for me to sneak in behind them" is fine though.

The world does not have enough giant sparkling pigeons.



Step 2 : Set difficulty

Once the Change has been proposed the GM sets a difficulty number, which represents how much the Change diverges from whatever currently passes for reality. The difficulty is determined as follows.

The difficulty starts at 3, which represents the essential inertia of consensus reality.

Add 1 if the Change contradicts one or more facts established in the current story.

Or add 2 if the Change contradicts one or more facts established in the current scene.

Add 2 (or more, see the Shadow chapter for details) if the Shadow is active in the area.

It follows from this that Changes that do not directly contradict what the Solipsist already knows to be the case are easier. This is because those things the Solipsists know about are more real, because their attention has made them so.

Step 3 : Overcome Limitations

Now increase the difficulty by the total rating of any of the Solipsist's relevant Limitations. A relevant Limitation is one that must be overcome to make the Change. So if a Solipsist is making themselves President, and has a Limitation of "I never gain fame" then that Limitation must be overcome to make the Change. Just as they serve to ground him in reality, a Solipsist's Limitations can also make their dreams impossible.

Any player can suggest which Limitations might be relevant. If in doubt, discuss it. If the GM wants to spend Shadow Tokens to raise the difficulty (see p. 74), he does it at this stage.

Optional Difficulties

The difficulty rules presented here are the default but your group may wish to alter how difficulties are determined with your own rules, which should be agreed before play starts. Here are some examples:

The 'Mage Rule' (like the game 'Mage') which treats non-Solipsist observers as a hindrance to a change, rather than simply parts of the background. In this case the presence of a non-Solipsist observer adds 1 to the difficulty, while a whole crowd of observers might add 2 instead.

The 'Low Fantasy Rule' which says that more fantastic changes are more difficult than ones more closely tied to current consensus reality. For example, in a world with less fantasy, killing a foe with a magical lighting bolt might be 2 points of difficulty harder than killing them with a gun.

The 'Fragile Reality Rule' holds that consensus reality is even more fragile than the default rules suggest, ready to alter at the slightest thought of the Solipsist. In this case the base difficulty is 1 instead of 3.

Step 4 : Give in to Obsessions

Now reduce the difficulty by the level of any of the Solipsist's relevant Obsessions. A relevant Obsession is one that would be furthered or achieved by the Change. When describing your intended Change, make sure that some of your Obsessions are relevant. This reduction can, and often will, take the difficulty below 0, which can be both a good or a bad thing.

Any player can suggest which Obsessions might be relevant. If in doubt, discuss it.

If the difficulty is now 0 then skip step 5.

Sometimes you'll realise in Step 4 that you want to involve an Obsession that doesn't fit the Change you've described. If so, you can adjust the Change to fit it in. Work with the intended Change until you're happy.



Step 5 : Spend Infestation

If the difficulty is not equal to 0 then the Solipsist may now choose to spend Infestation to bring it closer, or equal, to 0. If the difficulty is still above 0 then they may spend points of Infestation to lower it by one per point. If the difficulty is below 0 then they may spend points of Infestation to raise it by one per point. The Solipsist may spend as much Infestation as they have, and does not have to spend any. By spending Infestation the Solipsist disperses some of the cloud of animacules that have gathered to him, weakening his hold on reality. Have a look at step 6 to see why you would spend Infestation.

Pushing

In the event that the Solipsist really wants to make a Change, and just doesn't have the Infestation to make it to 0, then he may throw his balance to the wind and push. If he chooses to push then he immediately gains a Tear, and the difficulty is reduced by 5. This represents the Solipsist forcing their Change to the point of Ascending. You may only push if you have already spent all your Infestation without reaching 0, and you may push only once.

Passing Infestation



The core rules assume that Infestation spent on a change is gone for good, with the animacules involved being committed to the change that has been made. Optionally, instead of all your spent Infestation being discarded, half of it must instead be given to other players, and added to their Infestation pools. The player spending the Infestation splits the tokens spent (rounding down) and then gives the tokens to any other players who have characters in the scene.

This rule increases the amount of Infestation in play dramatically, and can lead to more frequent, and powerful changes. It also gives the characters even more reason to work together, because they can capture some of the animacules given off by their fellow Solipsists.



Step 6 : Resolve the Change

Now the process is complete, the Solipsist has exerted his will and reality changes. The result depends on the final difficulty number.

If the difficulty is above 0 the Change fails. Consensus reality, and the Solipsist's own Limitations, have proven too strong and the Solipsist is snapped painfully out of his own dream. Place a Tick by each of the Solipsist's Limitations that were involved. (For more on Ticks see p. 38 below). The GM now narrates the consequences of this failure.

If the difficulty is 0 the Change succeeds exactly as the Solipsist wanted. The Solipsist now narrates how reality alters to match the Change. For example the Solipsist in step one might say "As I walk towardsthenightclubdoorthephotographersthereturnandrecognise me, the man who won the lottery, the new success story of the city! They crowd around me and sweep me in past the surprised doormen." Note that none of the elements mentioned (the photographers, the lottery win, the crowd) need have existed before.

If the difficulty is below 0 the Change succeeds, but not as the Solipsist intended. Instead he gives into his Obsessions and everything runs away from him. The world slips out of his fingers and he runs the risk of ripping open new Tears in reality. The GM now narrates what happens (rather than the player), in a way that emphasises the runaway Obsessions and the character's Limitations. For example they might say "As you approach the club the paparazzi come flashing in, blinding you with their lights, recognising you as the famous cocaine-head rock star. Your minders hustle you past them into the club where they form a cordon to keep you from the screaming fans... you don't notice, you're so far out on speed that the world is just a blur."

When the result is below 0 the Solipsist gains new Infestation equal to the difficulty (so a difficulty of -6 yields 6 Infestation) as the animacules flock to the display of power. Place a Tick by each of the Solipsist's Obsessions that were triggered, and the Solipsist also gains a Tear.

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Shadow-tainted Changes. One other result is also possible. If the difficulty is below 0, and the Shadow taint is in force, the GM may spend a Shadow Token (see p. 75 for more details) to twist the result of the runaway Change with the Shadow's intentions. Instead of the Change just following the Obsessions and Limitations of the Solipsist the Change will be altered by the Shadow. Such a tainted Change still achieves the Solipsist's end, however.

MULTIPLE SOLIPSISTS

It will often be the case that a Change does not simply involve one Solipsist, but instead two or more either helping, opposing, or simply disagreeing, with one another. In these cases the procedure above is altered as follows.

Changes with Solipsists present

When a Solipsist Changes Reality with another Solipsist present, who is not actively trying to aid or hinder the Change, then the mere presence of the other Solipsist will inevitably make the Change harder, because it will be changing the reality of the other Solipsist too, often in ways contrary to their Vision. This can be a good thing, since it makes it less likely that the Change will run out of control. The traits of the other characters impose on the Change as follows.

In Step 3 the difficulty is increased by the largest trait of each other Solipsist that is being directly opposed. Both Limitations and Obsessions increase the difficulty in this way, if they are contrary to the Change. Regardless of the number of traits being opposed only the largest one counts. If the Change fails each of the lead character's Limitations get ticks as normal, as does each opposing trait.



Co-operating with a Change

When a Solipsist makes a Change another Solipsist (or Solipsists) may choose to aid them. The other Solipsists each apply their Limitations and Obsessions to the difficulty number, and may also spend Infestation or push to make the Change. For this purpose only, each assisting Solipsist is allowed to ignore one of his Limitations. When combating a powerful Un-change of the Shadows this may be the only method of success.

If the Change fails each player ticks their Limitations as normal.

If the Change succeeds both players gain Infestation and both narrate the results, following the intent stated by the first player (the one being aided). If there is a disagreement about an element of the result then the player who spent the most Infestation (or in the case of a tie, the one who had more levels of Obsession involved) has the Veto.

Opposing a Change

Sometimes when a Solipsist makes a Change other Solipsists present may object. This most often happens when the intended Change runs counter to some element of their Vision. In this case the other Solipsists may choose to interfere with the Change, trying to make it fail. As above each Solipsist adds their relevant Limitations and Obsessions to the target number, however for this purpose only they are allowed to ignore one of their Obsessions because their focus is on preventing the Change.

If the Change fails the initiating player ticks their Limitations as normal, but the opposing players do not. The opposing player narrates the result.

If the Change succeeds all players Tick Obsessions but only the initiating player gains Infestation. The initiating player narrates the result.

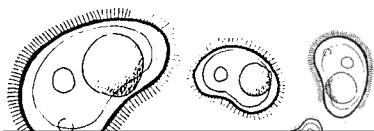
TICKS

During play a Solipsist may acquire ticks next to their Obsessions and Limitations. These ticks represent the increasing power of the Solipsist's Obsessions, or the increasing resistance of their Limitations.

Whenever the number of Ticks accumulated beside an Obsession or Limitation exceeds its level, increase the level by one and erase the Ticks.

As a Solipsist's Limitations become more powerful they will fail to Change Reality more often and will gain Limitations even faster. This is a dangerous slope. As a Solipsist's Obsessions become more powerful they will fail to control their Changes more often and will gain Obsessions even faster. This is also a dangerous slope.

It is also possible to gain Un-ticks through the action of the Shadow. Un-ticks are recorded separately from the Ticks, a trait can have both at once. When a trait gains as many Un-ticks as its level, reduce the level by one and erase any ticks and Un-ticks beside it. See p. 77 for more details on Un-ticks.





