

BOOK OF THE WEAVERTM

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The Sourcebook of the Weaver for Werewolf: The ApocalypseTM





Of course, I thought my task was simple – to fight the Wyrn and rescue the Weaver from its talons. I thought that the rest of the Garou Nation were fools for leaping to the Wyld's defense and leaving the Weaver to be devoured by the far stronger Wyrn.

I was, of course, naive.

I had been born into a family of means, and used their resources to further my fight. And it was a good fight, much better than the blood-soaked wilderness brawls of our cousins. My weapons were paycheque and revolver, steam and the printed word. The Wyrn's coils rose thick and oppressive in the cities at the time, and I was there to meet them. And as I grew into my role, the city grew around me. Sometimes I thought of it as my child, and paced its streets with paternal possessiveness; sometimes I thought of it as my parent, and curled up in its warm gaslight gaze and sleepy brick arms. I would have thought of it as my mistress as well – had it not sent a mistress to me.

Her name was Elena. She pretended to aristocracy, and in truth her grace and wit would have enthralled the nobility of Europe. It certainly enthralled me.

We had been introduced by a colleague of mine, a... no, I cannot recall or access the tribe or even the name. Unimportant. But in the polite drawing-room conversations, he let it fall that she knew certain things, that she was not one of "us" [Iron Riders? Garou? I cannot recall his meaning] but was one of "us" nonetheless. I took his meaning to be that Elena was Kin, and her mystique captured me so that I never thought to inquire further. After all, it would have offended – something I soon could not even contemplate doing to her.

I never saw her eat, and I might have feared at first, a little, that she was a vampire. But no vampire can pretend to actual life the way that she was alive. Only once did I quietly wake when she was still asleep, and I watched the rise and fall of her chest, listened to her heart beat and her blood pulse, tasted her smell of sweat and life.

Too much life. Before long, I was sure she was a shapechanger like me, and yet she could not be Garou. Her eyes blazed with the fire that only comes from being a creature that can see all of life, both flesh and spirit. But there was no Rage to her — her anger burned cold when it burned, not furnacelike as it is with us. It was strange, and I felt nervous — but so many fears can be quelled by a lover's touch, when that lover understands you in ways no human, much less wolf, can.

I learned her true nature some nights later.

I had told her that I had an appointment in an opium den, and left the true nature of my visit unspoken. I had my vices, to be sure, but opium was not among them; Elena knew as much, and knew that this would be a "business" visit. So with a promise to call on her the evening after, I set out about my affairs.

They were waiting for me, of course. The man I had chosen to kill had forewarning of some sort, and it was my misfortune to learn that not only was he a sorcerer of some fashion, but that the women on his arms and lap were Wyrms-beasts in female skin. There was pain — terrible, burning pain that I can only reconstruct, not remember. I fought back with all my strength, and it was enough; his concubines splintered and jellied under my talons, and he

would have been next. He was a sorcerer of discretion, though, and took the first opportunity to magic himself away. Perhaps I would have never found him.

But I did, the very next night. I found his shrunken, desiccated husk, wrapped in twine-thick cobwebs, laid neatly across my coal-scuttle the very next night. And after I had set it burning, wondering all the while, I went upstairs and found a radiant, flushed Elena pouring brandy into two snifters.

She chuckled deep in her throat. "Did you find your present?"

I feel certain that the elders would have censured me had they known. Perhaps if I had been older myself, or more innocent, I would have torn away from her then. But nobody tells a Garou what to do, or so I thought. And although the images of bloated, bulbous spiders danced across my fancy in the dark, it somehow made my hunger for Elena all the more rapacious.

Then I made the mistake of trying to reconcile my "duty" with my love. In the midst of a conversation filled with quiet flirtations and double-speak about our contrasting shapeshifter natures, I decided I would draw her out; either I would understand more about her, or bring her closer to me. So, most casually, I said:

"You've never once mentioned the name of Gaia."

I should mention that her smile was always metallic, like bright red paint over polished steel. Her reply was, "Neither have you."

I faltered then, and had no reply.

This troubled me for some time afterward. Why was it that Gaia's name would not come to my lips unless I directly made an effort? Her gift of life pounded in my veins — or was it

actually the heart of Gaia's energy at all, and not the pulse of something else? From where did I draw my iron strength, my furnace heart, my electric speed, if not from the Earth Mother?

I tried to ask Cockroach for his wisdom then. Into the Umbra I went, into the heart of the city's glowing webs. His voice was a faint clicking, intertwined with... something else, a peculiar atonal melody. I tried to focus on Cockroach's voice — no, I lie. I could not resist the other sound, the song of wheels on rails and gears humming on their spokes.

When I realized this, I fled from the Umbra in shame, thrashing my way through the Gauntlet, collapsing in the street.

How much time passed then? I cannot say. I have no idea how to guess time in minutes any more, much less hours or days. Elena came to me, though, and nursed me with her touch.

"What is this?" I finally cried. "How is the voice of the city so strong, when it is so beset and should be weak? Why do I hear it in my head?"

"Poor thing," she murmured. "It hurts not to understand, doesn't it?" Her caress was cool on my cheek. "I can help you understand if you want. I want to help you. May I?"

My eyes were closed. I know that much.

"Please," I said.

I felt her lips against mine, then on my ears. Her whisper rustled like old silks. It was faint, and in no language I knew. And then...

And then, it seemed, she was answered. By a sound that was alien to me and yet resounded in my bones like a cub's call for its mother.

"Listen," she murmured. "Can you hear that? It is the language of my queen, whispers of things to come. It is the future of this world."

I listened then. I opened my ears and I heard it all.

From that point on — I believe it was as if I were sleepwalking, but I cannot say whether my senses were clouded then or if my clarity of perception is half-complete now. Perhaps I waited and mulled; perhaps I began my journey immediately. I do not know. I remember only that I stepped past the Gauntlet and into the heart of the spirit-city. The lights were blurred around me, but I could sense that they were patiently guttering, biding their time until they could flare so brightly that night would be no more. I paid them little heed — I simply walked, and she walked quietly behind me.

The Web was alive with miraculous electricity, and the tighter the strands grew, the brighter the lightnings. The filaments grew closer and closer together, curving and dipping into the heart of it all. I saw the concave form at the center of it all, and I recognized it for what it was. There was no longer any question, any choice — nor do I believe I would have cared for one at the time. I stepped into the heart of the spirit city, and lay down in the cradle prepared for me. The skittering of the spiders gently closed around me. I slowly closed my eyes and sank into their ministrations.

What then? —

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Then came madness. Madness now to recollect it. A time without a body, a mind set to run as electricity over the web. Separated. Unified. I cannot say whhhh'h'Δ·Δ°°°'†\$f54— no, I will not remember. There is no then. There is only now. Now.