TEARS

A Solipsist is always in danger of causing Tears, contradictions between the Solipsist's reality and consensus reality. If he gains too many then his own reality will irrevocably separate from the rest of the world and there will be no return.

A character gains a Tear when one of the following happens

1. A Change of Reality overshoots, i.e. the result is negative: This is because the Solipsist is indulging his Obsessions.
2. A Change caused by the Solipsist fully satisfies an Obsession: Each Obsession fulfilled is a step closer to the Solipsist's Vision.
3. A Solipsist chooses to Push to complete a Change: The exertion of the Solipsist's will propels them into their own world.

It is possible to achieve an Obsession through a series of Changes none of which cause Tears themselves, so the Tear does not appear until the final Change.

For example: Kurt Stardust (see Example of Play, p. 57) makes a Change to sign a lifetime record deal with a recording company that guarantees his fame. When he does this he has satisfied his Obsession about becoming a Rock Star and gains a Tear.



SOLIPSIST

ASCENDING

Whenever a character gains a Tear you should check to see if the character Ascends as follows.

1. Count the number of Tears the Solipsist now has. Divide the amount of Infestation they have by five (rounding down) and add this to the number of Tears, this represents how strongly the Solipsist is pulling to his own reality.
2. Add up the levels of all the Solipsist's Limitations. If this is fewer than the number from step 1 then the Solipsist Ascends.

When a player gains the last Tear that causes him to vanish into his own world the game pauses to give the player the opportunity to narrate what happens to his character. This is the chance for the player to tell his Solipsist's fate in his own reality. The player should also describe what happens back in consensus reality when he Ascends. Does he die? Does he go mad? Does he get a phone call and leave on a jet plane? Whatever the answer the Solipsist is now gone for good.

GROUNDING

Between episodes a wise Solipsist will attempt to reconnect with consensus reality, to help stave off Ascension. This process is called Grounding. During Grounding the Solipsist engages with their Limitations, to drag them back from their Vision.

Mechanically this involves spending accumulated Infestation to modify Limitations, Obsessions and Tears. Some of these actions involve describing what the Solipsist is doing during the Grounding. This can either be done during a gaming session (with each player taking turns), or can be put down on paper (or email) between sessions.

SOLIPSIST

During Grounding you may do the following.

1. Spend Infestation equal to the level of a Limitation to reduce the level of the Limitation by one (and erase any Un-ticks).
2. Spend Infestation equal to the level of an Obsession to reduce the level of the Obsession by one (and erase any Un-ticks). In this case the player must describe an element of his reality, related to the Obsession, that he sacrifices to do this. Doing this also removes one Tear.
3. Spend 3 Infestation to gain a new Limitation of level 1. This Limitation must be different from any other Limitation he has, and must be related to some element of their own Vision and personality. If he does this then he may also remove one Tear.
4. Spend 3 Infestation to gain a new Obsession of level 1. This Obsession must be different from any other Obsession he has, and must be related to some element of their own Vision and personality.
5. Spend 5 Infestation to remove one Tear.
6. Once only, narrate a scene in which the Solipsist re-connects with his Limitations, such as visiting his loved ones, or passing up an opportunity to pursue an Obsession. This removes one Tear without spending any Infestation.





KT

"Outside the Blue Parrot is an enormous queue of frustrated patrons who are being turned away by a pair of ape-like bouncers as fast as they arrive. If you aren't on their list, you aren't getting in!"

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PLAY

Now that you understand how to create a character and use the rules it's time to put it all together and describe how the game is played.

A game of *Solipsist* (also known as a story) is a series of scenes featuring the players' Solipsists, that takes them from an opening to a final successful or unsuccessful conclusion.

BEFORE PLAY

Character creation

The first step is to create your characters. Create them in a group, focussing on the connections between them as well as their own individual Visions. Decide as a group how your Solipsists know each other and why they might be willing to compromise their Visions to work together. All the characters don't have to be reading from the same page in what they want from the world, but if another character's Vision would be anathema to your Solipsist then they are unlikely to work well together.

GM preparation

The GM shouldn't have to prepare anything before characters are created, though having a few interesting philosophical issues, or creepy Shadow manifestations in mind is a good idea. Once the characters have been created, however, there is more for the GM to do.

Look at the characters' Obsessions and Limitations, especially any that apply to more than one character, and make sure that the setting will have opportunities to explore them. If the game will last many sessions then you don't need to hit every trait in the first one, but it helps to have a key scene or conflict in mind to use for every character. A good

*"All the world's a stage,
And the men and women on it merely players."*

William Shakespeare, As You Like It (Act 2, Scene 7)

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technique is to jot down a few key scenes you think might happen, based on the character's traits (you'll probably have plenty of time to do this while the players are thinking of names for their characters).

For example if one of the characters has an Obsession with protecting innocent people from harm, then you might note down a scene where some people are being threatened by a tornado. If a character has a strong Limitation about being haunted by their ex-girlfriend, make a note that she should turn up at the most inopportune time. If the game is lagging, or it seems like the characters need some opposition, have a look at the list and use it to inspire a new scene. Don't worry if your notes don't get used. Often you'll think of something better in play, or the game will be going just fine without dropping in something extra, but if you need an idea, check out your list.

OPENING THE GAME

A game of *Solipsist* usually begins in a world just like our own (wherever that is for you). The world has cars, and planes, and people, and animals, and poverty. It does not have magic, or monsters, and people who aren't Solipsists don't know that Solipsists exist.

If you are stuck for a place to start your story, start it in your own town or city, at the same time of year as you are playing, and go from there.

The first job of the GM is to open the game, setting the initial scene.

In the opening scene, set the story in motion. Give the characters meaningful choices and goals to pursue. If the story is going to revolve around a Shadow Incursion mention some sign of it now. Other choices might be to start with an Obsession or Limitation scene for one character, or the reappearance of an old friend, or a message from another Solipsist.

If this is the first session of a new story mention any notable facts about

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the setting and get the players to describe how they are connected to one another. For a continuing game remind the players how the last session ended and what consensus reality was like when you stopped. If any changes have come about as the result of Grounding between sessions, mention them too.

Once the Opening scene is over move on to another type of scene.

SCENES

A game of *Solipsist* is split into any number of related scenes. Each scene is a portion of the story where something happens; a fight, an investigation, a visit to a club, a flight around the world or a climb up the side of a mountain. The scene tells you about what you are doing, right here and now. Remember that Changes of Reality that contradict things from the current scene are harder than those that contradict things from previous scenes.

Each scene has an initial narrator, who describes what is happening at the start of the scene. If the last scene ended with a Change of Reality, then the narrator of the Change introduces the new scene, otherwise the GM does. The initial narrator sets the location, feel, and elements of the scene, usually highlighting some sort of challenge, choice or obstacle, which makes the scene worth describing.

During a scene the characters can move around, interact with things, talk to other people and so forth, as long as what they are doing is conceptually related to the rest of the scene, and doesn't involve a Change of Reality. When the characters start doing something different, or someone Changes Reality, you have a new scene.

If you want to highlight a change of scene you can describe how you cut to a new location, or how you are now somewhere else, but it's usually not necessary to do so.

INTRODUCING A SCENE

A new scene is introduced by its initial narrator, who may be the GM, or another player when they have just Changed Reality.

The narrator should outline the important things about the scene, what is happening, where it is, who is around. These things are often obvious from the previous scene, but after a big Change they might not be. All of the Solipsists and GM characters from the previous scene will be present unless the last Change of Reality removed them, or bypassed them. Other elements, people, creatures, places and objects, can be added by the narrator to fill out the scene. If it's important or interesting, describe how the last scene led into this one. Again, this may be obvious from a Change that has just occurred.

For example: "The Solipsists cross town to the neon-lit district where the club is to be found. The dark streets are crowded with scantily dressed and drunk revellers making their way from one club to another. Outside the Blue Parrot is an enormous queue of frustrated patrons who are being turned away by a pair of ape-like bouncers as fast as they arrive. If you aren't on their list, you aren't getting in!"



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PLAYING OUT THE SCENE

Once a scene has been introduced the GM takes over as narrator and the Solipsists can do what they want in it, with each player describing what their own Solipsist does and says (if they are present). They can talk to the people around them, argue with their fellow Solipsists, look for a back door to avoid the obstinate bouncers and so forth. All these actions are, of course, mediated by the animacules, but they do not require a significant application of will.

Those elements of the scene which are not the Solipsists are given to the GM to describe (regardless of who the initial narrator was). He speaks for the bouncers, describes what is on the other side of the street if anyone looks, decides whether the crowd stops the Solipsists getting to the front of the line, and so forth.

It is the job of the GM to arbitrate which actions are likely to succeed given the current state of reality, and which are not. Usually if a player narrates something into the scene that wasn't there before then it's there, but sometimes the GM will need to tell the player that a Change of Reality will be needed.

For example if the current scene is set outside a mysterious installation where the Solipsists suspect that bizarre experiments are being conducted on their loved ones the players might state that they dress up in guard's uniforms,

Important Note

It is important to note that, with a few exceptions for Limitation, Obsession and Shadow scenes, none of the things the GM may do to a Solipsist in a scene have any mechanical implications. A Solipsist may be robbed, imprisoned or even killed at the GM's instigation, if the Solipsist does not Change Reality to avoid it, but this does not alter any traits, raise or lower Infestation, or give any Tears. At worst it temporarily removes the Solipsist from the scene until they Change Reality to return.

It is possible, however, for the GM to introduce danger to the Solipsists that can alter traits, reduce infestation or even give Tears, through the use of the Shadow. More details on this are given in the final chapter.

So, what about combat, charming people and the usual way you do things in games? Well, they're all either agreed between the players and GM, with the Narrator having the Veto, or you can Change Reality. That's the sole mechanic of the game.

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steal an electric cart, and drive in. If the current world has been changed to resemble a *James Bond* movie then the GM should just agree and let them get on with it. If, on the other hand, it is more like a gritty police procedural, then he should tell them that their plan just ends up with the Solipsists being held at gunpoint... unless they want to Change Reality of course.

CHANGING REALITY

If a player wants to do something, they can either ask the GM if it's possible, (and the GM gets to decide) or they can declare that their character is Changing Reality and force that action to be possible.

When you want to Change Reality, tell the GM. Say "I Change Reality so that ..." and then describe the intent of your Change. Once a Change has been initiated follow the rules given in the "Changing Reality" section (p. 30) and either you, another player, or the GM, will narrate how the scene has been changed.

Players don't have to do anything in a scene, of course, they can try to change it immediately if that is appropriate for their characters, but it is considered polite for a player (rather than their character) to allow other players to interact with the scene before they do so.

SPECIAL SCENE TYPES

As well as introducing a new scene based just on the previous one the initial narrator can use one of the following other types of special scenes instead. The purpose of most special scene types is to keep the story moving when it lags, or to increase tension by introducing an obstacle or challenge before a goal is achieved. If the story is already moving along at a great pace then it doesn't need anything more.

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Arrival

An Arrival scene is one where a player tries to introduce their Solipsist into the story when they are absent for some reason (e.g. they were killed or lost in a previous scene, or have not been in the story so far). Such a scene is initiated by the player declaring that they wish to try and make themselves arrive. To do so the player makes a Change of Reality as normal (at the usual +1 or +2 for contradicting an established fact if they were removed in a previous scene). In general the Arrival attempt should be made as soon as possible, although in some cases the GM will need to resolve the current scene before it can happen.

Limitation

At any time the GM, or a Solipsist's player, can introduce a scene where one of a Solipsist's Limitations comes into play and threatens to derail what the Solipsist is trying to do. They get a call from their sick mother, or are interrupted by the actions of their enemies. The Solipsist will have to deal with this event, and any Changes they make will automatically include this Limitation. A given Limitation cannot be introduced more times in one story than its level. In other words the more severe the Limitation the more often it can come into play.

Obsession

When relevant the GM can introduce a scene where one of a Solipsist's Obsessions could be furthered. The Solipsist may choose to give into this temptation (and gain a Tear if he completes the Obsession, as normal), or may wish to resist it.

Either way the Solipsist must make a test to Change Reality. If this test succeeds then the Obsession has been given in to and is furthered. If this test fails then the Obsession has been turned down. During this Change the Obsession in question is automatically involved, making the Change more likely to succeed, and other Obsessions and Limitations can be involved as normal. Note, however, that the

Why would you want to introduce a Limitation scene for yourself? The answer is usually to get to Tick one of your Limitations when it is too low.

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Solipsist cannot spend Infestation to make themselves fail, they must invoke their own Limitations and ground themselves.

Regardless of whether he chooses to give in or resist the Solipsist gains a point of Infestation at the start of the scene as the animacules are attracted to his intense desires.

Shadow

The GM can introduce a scene in which the Solipsists encounter a manifestation of the Shadow, or are attacked by one (see the Shadow chapter for a more in depth discussion on how and when Shadow encounters should be introduced). The Shadow can also create conflicts between the Solipsists by manipulating their external Limitations. For example the Shadow might cause the loved one of one Solipsist to attack the loved one of another. Such a scene may be the first appearance of the Shadow in a game, or it may be part of the Solipsist's attempt to close a Shadow incursion.

Thread

The GM can introduce a scene in which a Thread appears, usually for the first time. (For more details on the role of Threads in a *Solipsist* story see p. 73) The GM may have in mind something that should be a Thread in the current story, or may have seen that something introduced by the Solipsists in a previous scene ought to be a Thread. Other times the Solipsists will seek out a Thread, with more or less of an idea about what it might be, in which case this sort of scene naturally arises when they are successful in doing so.

To introduce a Thread the GM takes some of his stock of Thread tokens (p. 72) and assigns them to the element, telling the players what the element is, and letting them see how many tokens it has.

SOLIPSIST

CONTINUING PLAY

It is an assumption of these rules that the same Solipsist characters will continue to be played, not just for a series of sessions in one story, but for a series of stories, or campaign. During a story each Solipsist will tend to accumulate Tears, Ticks, Infestation and, probably, more extreme traits. The Obsessions and Limitations that the players uses most will grow in size, until using them at all will quickly cause an accumulation of Infestation, Tears, or both. Tears, indeed, are seldom a threat in a single story, since the player never has to deal with the consequences of having almost enough to ascend at the end of play.

Over the course of multiple sessions and stories this process will make characters far harder to play, constantly in danger of gaining too many Tears and ascending. For this reason it is important to have an interval of Grounding at least between each story, and perhaps more often if the course of a given story seems to permit it. A session of Grounding is not always enough to shed the accumulated burden of Tears and overblown traits, nor should it be, but it can help to shift them, and excess Infestation, into new traits, which will give the character more options over time.

TINKERING TIME

If you do embark upon a series of sessions, or a campaign, then you should strongly consider having a period of “tinkering time” after the first session where the players can fine tune their characters a little after having played them. Actually playing your Solipsist will often reveal that one or another trait is poorly worded, or doesn’t actually fit with your character concept at all, so it is good to have an opportunity to correct those problems before you go on. I’d advise that during this tinkering time each player may reword any traits to clarify their meaning, redistribute up to three of their points in each of Limitations

SOLIPSIST

and Obsessions, and entirely replace one of each sort of trait with a new one. Anything more than this is going beyond tinkering and into a new character entirely.

ONE-OFF SOLIPSIST

If, in contrast to the assumption above, you intend to run a game of *Solipsist* lasting just a single session, then a few tweaks to the character creation process will enhance the experience. The aim of these tweaks is to make the characters more likely to change during the session, and to make sure that the threat of Tears is real.

After each character has been created in the normal manner, do the following extra steps.

Firstly each player should distribute four ticks between their Obsessions, and four between their Limitations. They can apply as many ticks to a trait as they like, so long as each trait has fewer ticks than its value.

Secondly each character is given three Tears.

ONE-ON-ONE SOLIPSIST

Solipsist can work very well as a two-player game, with one Solipsist and a GM, though the story will quickly get distorted in line with their Vision. As long as the Solipsist has a fairly wide spread of Obsessions and Limitations, and a Vision with a number of clauses, they should not find it impossible to make Changes, though they will often run lower on Infestation than players in a multi-Solipsist game.

One-on-one *Solipsist* is also ideal for running through email.

A two-player game run by email is discussed on this thread:
<http://www.collective-endeavour.com/node/1186>

You can see the Solipsist from that story on p. 90 of this book.

ADVICE FOR THE GM

The most important advice for a *Solipsist* GM is “go with the flow, but know where the flow is going”. The players in a game of *Solipsist* (or more precisely their characters) have enormous power to change the world in which they are playing. Since it is the GM’s job to describe and narrate that world then you should always be looking at what the world has become, and what the characters want, to understand the direction in which it might go next. In a one-off game it’s probably not necessary to take a note of each Change and what it’s done to the world, but in a longer running game it’s a great idea.

Watch and listen. The players will tell you what things interest them most by which traits they choose to use in Changes, and what elements of their Vision they pursue the most. If a player always involves one Limitation, even when they could have argued convincingly that it didn’t apply, then that is the one to introduce in a Limitation scene. If you see that one Obsession is more dear to them than others than give that one an Obsession scene.

Give the players what they want. If a *Solipsist* wants to protect the weak, make sure your story has weak to protect. If a *Solipsist* has Obsessions related to the weather, think about weather related threats and scenes. Think of story roles. Every *Solipsist* is an author of a book with themselves as the lead character. If you have a feel for what sort of character that is, hero, anti-hero, supporting player, then you can help the story go in directions that brings each character to the fore.

Make things hard for the players. Don’t let the players have it all their own way. If they are sailing their way to their goals then throw in a Limitation or an Obsession scene for them to overcome. If they need serious opposition, then use the Shadows to give it to them. Don’t be afraid to lay it on thick, the rules limit what the GM can do (in terms of Shadow Tokens, and Limitation scenes) so don’t worry about going too far.

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Use the Shadows. The Shadows can give structure, direction, goals, and danger in stories where these things can get lost in a sea of conflicting minor desires. The Shadows can be an enemy, or a mystery, or a cosmological struggle depending on how they are played. If you need a foe, personify them. If you need a background, dehumanise them. When the story is crying out for a change of pace, or a reason to unite, or an external goal, the Shadows are the way to do it. Also when the players (as opposed to their characters) are in need of mechanical danger to make their play more exciting, the Shadows give you a means to provide it.

Don't use the Shadows. Often Solipsist stories will tell themselves. A direction emerges from the differing characters that needs no extra spice to season it. All such a story asks from the GM is pacing, and the occasional bit of adversity in the form of unwelcome Limitation scenes, tempting Obsessions at key junctures, and recalcitrant doormen. Adding the Shadow to such a story is overkill.