Listen.

Sometimes— I pass the wrong way down a junction, or am thrown from one strand onto another when the Web

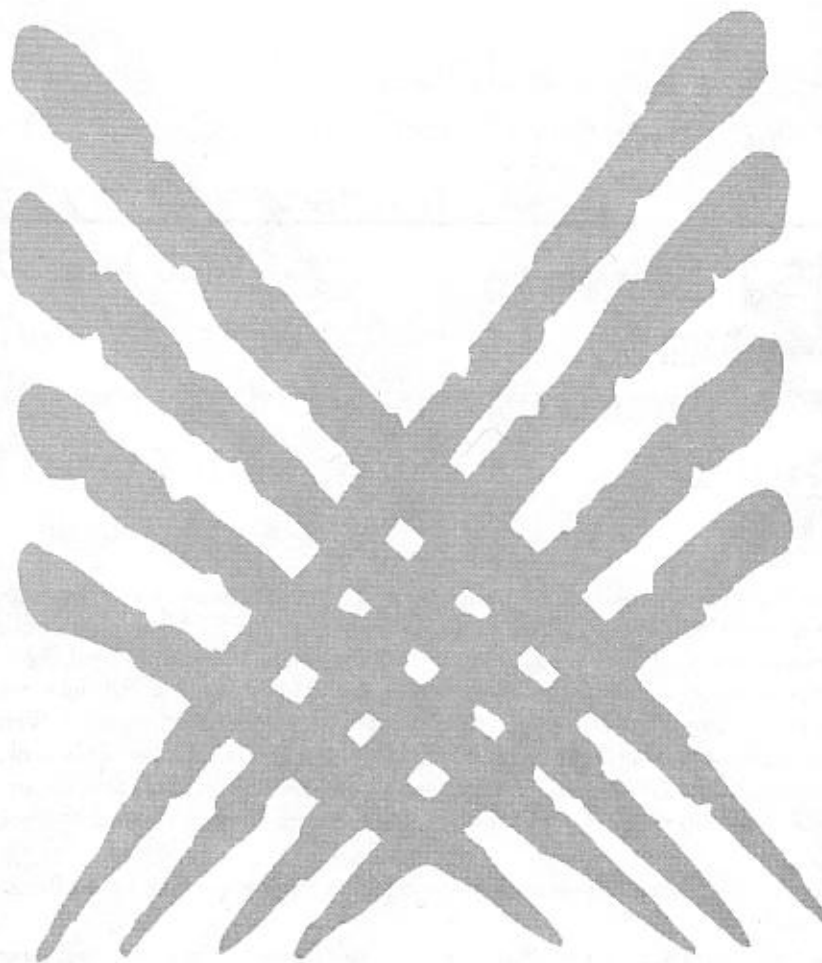
stakes. A little of myself... is re-loaded then. I look for things of my old life, and eventually - nanoseconds are so long to me now - I remember that my old life is gone, and my friends are no more. And then...

And then sometimes I drown myself again in the Onesong, giving up despair for unity. Other times I struggle to manifest myself, only to fall into fugue from exhaustion. But sometimes - now - I go hunting for the electronic records of my tribe, such as this machine, and I tell as much of my story as I can.

I don't have so much as a second left; the Onesong is rising in volume. I am to be collected again. Again, do not delete or reformat this file. Learn my story. Tell your Moon Dancers.

She is great and majestic and terrible - but she does not need your assistance. Her power is too strong already.

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INTRODUCTION: THE SNARLED SKEIN

*Nature is a part of our humanity, and without some awareness
and experience of that divine mystery man ceases to be man.*

— Henry Beston

Humanity has struggled toward the concept of a utopia for centuries. We dream of someday having a society where pain and suffering are nonexistent, and art and literature flourish. We want a society where crime is a mere pipe dream, where everyone is free to do as they will, where we can have whatever we like with just enough effort to make us appreciate it, but without sacrificing convenience. We want justice and technology and peace and health — and every day, people do what they can to bring us one step closer to this idealized existence. We hope that we'll be enlightened enough to appreciate this society and not abuse the power we gain, and we hope that someday our level of technology won't outstrip the everyday man's comprehension of that technology — a world without ignorance, technoshock or fear. If we can balance our own knowledge with the wisdom to use it, perhaps someday it will be possible.

But one of the fundamental things that is wrong with the Werewolf universe is that Balance is corrupt — and Progress and Science are insane.

It all comes back to the Weaver in the end. According to the legends of the Changing Breeds, the universe went wrong when she lost her mind. She is the one who raised the

Gauntlet; she is the one who bound the Wyrms, driving it insane. She is indirectly responsible for all the corruption that the Wyrms have worked since then — and she is directly responsible for the unchecked growth of the Pattern Web. She could very well be the real enemy of the shapeshifters, one more powerful than the Wyrms. Even if the Garou manage to stop the Wyrms in its tracks, if the Weaver isn't healed of her madness, they'll just be exchanging one Apocalypse for another.

The magi perceive her threads, too; a powerful faction of mages in fact further the Weaver's will each time they exert their own on reality. The Namers would call the Weaver "Stasis" — but they are wrong. The Weaver allows change, usually in the name of "moving forward" — however, she has no power to create on her own. Like a deranged maiden aunt, she fusses over the children that aren't hers, trying to claim them for her own. She orders and defines and records, insisting on Naming the things that she can't produce. She narrows potential, insisting that things only grow into the things she wants them to be.

She is ally to some, enemy to others. She isn't malicious; nor is she benevolent. She is simply unyielding. It's her way or no way at all.

A Word of Explanation

Some of the scientifically minded or technophiles among you might be irked a bit by the tone of this book. Specifically, you might get the impression that we White Wolf folks are a bunch of hypocritical Luddites, frothing at the mouth about how we'd all be better off in lightless caves, and then typing it into our Macintoshes so that we can collect our paychecks on time and drive home to our CD players and video game platforms.

In a word — relax.

Yes, technology and science have done wonders for the whole world, not just humanity. Nobody really misses smallpox, and it's science that helps us realize exactly why this ecosystem of ours is worth preserving. But remember, this is the World of Darkness we're talking about. Of course we're going to focus on technoshock and vivisection, on pollution and blind progress. We're going to tell a story about a society that's receiving social and technological advances faster than the general populace can learn to responsibly use them. Because this stuff is real, and it's even *more* of a problem in the World of Darkness, where there's a potent spiritual entity who's contributing to the insanity. We'll leave all that fantasizing about science only ever being used responsibly to *Star Trek*. In *Werewolf*, the world is a mess, and it isn't looking any better.

But hey, you knew that already.