Don't be afraid of recurring themes. In games of *Solipsist* players (and characters) really change the game world to be the way they want it. If they don't like a theme they will remove it, but something that comes up again and again is something they love. Recurring themes and elements in a campaign become part of its fabric, like a familiar *leitmotif* in a piece of music.

Most important of all, have fun.





SUMMARY OF PLAY

Character Creation

1. Write a Vision about your ideal world.
2. Choose 5 Obsessions and split 9 points between them.
3. Choose 5 Limitations and split 9 points between them.
4. Begin play with 5 Infestation (Tokens).

Scenes

1. In the initial scene the GM narrates the opening of the story then...
2. The narrator introduces each subsequent scene (based on previous scenes).
3. Players can act as they wish without Changing Reality, so long as the GM agrees and they like the GM's answers.
4. Or players can Change Reality to make things as they wish and end the scene.
5. The GM may also open a scene by triggering a Solipsist's Obsession or Limitation, or by introducing a Thread or Shadow-dominated scene. A player may initiate a new scene by adding themselves to the current scene if they are currently absent.

Changing Reality

1. Describe the Change you want (which must be about you and fit your Vision).
2. The GM calculates the difficulty...
 - i. 3 (or 5 if the Shadow is active),
 - ii. +1 if contradicting one or more facts from this story,
 - iii. or +2 if contradicting one or more facts from this scene,
 - iv. +2 per Token if the GM chooses to spend Shadow Tokens,
 - v. + Shadow Strength if opposing the Shadow directly.
3. Reduce the difficulty by your relevant Obsessions.
4. Increase the difficulty by your relevant Limitations.
5. If the result is not 0, optionally spend Infestation to bring it closer.
6. Narrate the result.
 - i. If equal to 0 you narrate a perfect result.
 - ii. If above 0 the GM narrates your failure.
 - iii. If below 0 the GM narrates your excessive success.
 - iv. Optionally, if below 0 the GM can spend 1 Shadow Token to twist it.
7. If you succeeded Tick each Obsession used. If you fail Tick each Limitation used. If the Shadow made you fail gain Un-ticks and Shadow taint. If you overshoot gain a Tear, and Infestation equal to the value below 0.

Grounding

1. Between stories a player can ground themselves.
2. Use Infestation to remove traits and Tears, or to gain new traits.
3. Narrate a scene where you attach to a Limitation to do the same.



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"Then, in utter silence, huge black tentacles unfurl from the clouds and descend to the land below. Unerringly they seek out the flood waters, plunging into them like questing mouths..."

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EXAMPLE OF PLAY

The following example features two characters, “Kurt Stardust” a wannabe rock-god, and “The Major” who yearns after a perfect and peaceful middle England. Both characters have been generated and are as follows.

Kurt Stardust (played by Susan)

Vision

The world’s greatest rock star and fashion idol. Everyone knows and loves Kurt, he’s recognised in whatever he does (and wherever he goes) as the world’s leading artistic authority. His life is one of hedonistic abandon.

Obsessions

I want to be recognised for artistic talent	3
I want to be a Rock Star	2
I want to live a life of carefree abandon	2 ✓
I want to be fantastically rich	1
I want to be famous	1

Limitations

I am always working but always poor	1
I am always seen as a follower not a leader	1
I must look after my sick mother	2 ✓✓
No one appreciates my music	2
My music can’t lift the blackness in my soul	3

Infestation 3

The Major (played by John)

Vision

The Major lives a peaceful and ordinary life in a peaceful and orderly world. Children go to school, the policeman rides a bike, everything is in its place and all ills are solved by the Major’s cups of tea.

Obsessions

I want the world to be orderly	3 ✓✓✓
I want people to work together	1
I want to be content with life	1
I want life to be full of peace and quiet	1
I can solve anything with the perfect cup of tea	3

Limitations

I am disorganised and hesitant	1 ✓
I have a weakness for alcohol	1
I get angry at disorder	2
There is a lack of respect in the world	3
There is a prevailing sense of discontent in the world	2

Infestation 4

To read some records of actual Solipsist games go to
<http://www.solipsist-rpg.com/index.php?action=cms.ap>

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BACKGROUND

The two Solipsists have been chasing a Shadow incursion across a flooded Middle England, following a 3-point Thread in the form of a mysterious and evil Vicar named Mister Sark. Travelling in Kurt's beat-up tour bus they have followed the trail to Mister Sark's home parish.

OPENING

GM: "You find yourselves in the centre of a drowned village. Everything is covered in black water except for a single hill, surmounted by a forbidding church. Its glassless windows look out of the square tower and dark clouds hover close overhead. The tour van finally gives up the ghost in the muddy water at the edge of the hill and you are forced to clamber out on foot."

FIRST SCENE

GM: "So there the two of you are, stranded apparently alone on this little knoll in the middle of the flood waters. There is a church at the top of the hill, a broken mini-van at the bottom, and little else."

John: "And a graveyard of old stones all covered in moss."

Susan: "And a small crowd of villagers, escaping from the flood waters."

GM: "No, there are no villagers. However there is a strange banner over the graves, like something you'd put up for a concert gala, and a rain-soaked wooden stage with scattered chairs." (Here the GM uses his Veto to prevent Susan adding something.)

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Susan: "A concert! That's more like it! Don't worry, the villagers are probably just hiding from the storm. Kurt Changes Reality so that his roadies set up the gear from the van on the stage. Then he leaps up and strums the opening chords of 'Rock me Stardust!' When he does that the villagers all come out of where they are hiding and give him a round of applause!" (Here Susan proposes a Change of Reality by outlining the intent.)

John: "Wait a second, let me look around first!" (The GM agrees that, as is normal, the Major should be able to investigate things before Kurt Changes them.)

John: "The Major walks up to the stage and calls out, 'Hello! Is anyone there! Vicar!?' Then he'll have a look around the back side of the church, any sign of anyone?"

GM: "Nope, he doesn't find anyone, and no one responds to his calls. It just stays eerily quiet. Does the Major want to do anything else?" (John indicates no, and the GM turns to Susan's Change.)

GM: "Okay, I know the intent, to stage a concert and have the villagers appear. The difficulty is 3, raised by another 2 because we know there is no one here. However 'no one appreciates your music' (Here the GM nominates a relevant Limitation) so that makes it a 7. John, do you want to aid or oppose?"

John: "I only want to find Mister Sark, and rock concerts are so uncouth! So... no."

GM: "Very well, but the Change opposes your Obsession with 'Peace and Quiet' so that increases the difficulty to 8. What Obsessions are you using Susan?" (Susan suggests that "Being a Rock Star", "Gaining Fame" and "Recognised for artistic talent" are relevant. These have a total level of 6, bringing the final difficulty to 2) "That still isn't a success, do you want to pay any Infestation to make it o?"

SCENES

Susan: "Oh hell!" (Susan looks at her 3 points of Infestation and sighs.)
"No."

GM: "Oh dear, the Change fails. You get a Tick on 'no one appreciates my music' and John gets a Tick on 'Peace and Quiet'" (The GM now narrates the failure, doing so in light of Kurt's Limitations. John doesn't get to share narration because he didn't actively oppose the Change.)

GM: "Kurt tries to get his roadies out of the van to set up a concert, but they just won't listen to him. Kaz, most of all, is sick of Kurt dragging them all on this crazy chase, when they could have been doing a perfectly good charity gig back in town. 'Christ man!' he says 'This ain't what we signed up for! Where's the pay? Come to that, where's the power! You want a concert, do it yourself!' The others agree, and moreover they are tired of being stuck in the sinking van, they want to go into the Church where it will be dry."

SECOND SCENE

GM: "So Kurt's roadies are heading up to the Church, but when they get there the doors won't open. Kaz bangs angrily on the iron bound doors, but they don't budge an inch. As they do there is a threatening rumble of thunder from above, and fat drops of rain start to splash down on the already soaked graveyard. In the distance the gloom grows heavier, making the roadies even more desperate to get in."

John: "Hey you! Wait there! That's a church you know! You can't just go banging on the door like that, it's not proper! The Major strides up to the roadies waving his shooting stick. Young lad, don't you have any respect?"

GM: "Kaz says 'What's it to you old man? We just want to get out of this rain and the van's shot! You got a better idea?'"

John: "The Major bristles at this rude lack of respect and says 'Yes I do



actually son. This is a Church of England, of course it's open, that's the way things are. The Vicar must just have barred the main door because of the wind. There'll be another door open around here somewhere, you just have to look."

GM: "Bugger that!" says one of the roadies "I've got a crowbar here, give us a sec and I'll have this door open." (Here the GM decides to make this a Limitation scene, and tells John that his "Lack of respect" Limitation is being triggered.)

John: "Oh no they don't. The Major orders them to stop that right now and go and find another door, which they do. I Change Reality."

GM: "Susan?"

Susan: "Kurt just shakes his head, he's still mad at them"

GM: "Okay, the difficulty is 3, raised by another 3 because of the Major's Limitation, to 6. What's more I think your 'disorganised and hesitant' Limitation should make it harder to order them around, so that's a 7! Worse, you get the distinct feeling that the Church doesn't want you in, it wants you not to find the Vicar, so that's a 9." (Here the GM introduces the effect of the Shadow taint.)

John: "9... Not sure I can do 9. 'Everything in its place' must apply, so that's a 6, and 'Wanting people to work together' too, so a 5. Dammit, I should have offered them tea! Susan, help! I mean the Major says 'Kurt you hippie! Do something about your disrespectful friends! They are going to break into the Church!'"

Susan: "Oh, okay. 'Boys! Come on, Rock Stars don't go breaking into Churches! We ain't those sort of Rock Gods! Just do as the man says won't you?' Can I use my 'Being a Rock Star' to help?" (Susan now chooses to aid the Major, and can apply Kurt's Obsessions. She also gets to ignore one of Kurt's Limitations, so she doesn't make things worse.)

SCENES

GM: "Sure, that makes it a 3, do either of you want to spend Infestation to succeed?"

John: "Yes, I'll spend 3 Infestation and succeed, we are going in no matter what!" (John spends 3 Infestation to bring the difficulty to 0 and succeeds perfectly. He gains a Tick on each of the Obsessions he used, which raises his "Everything in its place" Obsession to 4. In addition Susan ticks Kurt's "Being a Rock Star". Now John gets to narrate the results of his Change, with Susan contributing since she aided him.)

THIRD SCENE

John: "Hearing the Major's words the roadies have a change of heart, especially since they know that Kurt is right. Breaking into Church? It just doesn't happen in England! Rock Stars may be louts but some things are sacred. It's the effect of these floods, it's like the Blitz, they are making people re-evaluate their lives, work together, show spirit, stop just looking out for themselves."

John: "So the roadies do as the Major said and look around for another door. Soon they find a smaller side porch, and when they knock on this door it's opened by the Vicar, Mister Sark, who invites them in."

GM: "You are changing the world to make everyone work together and co-operate?"

John: "Well, maybe not everyone, but certainly everyone in England, which is what counts after all."

GM: "Right, well that gets you a Tear for satisfying your Obsession with people working together." (John marks the Tear on his character sheet.)

GM: "Okay, the door is opened by a man who appears to be the Vicar, though he is a very sinister looking Vicar indeed, with straight black



hair and a demonic looking goatee beard. For a moment he looks welcomingly at the roadies, but then he catches sight of The Major and Kurt and his eyes widen. 'Diabolo!' he curses, and then he turns and runs back into the Church!"

Susan: "What the hell!? Come back here! Kurt charges into the Church, yelling at the roadies to help him."

John: "And the Major!"

GM: "Okay, you all rush into the Church. The roadies don't know what they are doing, especially since Rock Stars respect the Church like anything, but they go with the flow. You rush into the Church, skidding to a stop in the middle of the empty pews. The place is huge and empty, with an air of desolation. The floor is half awash with dark dirty water, and as you stop lightning crashes outside, flashing weird and disturbing shadows through the stained glass windows. There is no one there, no Vicar, no roadies, just you and two open doors banging in the wind, one to the outside, one to the steeple."

Susan: "What the... what happened to my roadies? And where did the water come from?"

John: "The Major wails! 'It's all wrong! You can't flood a Church! This is not how the world works, there should be people here, villagers, and that accursed Vicar! When I get my hands on him I'll give him what for!' The Major is shaking with rage!" (It goes without saying that John is playing the Major's anger problem to the hilt.)

GM: "Are you changing something?"

John: "No, the Vicar must have gone up the tower, and the Major will go after him!" (Here John goes with the flow of consensus rather than Changing Reality.)

GM: "Susan?"

SCENES

Susan: "Wait a second, I'm not going up there, it's a trap! Something's way wrong man! It's the storm and the floods, they live here! Don't go!"

John: "I go anyway!"

Susan: "Well count me out!"

GM: "Okay, so you split up. I'll deal with the Major first, then come back to Kurt."

FOURTH SCENE

GM: "The Major bursts out at the top of the tower, onto the flat roof. There is no one there but the Vicar, standing with his back to the stairs near the edge with his hands raised. The black clouds are so close overhead you can almost touch them, and on every side you can see the sinister glinting flood waters, covering the landscape. The Vicar is laughing, calling to something invisible in the rolling clouds, entreating it to consume the wickedness of the world for forty days and nights!"

John: "Never! This shall not be! Vicar, don't do it man! This is England! The major tries to talk him down."

GM: "Reverend Sark turns and shakes his head at you. 'I can't stop now. This world is sick, I know it and so do you. We have to wash it clean and start again, and this is the way to do it!' he raises his hands again. 'It will be the flood all over again!' he cries."

John: "The Major sadly shakes his head. 'You're wrong, it doesn't work like that. It's not the way the world is. Look the rain is stopping, the clouds are clearing. It's over.' The Major points at the view from the tower where the water is indeed going, leaving the land clear again and showing Reverend Sark his mistake." (Once again John initiates a

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Change, this time trying to resolve the Thread of Reverend Sark as well as get rid of the flood.)

GM: “Oh, tough one. The difficulty is 3, plus 2 for the flood being well established, plus 2 for the Shadow, plus 3 for the Thread, that’s 10, and Kurt isn’t here to help. Still, I don’t think any of your Limitations count.”

John: “I apply my desire for everything to be in its place, and Peace, and Faith in the kindness of others, and spend my remaining Infestation.”

GM: “Whew... that’s down to a 3... sorry, still not enough”

John: “I push.”

GM: “Are you sure? (John nods) Okay.... You take a Tear, and the difficulty drops to -2, you succeed but overshoot, that’s another Tear! Gain 2 Infestation and Tick those Obsessions. (This raises another two of the Major’s traits.) Okay, you succeed, which resolves that Thread. (The GM discards the three Shadow tokens for the Thread) but I’m going to twist that (The GM spends another Shadow Token from his stock to twist the result, and describes a Change that succeeds, but not as John intended, and in a way tainted by the Shadow.)

GM: “As you gesture everything falls deathly quiet over the landscape. The thunder and lightning fades away and everything goes eerily still. Then, in utter silence, huge black tentacles unfurl from the clouds and descend to the land below. Unerringly they seek out the flood waters, plunging into them like questing mouths, and then start to suck the landscape dry, devouring the water and everything in it! At the same time more tentacles churn their way towards the tower!”

GM: “Right, now to deal with Kurt ...”



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"Dark alleys become twisted into knots from which there is no escape, whole streets may be swallowed in the creeping corruption, and hastily malformed things heave themselves from the ever-widening tears."



SHADOWS

NATURE OF SHADOW

The Shadows are the antithesis of everything that defines the Solipsist. They are not simply a different type of narrative, like other Solipsists or consensus reality can be, they are the absence of narrative. Although they are purposeful no one can understand their purpose. Logic and cause and effect lose their meaning around the Shadows. A Solipsist who spends too long exposed to their influence will lose first their control over the animacules, then their whole nature, until they are reduced to nothing and torn apart. Even the briefest encounter with their influence can wrench control of the story away from the characters.

In places touched by the Shadows narrative logic ceases to work, and all actions become contradictions. "Because you are famous... the fans walk away and leave you." or worse "Because you are famous... the fans are throwing water on the walls." With increasing influence even space, geometry and time fall apart until eventually everything they touch is consumed by a Tear. As Yeats put it "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold."

Luckily for all concerned the Shadows do not have free access to consensus reality. There must be a weakening, or a Tear, in the fabric of reality to let them in. The Tears left behind by incautious Solipsists are the most convenient entrances for the Shadows, but there are alternatives. In places where the throng of the animacules is thin and patchy they can creep in through the gaps. Forgotten cellars, abandoned warehouses, and rust shrouded railway sidings are the perfect places for the Shadows to slip their tendrils into reality.

At first the Shadow taint will be almost impossible to notice. Perhaps strange signs appear on old concrete walls, or lights shine where there

"Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold."

William Butler Yeats, The Second Coming

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is no power. Then more disturbing signs manifest. Dead cats may be found strung up on telephone wires, people disappear and return as shadows of themselves, or never return at all. If left unchecked the whole area will become corrupted. Dark alleys become twisted into knots from which there is no escape, whole streets may be swallowed in the creeping corruption, and hastily malformed things heave themselves from the ever-widening Tears. Shadow taint this strong is almost impossible to fight without the efforts of many Solipsists together. Without such intervention the only hope is that the Shadows' taint spreads so quickly that it will be swallowed into its own Tear before it can overcome everything.

WHAT THE SHADOWS ARE

There is no one answer to what the Shadows are, it is deliberately left open to the preference of your group to decide, if indeed you make a decision at all. Here, however, are some possibilities.

They are a force of Nature

Some Solipsists believe that they are predators of the animacules, others that they are simply a force from another sort of reality incompatible with our own. If this is the case then the Shadows are part of the natural order and can never be defeated, indeed they are not an enemy, they are just a force to be accounted for.

They are other Solipsists

Maybe the Shadows are other Solipsists, ones with world views so different from your own that your Vision can only accept them as an illogical and destructive force. Worse still perhaps they are more than one Solipsist working together on a corrupt agenda, hoping not simply to realise their own visions, but to permanently change the whole of reality into theirs. Perhaps they are fleeing their own form of predator, or perhaps they have gone mad.

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They are Ascended Solipsists

Others fear that they may actually be Ascended Solipsists who have run out of their own animacules and need to steal them from consensus. A Shadow incursion is a siphon stealing animacules from consensus reality and draining them off elsewhere. Perhaps the Ascended Solipsists are aware of this, or perhaps its unconscious. In this case what seems like illogic in our world is simply natural in the ascended Solipsist's reality.