How to Use This Book

Book of the Weaver is your guide to the madness of Grandmother Spider. It offers insight into the "mindset" of the most powerful of the Triat (though again, speaking of what the Weaver "thinks" isn't much more accurate than metaphor, considering that the Celestine operates on a level that mortals and shapeshifters alike can't comprehend). It

offers antagonists for some chronicles, allies for others, and a word of warning on keeping relatively free of the Weaver's webs. After all, once she has something, she doesn't like to let go. Look at what happened to the Wyrms....

Legends of the Garou: The Strand-Rider's Tale is the story of an Iron Rider who went astray, and what happened when he stepped too near to the heart of the Weaver's web.

Chapter One: Cosmology details the origins and history of the Weaver as the Garou know her, as well as delving into her hold over humanity and methods her servants prefer.

Chapter Two: WeaverTech contains a mix of hardware, software and wetware to throw at your players — or, in some cases, for the players themselves to use as toys.

Chapter Three: Grandmother Spider's Brood details the servants of the Weaver, witting and unwitting. Some may be the characters' allies; others — like DNA — will almost certainly be antagonists.

Chapter Four: Talespinning is the Storytelling chapter, full of advice on how to properly use the Weaver's touch in games, as well as possible story and chronicle ideas to take players on a tour of the Pattern Web.

Finally, in the **Appendix** you will find descriptions of the new charms employed by some of the Weaver's minions.

Glossary: Specialized Terms

- **Device** — A piece of technology advanced beyond ordinary expectations; this can be mundane in nature, infused with some amount of Weaver energy, or created by Technomagick.
- **Drone** — Human or supernatural hosts merged with Weaver-spirits; the Weaver's equivalent of fomori.
- **Naming** — To the shapeshifters, the process of defining something on a physical and spiritual level. The first things' Names were given by Gaia, and the Weaver has been traditionally jealous of this power. Mages are often called "Namer" for their tendency to, in the eyes of the shapeshifters, alter things' Names to suit their convenience.
- **Onesong** — The Weaver-spirits' method of communication; can be hypnotically seductive to people who hear it.
- **Three Seeds, the** — Dogma, Science and Technology; the legendary three gifts of the Weaver to humankind, allegedly granted to encourage humans to define and control their environment.
- **WeaverTech** — Super-advanced technology that relies on bound spirits to fuel its abilities; essentially, technological fetishes. Need not be created by shapechangers.



Onesong: The Weaver-Tongue

The litany trilled through Ik'vk'ich's mind as the K'gk'ai and Tr'k flanking her volleyed response to response to response, a synchronous survey of their sensory input and surroundings, faster than sound. It could be described as language only by the most extreme definition — it conveyed primitive impressions and decisions from the Web's simplest neurons to its sentience clusters, and as for the rest, it did not even fringe upon auditory perception. Only the Mk'lk'rm and above were capable of the full range of expression; lessers did not require it. The Web was one, and knew all a single strand knew.

The insectile analogy often attributed to the Weaver is frequently more fitting than any of its postulants could ever have expected. Such abstractions as Jung's *spiritus mundi* or the entomological "hive-mind" have been discovered on both sides of the spiritual barrier.

This transcendent language — likened to "song" by those creatures capable of even grasping it at all — is known and used in at least a rudimentary form by all the Weaver's children. All share data. All share decisions. All are one.

Storytellers may give appropriately gifted characters (Cybersenses, Sense Weaver, equivalents) some small chance of intercepting fragments of the Onesong — impossibly-compact bitstreams, many-layered information undercurrents, telepathic "static," whatever form will best contribute to the scene. Such glimpses will be garbled and unclear, however, and seekers are well advised to accept an imperfect understanding of their innermost workings. Those who have come closest to cracking the Weaver's code are invariably won over by whatever they unearth — newly-subverted strands and pillars in her ever-expanding Web.



CHAPTER ONE: COSMOLOGY

Whatever does not spring from a man's free choice, or is only the result of instruction and guidance, does not enter into his very nature; he does not perform it with truly human energies, but merely with mechanical exactness.

— Wilhelm von Humboldt

Introduction

Although the Weaver has certainly risen to the position of most powerful among the Triat, the Garou are of two minds about her. Her function, like that of all the Triatic spirits, is of course necessary. Without her, physical beings and things would have no coherent form or function. There would be no laws of nature to ensure that the world ran in an orderly fashion. Without the Weaver, all would be chaos, unformed, shifting matter and raw energy in a world where cause need not follow effect and no sentient being could survive — if only because it would immediately go mad.

On the other hand, it is evident that she has gone much too far. Her madness spurs her to attempt to calcify everything, both in the Umbra and on the physical plane, into static changelessness and dreary homogeneity. Many Garou agree that she is quite mad, but do not realize just how so; nor do they fully ken that this is her greatest weakness. She is a

powerful and subtle being, her influence not always evident and werewolves often overlook her doings in their pursuit of all things Wyrmtainted. In fact, the line between the Weaver and the Wyrmt is often fuzzy, so that Garou often mistake the Weaver's works for those of the Wyrmt, and react accordingly. Other times, the influence of the Wyrmt is indeed more powerful and obvious, and the Weaver's role in the situation is ignored as incidental and irrelevant. In most cases nothing could be further from the truth.

In many ways, the Weaver still serves as an ally to many Garou, and certainly to humanity. However, in the grand scheme of things, her mad spinnings are far from what the universe needs. If she ever manages to throw off her madness and restrain herself, then there might be a chance for balance once again. If not, then the ultimate result will be a universe of pure and perfect order — of the lifeless sort.

The History of the Weaver

From the desk of
Simon
Antonine:

*Thank you for the loan of your records. I'm glad to say that we're finally finished. Although I'd never have managed this without *Sings-With-Spirits'* primal understanding of the natural order (proof positive of the importance of instinct), it did take some time to reconcile his explanations with the scientific and historical interpretations you've uncovered.*

Again, thank you. This is far from comprehensive, but I hope it'll go a long way toward being a history that the young homid cubs will be able to digest.

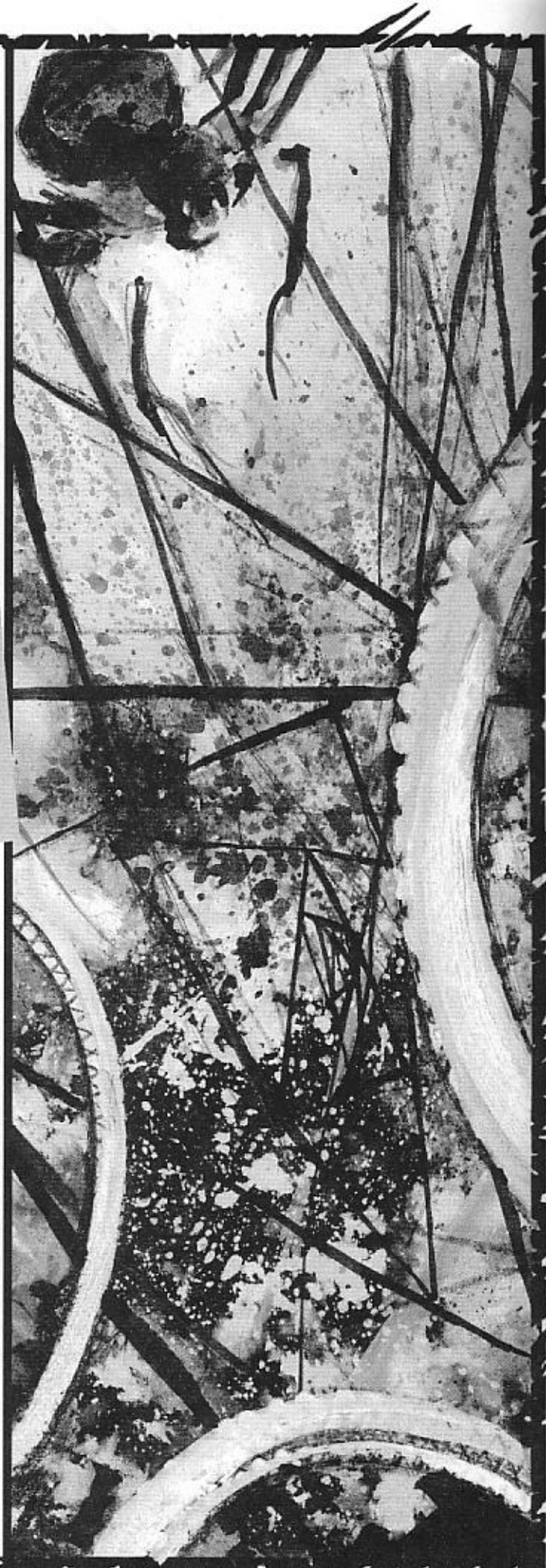
— Simon

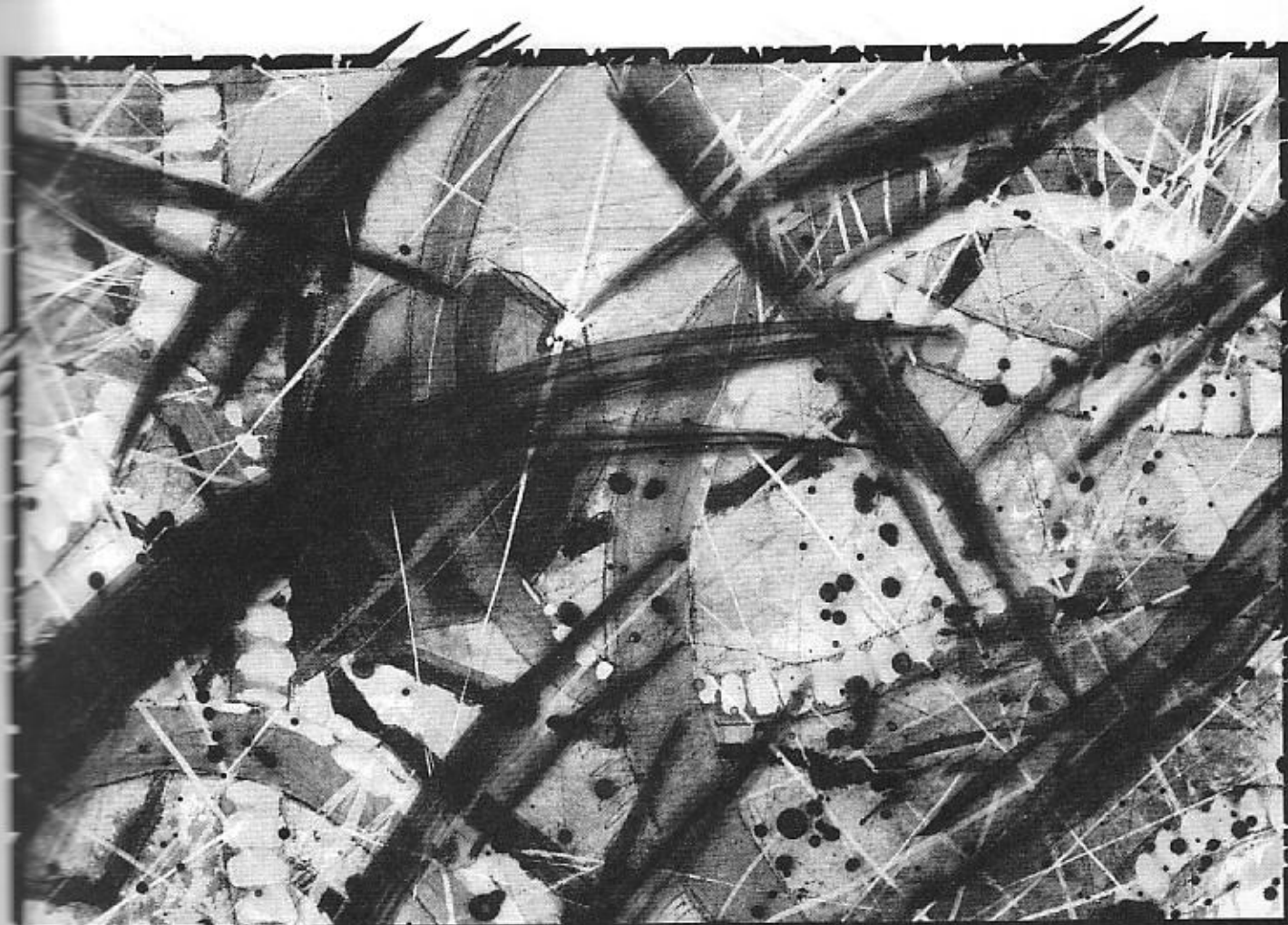
Compliments of
ARType Printing

First, of course, there was Gaia.

Then out of the primordial blackness arose the Triat. These three powerful spirits, Wyld, Weaver and Wyrn, worked in harmony for eons, their purposes set, their courses unwavering. Unbound Wyld generated the raw matter and energy of the universe, and set within it the seed of potential for change, for development, for evolution. Stern Wyrn kept an eye on things, watching for excess, making sure that all things wound down in their proper time so that matter could be destroyed and recycled, providing the universe with entropy and the arrow of time. Busy Weaver had the greatest task of all — to take the raw matter and potential the Wyld created, and to give it form; it was also her duty to ensure that things behaved by certain rules, so that there would be an order to the cosmos at large.