They are the Solipsist themselves

Could it be that the Shadows are merely a reflection of the Solipsist's subconscious desires and fears making their mark on the world? Perhaps some part of the Solipsist resists their own Vision, and those doubts manifest as the Shadows. Could it be that if the Solipsist embraces their Vision they will make a hell for themselves instead of a heaven?

They are doctors in the asylum

Perhaps all Solipsists are just crazy asylum patients trapped in their own delusions and the Shadows are the doctors trying to rescue them. If you give into the Shadow's temptations then you might be saved.





FIGHTING THE SHADOW

Fighting the Shadows is one of the main reasons for the existence of groups of Solipsists. While the majority of Solipsists are concerned only with themselves, and care nothing for the Shadows even if they notice their existence, some few have taken note of the Shadows' assault on reality and have sworn to do something about it. Some of these Solipsists fight because they fear what the Shadows might do to their own loved ones within consensus reality, while others wonder if even the private universes of departed Solipsists will be safe from the Shadows if they do not fight.

Regardless of the reasons for which they fight, the process that Solipsists must follow to combat the Shadows are the same. While the first traces of Shadow influence can be combated simply by reversing or overwriting their Un-changes, a more powerful incursion can only be defeated by closing the Tear at its heart. Because of the unravelling powers of the Shadows this process is not simple. A Solipsist cannot hope to simply will the Tear closed. Instead they must re-build the un-made reality bit by bit, rather like darning over a hole in a sock, until they can make the final Change that banishes the Shadows.

In attempting this process of closure many Solipsists speak of "seeking Threads". The Threads they speak of are traces of the original reality that existed before the Shadows started to unmake it. Such Threads often survive even the most brutal of Un-changes, giving the Solipsists a route to follow in their fight against the Shadows. Often the Thread will be a remnant of whatever event caused the original Tear that the Shadows have exploited.

Sometimes these Threads are something as concrete as a physical object (one resistant to Changes and Un-changes), such as the gun with which a man was murdered, or the missing key to the locked door in the centre of the Shadow nest. At other times they may be something far more nebulous, such as a snatch of haunting melody,

SOLIPSISTS

the scent of dried roses or the memory of a dead child. These Threads twist dreamlike through the distorted logic of the Shadow nests, and if the Solipsists can track them to their origin and restore them to what they were then the Tear may be sealed. It is usually obvious to Solipsists that a Thread is a Thread when they first encounter it, though it may not be clear what they have to do to resolve it.

Of course the Shadows do not simply allow this to happen. Although the Shadows are not compatible with our world they are not unaware of what happens within it. A group of Solipsists treading carefully on the edges of a Shadow incursion may not be noticed, but once they take overt action to reverse the Shadows' Un-changes they will be directly attacked. Usually these attacks take the form of dangerous elements of the Shadow reality, such as blank-faced thugs, or mis-constructed monsters. More rarely the Shadow will move directly against the Solipsists by subjecting them to Un-changes or by undoing their own recent Changes. (Rules for this are discussed in the "Resisting the Shadow" section below.) Such confrontations are the greatest danger that a Solipsist can face but together in groups they can still hope to prevail.





SHADOW MECHANICS

The following section gives mechanics for using the Shadows in your stories.

Shadow Tokens

When the GM introduces Shadows to a story he first makes an assessment of how strong they are, and gives himself this many Shadow Tokens. Shadow tokens are the equivalent of a Solipsist's Infestation. They are a measure of the Shadow's strength and a resource that can be spent in play. Between 8 and 10 tokens per Solipsist is a fair strength for a Shadow Incursion that poses a reasonable challenge to defeat.

This base number of tokens is divided into two pools, one representing Threads related to the incursion, the other the more general Shadow strength. It is advisable that the Shadow strength is something that the Solipsist's can reasonably hope to overcome as a difficulty without the Threads, so 10 points would be normal for a game with a couple of players.

The balance of tokens represent the Threads (If you are using counters for Shadow tokens then it helps to use a different colour for the Threads). These Thread tokens cannot be removed until the Thread itself is dealt with (i.e. they cannot be spent by the GM, or removed by resisting Un-changes), but still increase Shadow strength. Conversely by dealing with the Thread the Token can be removed without opposing the whole strength of the Shadow.

Thread tokens do not have to be split evenly amongst Threads, there may be more and less significant Threads. It is not necessary to split the Thread tokens into different Threads before play, they can be assigned naturally to elements of the story as they appear.

What if the Shadow loses tokens and then the Solipsists leave it alone for a game session? If they do this then the GM can restore the lost Shadow Tokens or even increase them.



When all of the Shadow Tokens for an incursion are gone the Shadow is defeated. If you want a longer Story then increase the number of Threads and Thread tokens, rather than boosting the general Shadow tokens by an unreasonable amount. This will allow the characters to resolve one Thread at a time of the course of a number of sessions, until the Shadow is defeated.

Threads

Each Thread is an essential part of closing the Shadow Tear and re-weaving reality. Each Thread is an aspect of reality that has somehow escaped the Shadow, or been created by it, and until all have been resolved the incursion is not defeated. Each Thread is also tied to a specific Shadow Token or Tokens. Even if the Shadow can no longer attempt Un-changes (because it has run out of other tokens) its aura and influence still remain.

Each Thread is different, and so is the way of resolving it. Sometimes a Thread is a sign of the unnatural things that have happened because of the Shadow, like a book that drives people mad, or a video tape that kills those who watch it. Threads like this must be found and destroyed to rid the world of them. Other Threads are leftovers of the reality invaded by the Shadow, like a photograph of a dead woman, or the opening bars of a lost concerto, or even a missing person. Such Threads may have to be recovered or reconciled by the Solipsists, who are repairing reality by doing so. For example they might need to find the missing woman, perform the lost concerto, or return the photo to the woman's husband.

There is no need for the GM to decide what a Thread is before play begins (as already discussed in the Thread scene type on p. 50). Instead the GM should simply assign Thread tokens (from the pool set aside at the start) to key people, places, things or themes that emerge during play. Doing so makes that thing "special" and marks it as an element of the Shadow. Once that has been done the players can try to resolve it.

THE SOLIPSIST

Threads are resistant to accidental Change. A Change that is not specifically aimed at removing or recovering a Thread will not do so by accident. Any attempt by a Solipsist to destroy, find or resolve a Thread has its difficulty raised by the number of tokens committed to the Thread in addition to any other modifiers.

When the Thread is resolved remove the associated Tokens from the Shadow Pool. In addition the Solipsists responsible may remove an Un-Tick if they have one.

Shadow Influence

When the Shadow is strong Changing Reality is harder. As explained in the basic rules the base difficulty of a Change is raised from 3 to 5 in places where the Shadows have influenced reality. This “place” is not necessarily a single physical location, but rather an element of the world that has been tainted. It could be an individual house, or it might be any office of a multi-national company, or even be the presence of anyone from a government department. Regardless of the fluidity of its location a Shadow Infestation can still be left, allowing the Solipsist to go elsewhere to make a Change, so long as that Change does not affect the Shadow.

In addition to the general difficulty modifier for affecting the GM may choose to spend Shadow Tokens to further raise the difficulty by 2 for each Token spent. These tokens are permanently lost. The GM can only do this in scenes where the Shadow Influence is already present.

When a Solipsist fails to make a Change when the Shadow is affecting him the highest rated Obsession used in the

Climacting Scenes



In the final showdown between the Solipsists and the Shadow they are fighting the GM can, and should, spend their remaining tokens to boost the difficulty still further, especially if they are on the verge of resolving the Shadow's last thread and events have come to a head. Its an anti-climax to have to make another change after the big confrontation, to get rid of the last few tokens, so throw them in and go for broke.

SOLIPSIST

Change gets an Un-tick against it (see below). In the case of a tie the trait with the fewest current Un-ticks is chosen. Further ties are resolved by the GM picking whichever trait he feels was most important to the attempted Change.

The Shadow can also manifest when a Solipsist overshoots a Change when the Shadow is affecting him. If the GM spends a Shadow Token then he may have the Shadow twist the success into something strange and different. The Change still succeeds, but it is no longer just inline with the Solipsist's Obsessions, but also with the un-intentions of the Shadow.

Attacking Shadow

The simplest way to attack the Shadow is to try and simply will it out of existence. This is very difficult indeed. The Solipsist must make a Change of Reality where the difficulty is raised by the current number of Shadow Tokens (including Threads), as well as any normal modifiers and the Shadow aura. Even for a group of Solipsists working together this will usually be impossible until the strength of the Shadow has been reduced. This can be done by resisting Un-changes and resolving Threads.

Un-changes

Normally the Shadow operates by distorting and corrupting reality, breaking apart narrative and undoing structure. Solipsists may try to repair this damage using normal Changes of Reality, but doing so does not reduce the strength of the Shadow unless a Thread is resolved in the process.

Sometimes, however, the Shadow will move directly against a Solipsist, this is called an Un-change. These Un-changes disintegrate reality, tearing apart dreams, scattering the animacules and undermining consensus and Solipsists alike. Sometimes the Un-change will manifest as a direct attack by the minions of the Shadows, but equally often

SOLIPSIST

the Solipsist will find that some element of their reality, some Change they have already made, has changed back, or has altered in a way the Solipsist would never have wanted.

To initiate an Un-change the GM starts a scene with something attempting to alter the Solipsist or their reality: They must have at least 1 general Shadow Token remaining to do this.