At first, the Weaver's job wasn't too difficult. Energy becomes matter and vice-versa; gravity set to a certain value ensures that gas clouds condense to galaxy clusters, which in turn spawns stars and planets within them. With a majestic slowness, pattern and order came to the universe out of the original seething froth, and this pleased the Weaver. The Wyld ensured that the universe didn't remain static, and the Wyrn ensured that the fuel of the stars used would eventually, run out, causing the stars to explode and release the





elements forged within them into space, and perhaps to collapse into an all-devouring black hole. The Weaver did not like these "flaws," but the Wyrms insisted it was an essential and effective device for cleaning up cosmic detritus and dead-weight. Besides, he pointed out, her own laws demanded that stars above a certain density collapse into a singularity. The Weaver reluctantly consented to let them be, just so long as she didn't have to see the damn things. Thus were singularities hidden behind event horizons.

The Fall

The Weaver continued weaving, complexities inlaying complexities built upon more complexities. The more complex the universe became, the more the Weaver's consciousness expanded. A new layer of complexity arose — out of Gaia came life. Simple at first, the spark of malleability provided by the Wyld allowed it to change, evolve, grow, become even more complex — guided, of course, by the rules of the Weaver. The Wyrms ensured that life, too, was governed by entropy, growing old, dying, decaying. Hosts of spirits appeared, growing stronger, spawning smaller spirits. In those days, the line between spirit and flesh, between Umbra and material world, was practically invisible. Living things and spirits commingled. Wyld encouraged a variety of forms to appear, and Wyrms occasionally raced through the world of flesh to clean the slate and start practically anew.

Weaver paused in her work, and looked around. The harder she looked, the less sense her work made to her. "What is the point," she asked, "in making pattern and form if Wyld changes it and Wyrms destroys it constantly?" Her question echoed in the void, unheeded and unanswered.

She cried out in anguish; her mind fractured. In this way was the Tellurian wounded.

The Severing

In a fit of rage, the Great Spider wove a barrier that crashed between the physical and spirit worlds. The Gauntlet brutally separated spirit from flesh, quelling the riotousness of their unfettered coexistence. Cries of agony and loss rose from the furthest reaches of the Tellurian, but the Weaver did not care. Order had to be imposed.

Next she turned her attention to the Wyld. It was too changeable, too uncontrollable. She saw the endless change it caused as incomprehensible, and decided that if she could only bind it, the world would make more sense. But Wyld was far too fluid; no matter how hard Weaver tried, no matter how strong or tight her bonds and traps, it could not be caught and kept for long. Like quicksilver through a sieve, the Wyld always poured free from her webs. Furious now, Weaver turned her attention to the Wyrms.

The Wyrms had always been a source of annoyance to her. Here were her beautiful creations, lovely in their complex and precise mathematical forms, orbiting and



living and proceeding in a clockwork manner just as she had ordained. How dare the Wyrms cause their decay and destruction! Wyrms was not as slippery as Wyld, and proved to be an easier fly to snare in her webs. As the unwitting old serpent was more tightly bound into the Pattern Web, Wyrms's own consciousness exploded, then shattered into countless fragments. As he madly tried to force his head free of the webs, the strands cut his consciousness into the Hydra. His mad, frantic thoughts radiated out into the Tellurian and took form as Banes, Urge Wyrms, the Maeljin Incarna, and more. Still bound, still mad with pain and hate, he has sought revenge upon his captor ever since.

Weaver, however, was satisfied with her catch, neither knowing nor caring about the effect it was having on Wyrms. Now that the force of entropy was contained, she could enjoy the fruits of her endless labors without having to see them go for naught, destroyed in Wyrms's maw to be reprocessed into raw potential by the insufferable Wyld. Wyld, of course, was still free and caused no end of problems, but Weaver considered that it would eventually be weakened enough through her calcifying spinning that it could easily be caught. She also began to realize that many Wyld spirits could not survive well in areas where she had been hardest at work, and so began her attack on the Umbra itself.

Where the spiritual counterparts of all things — from rivers and rocks to mountains and clouds and such — had all been vibrant, sentient beings, they now began to be sapped of their energies. This process has taken a long time, and is still continuing — but the result is the mindless ephemera they seem today. Many Theurges believe that this is only the first step to complete calcification of these objects, of utter binding within webs spun by Pattern Spiders. It may also be that these things will eventually disappear completely, drained forever of the Gnosis maintaining them. Indeed, where the Weaver's webs are most evident in the Penumbra, the colors are more muted, and the less likely it is that sentient representations of inanimate objects will appear. The vast majority of buildings and other man-made objects are nothing more than insensate ephemera; only those buildings and other objects which have been deliberately awakened are represented by true spirits.

But reworking the Umbra was not enough, and work went too slow. There were not enough Pattern Spiders to do the job. She looked again upon Gaia, and there espied a new creature.

The Weaver's Pact

"What is this?" she inquired to no one in particular. For there, on the grassy plains, huddling at the fringes of the trees, were apes. They were not where they belonged; they should be in the forests. But the forests were retreating, and the apes did not follow, being left to fend for themselves on the plains. "More change!" fumed the Weaver, angry that things hadn't stayed the same since the last time she looked upon the world. But before she turned away in disgust, to try to make things stop here, she happened to notice that just perhaps this new



thing could be used to her advantage. These apes were walking upright, and their hands were free, you see.

Her mind churned, seeing, as is her wont, the potential in rawness. She approached these creatures with sympathy. "Oh, my," she exclaimed. "It seems Gaia has forgotten about some of her children! Look at you! You have no fangs, like the wolf, to catch your meat. You have no hooves nor horns with which to protect yourself, nor do you have any claws for digging. How do you survive?" The apes showed how they lived, eking out a living scrabbling the best they could for roots, gathering what plants they found and scavenging carcasses. "Oh, no, that will never do. I can help you, though. I can give you a powerful Gift that will ensure that your kind need never have to struggle like this again. You will be warm and comfortable and safe, and master of all you survey. You will be my adopted children, and may use this Gift freely as you will. In exchange, however, I ask that you help me learn and understand, that I may satisfy my mind. You will help me bring order to the world."

This deal was too good for the apes to pass up. They accepted, and as they did, a new light shone in their eyes — a terrible, cold light never before seen on Earth. One picked up a sharp, edged rock, and used it to cut at a carcass. Lo and behold, the joint and the meat came off much easier. Before long, these apes were shaping stones to their will, and using certain stones to make sparks to light fires on purpose. And they taught these skills to others of their kind, and their children.

The newly born Garou saw this, wondering at what they were doing. "We are making cutters and cooking our food to make it easier to eat," said the leader of the apes. Some Garou didn't trust this activity, but held their tongues. Others thought it tricks taught by Rock and Fire-spirits who managed to materialize, and so thought little of it. Others were fascinated, and emulated those tricks.

Eventually, some of the apes discovered how to use tools to kill. Oh, how excited they were after spearing their first large beast. "Fresh meat! All we want!" they shouted. And they feasted. The Garou saw this, too, and some grew worried. "It is nice that you have learned the hows of the predator," they warned, "But it would behoove you to learn the ways. Do not kill too much, else it would be bad for you." The apes nodded their heads and passed the cooked meat. The Weaver watched this, and smiled. Her children were progressing, using the Gift she had given them.

The Impergium

With hunting, the apes gradually learned to make other things out of the animals they killed. Bone and antler could be used as tools, and garments for warmth and adornment could be made from hides and sinew. Hides and plants were also useful in making shelters, so that one might hide from strong sun, rain showers, and predators. Organs could be used to hold water to take away from the lake or river. The apes also learned to weave baskets and such to hold more

forage in, so that the gatherers could take more food back to the camp. They learned how to catch fish, and overcame their fear of entering the water. The apes prospered, multiplied, and spread.

As they traveled from their ancestral homeland, their Changing Kin followed. Some spread to the north and west, some to the east, and some continued on southward. They killed as they went, honing their hunting skills and making more use of hides as they ventured into harsher climates.

Then Gaia became distant, and the world became cold. The Wurm spread himself across the land in her absence. The Weaver feared that her children might be lost, but no! Not only had they spread themselves so wide, but they had well learned the use of fire to keep themselves warm. Though some abandoned simple hide huts for caves, they managed to continue to progress, making better tools that could slay ever-larger creatures. Some, in the warmer places, were beginning to learn to chase prey animals into enclosed areas so that they might be more easily slain *en masse*.

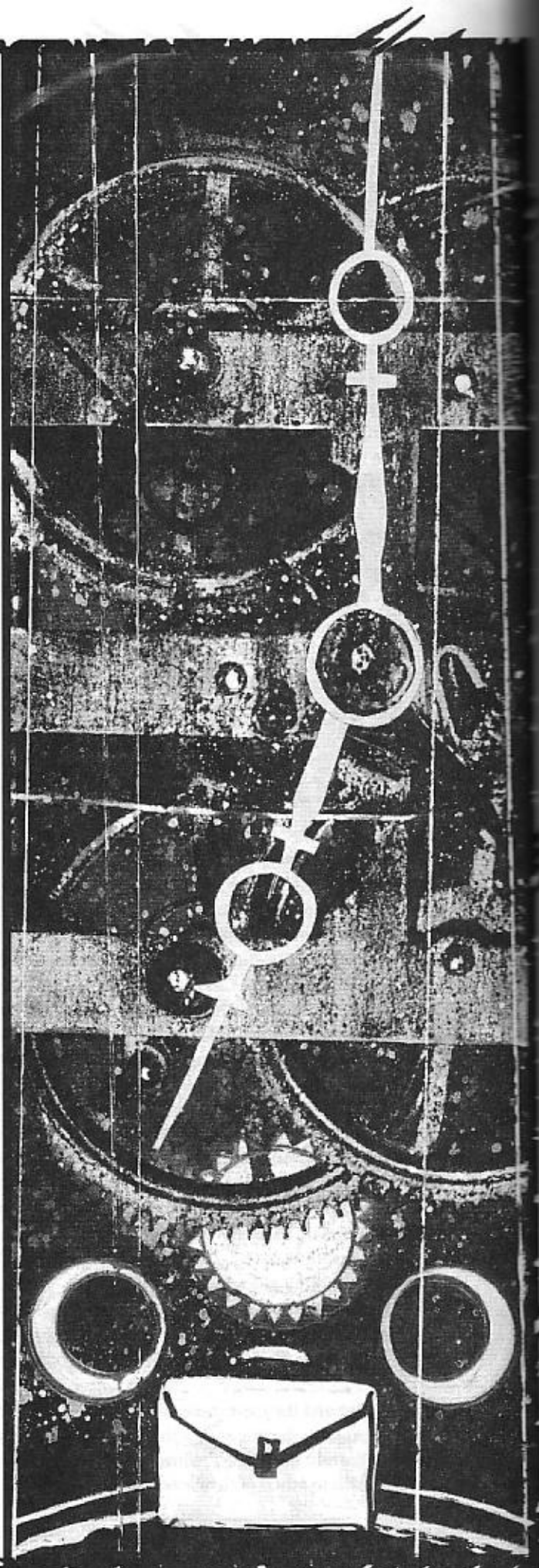
Things became harsher, and times tougher. The Garou of the north asked, "Where have the mammoths gone?" for none had been seen in a while. The apes, now almost completely hairless and wrapped heavily in mammoth skins, replied, "We have killed them all. They could not bear the brunt of our spears. We were stronger, they the weaker. We needed food, fuel and hides. So we killed them, every last one."

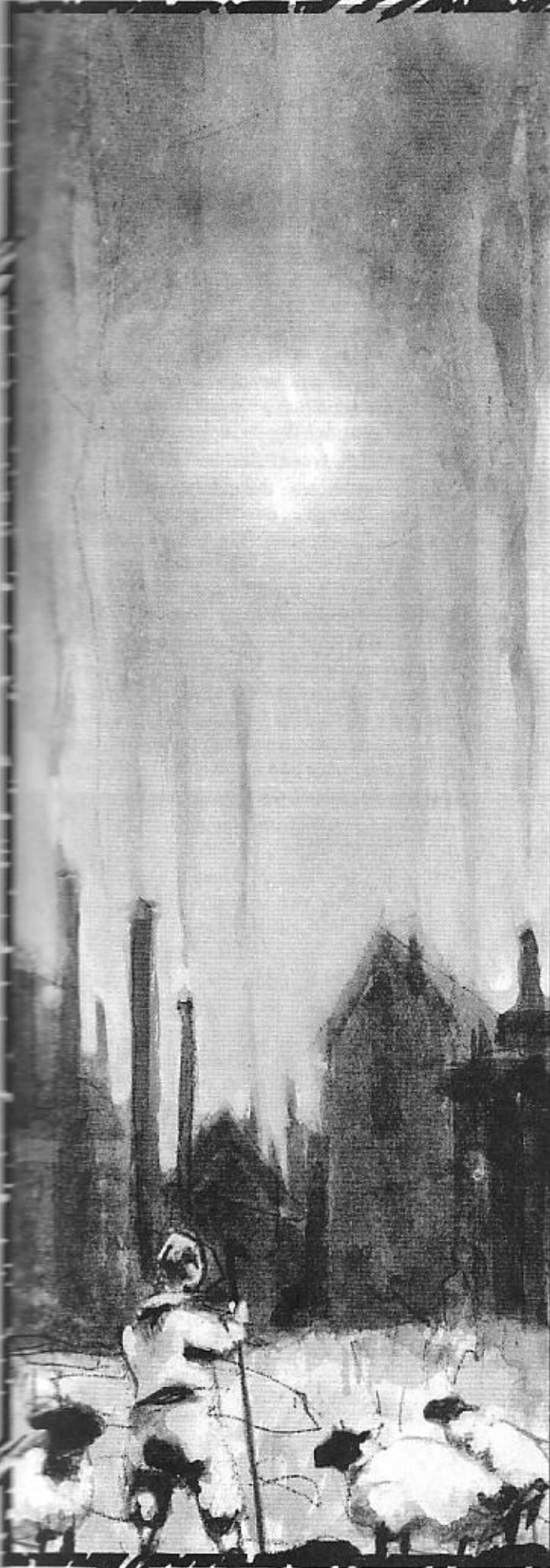
Horried, the Garou looked even more closely at what humans were doing. Wherever they went, they had begun to lessen the numbers of prey significantly. "It is the work of the Wurm," they decided. "The Wurm has gotten into them, making them do this." The more warlike of the Garou decided it would be good to control the numbers of humans, if not wipe them out completely for their taint. Some decided to take their humans away from the Wurm, where they might be shown better how to behave. Others argued against the leaders, saying that the humans should not be punished for something the Wurm has done, but rather taught better in Gaia's ways.