Examples might include a gang of dog-headed Shadow thugs attempting to shoot the Solipsist, the Solipsist's faithful retainer having a crisis of faith about his master, or the car that the Solipsist added in the previous scene breaking down and falling apart.

Whatever form the Un-change takes the mechanics of dealing with it is the same, the Solipsist must make a Change of Reality to resist the Un-change. The difficulty of this Change is the current number of general Shadow Tokens, plus the Shadow aura. This difficulty is increased by any level of Shadow Taint the Solipsist has (see below), and as usual the GM may choose to spend some of the Shadow Tokens to further increase the difficulty.

Generally an attack by the Shadow will target one of the Solipsist's Limitations, in which case the difficulty is raised by the level of the Limitation. Alternatively it may target an Obsession, tempting the Solipsist with what they want. In this case the GM must spend an additional Shadow Token, and the Obsession cannot be used in resisting the Un-change.

If the Change succeeds perfectly then the Un-change has been resisted. Each Solipsist involved may remove an Un-tick (if they have one) or a Tear (the player's choice), and places a Tick on all Obsessions used. The target (or targets) narrate how the Un-change is overcome. Finally the Shadow loses 2 general Tokens.

If the Solipsist overshoots the Un-change is still resisted, and Obsessions ticked, but no Tears or Un-ticks are removed. In this case

SOLIPSIST

the Solipsist's Obsessions take over and the GM narrates how the Un-change is resisted. In this case the Shadow loses only 1 Token.

If the Un-change is not resisted then the Solipsist is dragged further into the Shadow's realm. Each of their Obsessions gains an Un-tick, and each Solipsist involved loses 2 Infestation (or 1 if that is all they have left). Finally the Shadow loses a single Shadow Token.

Un-ticks

Un-ticks, which are gained by failing to resist Un-changes, are a measure of how much a Solipsist's power has been corroded by the Shadow. When an Obsession gains a number of Un-ticks equal to its level it is reduced by one level and all Ticks and Un-ticks are removed. At the same time the Solipsist gains a new Obsession simply called "Shadow Taint". This Obsession acts like any other Obsession except that it does not gain ticks in play. If the Solipsist already has the taint then it is increased by one level instead.

If a player loses their last Obsession due to Un-ticks (not counting the Shadow Taint) then they are immediately dissolved and torn apart by the Shadow. The more a character gains Un-ticks the closer they are to being lost. Note that, as explained in the Grounding rules, a player may reduce the level of their Shadow Taint using Infestation between episodes, but they cannot rid themselves of Un-ticks.



SOLIPSIST

Shadow Taint

As described above, exposure to the Shadow can result in a Solipsist gaining a Shadow Taint Obsession. This Obsession constantly urges the Solipsist to create chaos and disorder, to demolish structure and abandon narrative. Once a Solipsist has this Obsession it will apply to their Changes whether they want it to or not, if their intended Change has any of these elements. This may cause the Solipsist to make uncontrolled Changes and eventually result in them gaining Tears. Note, however, that this Obsession doesn't gain ticks in normal play, it is only increased when Un-ticks remove other Obsession levels.

This is not the only way to gain the taint. It is possible for a Solipsist to make a deal with the Shadow in return for power. This is a conscious decision, and should be negotiated in private with the GM. When a Solipsist makes a deal with a Shadow Incursion they gain the Shadow Taint at level 1 (or increase it by 1 if they already have it), the GM spends one Shadow Token, and the Solipsist gains 5 Infestation.

A Solipsist can detect the presence of the Taint and Un-ticks in other Solipsists as a darkness or corrosion that clings to them, but they cannot tell the difference between Taint gained by fighting the Shadow and that which a Solipsist has gained willingly.





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Sample Characters

These were originally submitted in an open call on *Story Games*:

<http://www.story-games.com/forums/comments.php?DiscussionID=5485>

We also added Victoria's one-on-one character:

<http://www.collective-endeavour.com/node/1186>

Gregor's character from a lively three-player game is shown too:

<http://www.collective-endeavour.com/node/1173>



QUESTIONS ANSWERED

What is a Solipsist?

A Solipsist is simply a mind strong enough to attract the animacules and define its own reality. Of course this answer begs the question "What is a mind?". This book does not offer an answer to that. Maybe a mind is just another manifestation of the animacules, part of an endless circle of referentiality, or perhaps minds are something quite different from the stuff of reality.

Can a Solipsist die?

A Solipsist cannot die, because dying is just another effect produced by the animacules. A Solipsist can appear to die, perhaps as the result of a failed Change, but they can simply Change Reality to return themselves to play in the next scene (though usually with the +1 or +2 modifier for contradicting an established fact).

On the other hand Solipsists can leave play. If their number of Tears exceeds their total Limitation levels they will vanish into their own reality and may certainly appear to die, or go mad, in the consensus world. Similarly if they lose all their Obsessions to the Shadow then will be sucked into the Shadow realm and cease to exist! Finally a Solipsist who somehow loses all their traits will simply become mundane, forgetting that they were ever a Solipsist and vanishing into the consensus.



Is there a limit to a Solipsist's power?

The short answer is no. A Solipsist, given a strong enough Obsession and plenty of Infestation, can Change anything. They can turn the world upside down, or into an endless plain of cheese. They can make themselves King of the city or Emperor of the Universe if they so desire. Indeed they often do.

The catch, of course, is that they tend to do such things in their own Universe, rather than the consensus one. The bigger the thing you try to do the more likely that you will fail. Conversely the stronger your desire to do something the more likely you are to gain Tears. Only perfectly balanced Changes (those that result in a o) don't push you immediately into your own universe, and even they may end up giving you Tears if you satisfy your Obsessions. Of course a perfect Change can still be a major one, as long as you can apply the right mixture of Obsessions and Infestation.

It is assumed by default that a Solipsist's Changes affect all of reality equally. If a Solipsist makes the Sun green, it is green everywhere. Optionally you can agree that the more Tears a Solipsist has when they make a Change, the more local it is, and the more likely it is to fade away when their Tears are removed. This is because a Solipsist with many Tears is closer to their own reality than to consensus.



WORDS FROM THE AUTHOR

HOW I GOT HERE

Solipsist started life as an entry in the 24-minute RPG design contest at Compulsion 2006. This version was read by Gregor Hutton, who encouraged me to develop the game the following year and take it all the way to production. I wouldn't, and couldn't, be here without him. Thank you Gregor!

The creation of *Solipsist* charts two journeys; one from being someone who wrote games only for my own friends to being a published game author, the other from knowing nothing about the world of "story games" to knowing a little and wanting to know more. Along the way I have learnt many hard (and interesting) lessons about how to create a game, how to playtest (and how not to), how to advertise, proselytise and obtain things like proofreaders and artists. I've also been exposed to concepts, games, and gaming styles, totally at odds with most gaming I've ever done before.

Solipsist owes a lot to these influences, but is just as much an independent creation, having been designed before I encountered most of them. Hopefully some of what I have done is new and interesting, even if others reinvent the wheel (hopefully in a roughly round shape, rather than a square). Most of all I hope that this game helps you look at stories where the characters (rather than the players) can shape the world at a whim, and what that means for their dreams and weaknesses.

Learn more about the history of this game on the website:
www.solipsist-rpg.com

David has been designing and playing roleplaying games for decades, but not publishing them. He lives in Edinburgh with his wife Victoria and a host of pets and small figurines.



INFLUENCES

Games

Heretics – Welcome to the Asylum, Wasteland Games.

Mage : The Ascension, White Wolf.

The Shadow of Yesterday, CRN Games.

(Especially the section on setting intents.)

Fiction

The Chronicles of Amber, Roger Zelazny.

Indigo Prime, John Smith, 2000AD.

Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There, Lewis Carroll.

(The Red King's dream.)

Non-Fiction

The Mind's I: Fantasies and Reflections on Self and Soul, Douglas Hofstadter and Daniel C. Dennett.

Other games that touch on similar subject matter to Solipsist are: *Nobilis*, by R. Sean Borgstrom; *The Whispering Vault*, by Mike Nystul; *Mortal Coil*, by Brennan Taylor.

DD

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WORDS FROM THE PUBLISHER

Solipsist has been David's Vision, with all the associated Obsessions and Limitations, for the past year. Blood, sweat and tears, and Tears too, have been expended to get the book out. It has at times been an intensely frustrating experience for both David and I. Most other times it's been immensely enjoyable and thoroughly rewarding.

This book is as good as we could make it. I hope you enjoy it and have fun playing *Solipsist*. If it inspires you to write your own game then so much the better. I'll tick an Obsession and gain a little Infestation.

So, having said that, what did I like that got cut?

Below I've put a piece of the text that was dropped from the body of the book (several times it turns out, since it kept coming back). No Shadows. Playing it this way draws the focus of the game strictly on to the character versus character interaction. It could be intense.

Thanks from me to David, of course, and to John Wilson. Further afield I thank Ron Edwards, D. Vincent Baker, Paul Czege and Matt Snyder for their efforts in encouraging people to create and publish games.

They don't exist



The Shadow is just an illusion, no more than the image cast by beliefs and fears on the world around you. There is no such thing. Maybe you believe in them anyway, or maybe you overcame that illusion long ago. Either way there is no thing there to fight or fear, no mechanics, no need, nothing.