We know the rest of the story. But usually one detail is omitted, a very important detail: After the Impergium was called off, the Weaver vowed never again to let her children be so victimized.

The Rise of Civilization

When the Garou retreated, men, spurred on by the Weaver, set to work with a freer hand than before. They learned quickly how to tame and control plants and animals, and learned to use mud and stone to make better dwellings. When the Garou returned, they saw the massive changes that had been wrought. Some entered the cities and stayed there, while others preferred to remain in the wilds. The Red Talons had long since cut off all relations with humans, and were shocked and horrified at what they now found. The Garou looked more closely around them, and saw the strict order that human society had formed. They realized the



A dark, atmospheric illustration of a factory scene. In the background, several tall smokestacks rise into a hazy, smoke-filled sky. In the foreground, there are silhouettes of figures, possibly workers or sheep, in a dark, industrial setting. The overall tone is somber and industrial.

effort that building such edifices took, and dismayed at the neat, ordered rows of grain tended with hoes and the docile, captive-bred sheep, goats and cattle. They saw that some of their wolfkin had, under human guidance, become less than wolves. They saw, too, that people were leaving Gaia behind to worship strange, new gods. Only then did they understand exactly to whom the humans had sold themselves — and by then it was too late.

The Industrial Age

As human society progressed, the intricate dance between Weaver and Wyrms became tighter, the Wyrms feeding from and often abetting what the Weaver wrought. Look for yourself; history charts the slow but steady expansion of her webs. But there came a time when her power grew almost exponentially.

In the 14th century, the invention of the fully mechanical clock ushered a new regimentarianism into human life. No longer was the day variable; people were finally removed from the tyranny of the sun's setting and rising depending on the time of the year. No longer did townsfolk have to dance to wholly natural rhythms, as the serfs did. Business could be conducted at a purely human-dictated schedule. Work hours became regular in the primitive factories of medieval Europe.

The seeds of technology continued to grow, spawning more and more efficient factory systems. Even during the latter medieval period, high labor-intensive mass production facilities were in force, though generally manned by relatively skilled laborers — weavers, artisans and craftsmen of various sorts (and gender; women were not entirely exempt from this type of work, especially in the textile industry). The use of coal helped fire this industry — and pollute the cities. The Wyrms' touch fell heavily upon London, where the famous London Fog was actually a killing, sulfurous smog from the burning of so much coal. While cities had always had problems with inadequate sanitation, their growth throughout the medieval period facilitated the spread of diseases such as the Black Plague and cholera, the latter of which originated because of the use of rivers as open sewers. But the cities proved attractive for boys who had heard of the money to be made there, that couldn't be made on the farm, or as a smalltownsman's apprentice. Thus, the Weaver's call brought many a young European straight into the Wyrms' coils of sickness, corruption, and death.

Various lines of technological progress — both in city machinery and in agricultural practices — came together in the 18th century to begin what we now know as the Industrial Revolution. The Weaver had finally knit together the ultimate trap, and she watched with fascination and delight as humans were drawn ever more tightly into her web. As her web tightened, Wyrms thrashed, this time loosing the Defiler in yet another spasm of agony and madness. As Wyrms thrashed in his bonds, the unfortunates suckered into the industrial web suffered.

The new factories were unlike anything seen before. While fewer people were required to do the work, thanks to machines that could do the work of many people, workers were required to spend long hours tending their machines. Furthermore, workers no longer needed to be especially skilled or trained. Young children were put to work in these places at much lower wages than their adult counterparts—even the women, who received far less than men. Many youngsters died in these factories, due to long hours, bad food, and endless torture at the hands of their taskmasters. Indeed, quite a few of the more brutal foremen fell wholly to the Wym; the Weaver's advances offered plenty of new opportunities for temptation. I understand that there were even Ferectoi and Black Spiral Dancers who had learned what the factories could offer them long before Pentex was founded. But the factory owners themselves, their government lackeys, and their apologists, were guided by none other than the Weaver, in their insistence that such atrocities could not be helped, were the price of progress, and only served to bring a more ordered and prosperous society—the siren song of the Spider throughout human history.

While the Iron Riders (soon to become the Glass Walkers, but not yet) raged at the more obvious abuses, they were completely blind to the ultimate source of the misery thus caused. Other tribes became alarmed at what they saw as the Weaver's excesses, but the Riders continued to insist that the Wym was the true cause of the trouble—not the Weaver, who had woven the web of destruction in the first

place. As the Riders protected the increasingly wealthy industrialists and made their apologies to the rest of the Garou Nation, the Bone Gnawers were left to pick up the pieces left shattered by the workings of Weaver and Wym while conditions worsened. Only with the help of the Children of Gaia and their Kin were they able to get the voice of the exploited heard in the 20th century.

And thus was the tone set for the modern age.

The Twentieth Century

Systematic attempts to annihilate whole ethnic groups have occurred—most notably in Nazi Germany, but also in Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia, and elsewhere. Similar tendencies have existed throughout human history, but only in the twentieth century has technology made killing on such a scale practical.