*Gregor Hutton lives in Edinburgh and is an Astronomy graduate. His first published game was **Frenzy** (1995) and his most recent was **Best Friends** (2006). You can write to him at: malebox@boxninja.com*



SUMMARY OF PLAY

Character Creation

1. Write a Vision about your ideal world.
2. Choose 5 Obsessions and split 9 points between them.
3. Choose 5 Limitations and split 9 points between them.
4. Begin play with 5 Infestation (Tokens).

Scenes

1. In the initial scene the GM narrates the opening of the story then...
2. The narrator introduces each subsequent scene (based on previous scenes).
3. Players can act as they wish without Changing Reality, so long as the GM agrees and they like the GM's answers.
4. Or players can Change Reality to make things as they wish and end the scene.
5. The GM may also open a scene by triggering a Solipsist's Obsession or Limitation, or by introducing a Thread or Shadow-dominated scene. A player may initiate a new scene by adding themselves to the current scene if they are currently absent.

Changing Reality

1. Describe the Change you want (which must be about you and fit your Vision).
2. The GM calculates the difficulty...
 - i. 3 (or 5 if the Shadow is active),
 - ii. +1 if contradicting one or more facts from this story,
 - iii. or +2 if contradicting one or more facts from this scene,
 - iv. +2 per Token if the GM chooses to spend Shadow Tokens,
 - v. + Shadow Strength if opposing the Shadow directly.
3. Reduce the difficulty by your relevant Obsessions.
4. Increase the difficulty by your relevant Limitations.
5. If the result is not 0, optionally spend Infestation to bring it closer.
6. Narrate the result.
 - i. If equal to 0 you narrate a perfect result.
 - ii. If above 0 the GM narrates your failure.
 - iii. If below 0 the GM narrates your excessive success.
 - iv. Optionally, if below 0 the GM can spend 1 Shadow Token to twist it.
7. If you succeeded Tick each Obsession used. If you fail Tick each Limitation used. If the Shadow made you fail gain Un-ticks and Shadow taint. If you overshoot gain a Tear, and Infestation equal to the value below 0.

Grounding

1. Between stories a player can ground themselves.
2. Use Infestation to remove traits and Tears, or to gain new traits.
3. Narrate a scene where you attach to a Limitation to do the same.

SOULPSIST



VISION

My Vision is of a world where family is so important to life that each family shares its life essence.

I am the sole survivor of my whole family and they live on through me.

TEARS



INFESTATION

5



OBSSESSIONS

Obsession	score	Ticks	Un-ticks
<i>I want to redeem myself in the eyes of my family</i>	3		
<i>I want to wreak vengeance upon my family</i>	2		
<i>I want to disown my family without fear of death</i>	2		
<i>I want to prove myself worthy in combat</i>	1		
<i>I want to travel to the far reaches of the world</i>	1		

LIMITATIONS

Limitation	score	Ticks	Un-ticks
<i>The people I trust are useless to me</i>	3		
<i>I am too destructive to be redeemed</i>	2		
<i>I will never forget my debts to my brother</i>	2		
<i>I must find a cure for the Plague</i>	1		
<i>I have a short temper</i>	1		

Character Generation

1. Vision
2. Five Obsessions (9 pts)
3. Five Limitations (9 pts)
4. Infestation (5), Tears (0)

Changing Reality: Difficulty: 3 (or 5); Contradictions: +1 or +2; Shadow Tokens: +2 each; +Shadow Strength if opposing directly; Reduce by Obsessions; Increase by Limitations; Spend Infestation. +ve *Fail* (Tick Lim., Unticks?, Taint?), o *Perfect* (Tick Obs., player narrates), -ve *Overshoot* (Tick Obs., gain Tear, gain Infestation, Shadow twists?)

SOLIPSIST



Pax

VISION

My Vision is of a world without war.

I live in harmony with my neighbours, working for the greater good and farming the peaceful land.

TEARS



INFESTATION

5



OBSSESSIONS

Obsession	score	Ticks	Un-ticks
<i>I want all weapons to be put beyond use</i>	5		
<i>I want all hateful thoughts gone from people's minds</i>	1		
<i>I want army establishments turned into gardens</i>	1		
<i>I want to soldiers to be workers</i>	1		
<i>I want battlefields to be ploughed and farmed</i>	1		

LIMITATIONS

Limitation	score	Ticks	Un-ticks
<i>Sometimes I just want to hit people</i>	3		
<i>Guns are quite cool</i>	2		
<i>I need to get a decent-paying job</i>	2		
<i>I want to take care of my baby</i>	1		
<i>I am uncertain and unsure</i>	1		

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Shadow Tokens: +2 each; +Shadow Strength if opposing directly;
Reduce by Obsessions; Increase by Limitations; Spend Infestation.
+ve Fail (Tick Lim., Unticks?, Taint?), o Perfect (Tick Obs., player narrates),
-ve Overshoot (Tick Obs., gain Tear, gain Infestation, Shadow twists?)

SCHEPESIST



VISION

My Vision is of a world where I am more famous than anyone, ever.

Everybody in the world knows me and they all love me.

TEARS



INFESTATION

5



OBSSESSIONS

Obsession	score	Ticks	Un-ticks
<i>I want to be regarded as the greatest person ever</i>	3		
<i>I want gifts and praise to be lavished upon me</i>	2		
<i>I want everyone to desire me in body and mind</i>	2		
<i>I want images of myself to be everywhere</i>	1		
<i>I want to never be without a material good I desire</i>	1		

LIMITATIONS

Limitation	score	Ticks	Un-ticks
<i>I love my privacy</i>	3		
<i>I'm not marketable enough</i>	2		
<i>My life is already fulfilling</i>	2		
<i>I don't feel so wonderful</i>	1		
<i>I want depth in my life</i>	1		

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SOLIPSIST



VISION

*My Vision is of a
Just world.*

*A place where I
preside over a fair
society. My rules are
followed and
I am respected.*

*There is no
injustice here, only
order and my law.*

TEARS



INFESTATION

5



OBSSESSIONS

Obsession	score	Ticks	Un-ticks
<i>I want to make the rules as I believe they should be</i>	4		
<i>I want to punish anyone guilty of something</i>	2		
<i>I want to make people play by the rules</i>	1		
<i>I want to understand everything and everyone</i>	1		
<i>I want to make order from chaos and randomness</i>	1		

LIMITATIONS

Limitation	score	Ticks	Un-ticks
<i>I can't adapt easily to circumstances</i>	3		
<i>People around me act illogically</i>	2		
<i>Injustice makes me lose my temper</i>	2		
<i>The people in power are too selfish and greedy</i>	1		
<i>I am too stubborn</i>	1		

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Shadow Tokens: +2 each; +Shadow Strength if opposing directly;
Reduce by Obsessions; Increase by Limitations; Spend Infestation.
+ve Fail (Tick Lim., Unticks?, Taint?), o Perfect (Tick Obs., player narrates),
-ve Overshoot (Tick Obs., gain Tear, gain Infestation, Shadow twists?)

SCHEPSIST



Toria

VISION

My Vision is of a world covered by ocean, where no humans exist.

I am the mermaid princess of this underwater kingdom.

TEARS



INFESTATION

5



OBSSESSIONS

Obsession	score	Ticks	Un-ticks
<i>I want to have a house by the sea</i>	3		
<i>I want to become a mermaid</i>	3		
<i>I want to breathe water</i>	1		
<i>I want to free the killer whales</i>	1		
<i>I want to see the sea cover the Earth</i>	1		

LIMITATIONS

Limitation	score	Ticks	Un-ticks
<i>My son would die</i>	4		
<i>My family love me</i>	2		
<i>I cannot swim</i>	1		
<i>I hate what being alone does to me</i>	1		
<i>My pet snake cannot breathe water</i>	1		

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SOLIPSIST



VISION

*My Vision is of
an endless and
glorious summer,
where the flowers
are ever in bloom
and in the balmy
evenings my new-
found friends
drink wine
with me and smile.*

TEARS



INFESTATION

5



OBSSESSIONS

Obsession	score	Ticks	Un-ticks
<i>I want to be with my friends</i>	3		
<i>I want to meet new people</i>	2		
<i>I have enough wine for me and my friends</i>	2		
<i>I want the summer to never end</i>	1		
<i>I want better weather</i>	1		

LIMITATIONS

Limitation	score	Ticks	Un-ticks
<i>I can't get away from my ex, Lauren</i>	3		
<i>I must fight the Shadows</i>	2		
<i>I upset people</i>	2		
<i>It's always raining</i>	1		
<i>I am an angry drunk</i>	1		

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-ve Overshoot (Tick Obs., gain Tear, gain Infestation, Shadow twists?)

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bold – primary reference

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bold – Chapter Title illustration



VISION



TEARS



INFESTATION

OBSSESSIONS

Obsession	score	Ticks	Un-ticks

LIMITATIONS

Limitation	score	Ticks	Un-ticks

Character Generation

1. Vision
2. Five Obsessions (9 pts)
3. Five Limitations (9 pts)
4. Infestation (5), Tears (0)

Changing Reality: Difficulty: 3 (or 5); Contradictions: +1 or +2; Shadow Tokens: +2 each; +Shadow Strength if opposing directly; Reduce by Obsessions; Increase by Limitations; Spend Infestation. +ve Fail (Tick Lim., Unticks?, Taint?), o Perfect (Tick Obs., player narrates), -ve Overshoot (Tick Obs., gain Tear, gain Infestation, Shadow twists?)



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