—Carl Sagan, *Billions and Billions*

The 20th century has seen the most rapid advance of technology, the most intriguing new trends in religion, and the greatest of scientific discoveries. The first radio broadcast was in 1901, and communications in general improved over the 19th century marvel of the telegraph. Manufacturing became more efficient. Great mysteries of the cosmos were studied and better understood, from the structure of the atom to the structure of the universe. Human life expectancy improved (at least in some countries) and advances in medicine improved the quality of life for those able to access it. Religious sects flourished, and new ideas of spirituality were grafted onto old to revitalize and spread some beliefs, most



notably the spread of Eastern philosophy and New Age beliefs — encouraged here and there by Stargazers and Children of Gaia — since the 1960s. In some ways, it appears that the Weaver has done well by her children, and the world under her control might not be that bad a place after all; certainly, it would be better than a world mastered by the Wyrms.

The 20th century has also, unfortunately, seen the worst excesses of human endeavor, a fact of which many Garou — particularly Shadow Lords — are keenly aware. The extermination of Jews in concentration camps, the poisoning of wildlife and humans alike by potent pesticides, brutal wars over political and religious affiliation, the rise of fundamentalism into a formidable and potentially dangerous force with its calls for harsh repression of those who do not adhere to fundamentalist values, the atomic bombing of Japan, nuclear testing — the Wyrms feed from all of this and more. But it has been the seeds of the Weaver which have grown and borne fruit to power such blatant crimes against Gaia.

The Weaver's sanity would seem to have deteriorated throughout much of this past century, faster so than in previous ones, if the pace of technological, scientific and religious change is any indication.

The New Breed of Human

Nothing about the 20th century is more startling than the incredible extent to which industrialized man is removed from the basics of nature in his everyday life. His food has been gathered or killed for him, processed, and packaged in airtight containers. He moves from house to car to work and back in a climate-controlled environment; he may need only to be out in the sun or rain for brief moments at a time. Few modern Western humans have the skills they would need to survive on their own without modern tools and conveniences; even so-called survivalists ensure they have firearms and canned or freeze-dried foodstuffs. Millions of people also can only survive through the intervention of modern medicine and its attendant technology; people who, even a mere century ago, would not have lived past early childhood are now living to ripe old ages.

From the human point of view, of course, all this is for the best. After all, very few people wish to see their children or other loved ones die of conditions that are, in the modern age, preventable or curable, Darwin be damned. On the other hand, genetic problems that would otherwise be weeded out are instead propagated throughout the human population, weakening the species in general and making humans even more dependent on science and technology for their continued survival. As the ways of the Western world are spread to all corners of the globe, more and more humans become thus dependent. Africa, the cradle of humanity, is a case in point. Parents continue to have many children, despite the fact that Western medicine helps more of those children to survive; this only ensures that more mouths must be fed, which means that farming techniques must be modernized in order to prevent mass starvation.

I realize that this is a disturbing point for me to argue; truly, I must sound almost like a Get or Shadow Lord when I talk about the deterioration of the human stock. But it is a real issue; your wolf side should tell you how wrong this feels. The Stargazers understand the need to cut the threads of the Weaver; think on this yourself. The Weaver feeds on the development of modern society; the more dependent humans become on technology, the more tightly bound they are to her — and, of course, to the Wyrms.

Compiled from the copious records of Antonine Teardrop by Sings-With-Spirits, lupus Uktena Theurge and recorded by Simon White Crane, homid Stargazer Galliard

The Whys and Wherefores The Weaver's "Psychology"

"One thing that the Garou tend to continually downplay or overlook is the fact that the Weaver is, indeed, full-blown, bull-moose crazy. She's just as crazy as the Wyrms, but in a different way. She's a perfectionist, bar-none. It's this drive to perfection that causes her to calcify things into stasis — because, after all, once something is perfect, there's nowhere left for it to go except back into imperfection. And a perfectionist can't stand that, not one bit. Another thing a perfectionist can't stand is change. If things are constantly changing, then it's hard to make them perfect, or at least to make them stay that way. For another thing, she's lost her sense of purpose. She knows she's driven to create pattern and form and all the rest, but doesn't know why. Nor does she know why she should put up with Wyld and Wyrms running roughshod over everything she does. It goes deeper than that, as well; she's having what might be called an existential crisis.

"Whether she made the laws of the universe or not, she simply doesn't understand them. They seem pointless and arbitrary. If she had a reason for making them that way, she can't remember what it is. If she didn't make them, then all the worse. And that puts her in a quandary; her entire purpose is called into question, and as we all know, a spirit needs purpose to give it form; when a spirit begins to question its purpose, it risks losing its entire identity. So she's got to frantically try to gain that sense of purpose back, and the only way she can do it is by learning her own laws. Therefore, technology wasn't the only thing she gave humans when she made her pact with them; she managed to slip a mickey, if you will, into the punch. But that's neither here nor there right now. What's important is to remember this — while she might seem to be the lesser of two evils, kid, she's still pretty damn bad. And prob'ly getting worse, from what it seems."

— Ruffles, corvid Corax

The Weaver is insane, but her insanity takes a different form than that of the Wyrms. Unlike the Wyrms, she is still whole, rather than shattered into many and various separate entities each vying to outdo the others. Rather, her single mind wars with itself, much as a paranoid schizophrenic's does.

(A note: clinical schizophrenia does not mean that one has multiple personalities — that's a separate mental disorder in and of itself. Rather, it simply means that the patient's mind is "cut off" from reality; the patient does not experience it in the way that mentally healthy people do, and so suffers from delusions, hallucinations, and phantom voices in the head. Granted, in the World of Darkness, not everyone who experiences these things is schizophrenic, but there are still people who simply suffer from natural chemical imbalances in the brain without ever having encountered a supernatural denizen of the world at large.)

The very nature of the reality she created has lost all meaning to her, and she is obsessively driven to find meaning again. Compounding this problem is that she has many ideas of how to do this, but can't settle on just one. Therefore she has spread several different seeds throughout humanity in the hope that at least one will come to fruition and guide her. But as time passes, the seeds grow concurrently, and humanity's activity burgeons, her mind has only become more fractured than before, as she switches attention from one mode to another, in a surprisingly disordered fashion. This disorder in her own brain only makes her mental state worse, and the competition between her seeds further adds to the mess in her attic.

Basically, the Weaver has gotten more unstable as time and history have marched on, her actions more frantic and her adopted children more divided. Though it seems that technology has reigned supreme with science at a close second, if one looks closely enough at the rifts between these two and the third one may get a bare glimpse of the total chaos that is the Weaver's mind.

The Wyrms and the Weaver

Politics makes strange bedfellows.

— Charles Dudley Warner

"Look out, over there in the waters. My ancestors remember a time when those rocks were home to many, many seabirds. Each year, birds would come from all over and cover every inch of the islands, breeding and laying their eggs. So many birds that each could barely move without disturbing two birds next to him. They would come to islands like these all down the coast, where the Croatan lived, and farther north, too. My people would take advantage of these times, and paddle out to climb the rocks to where they nested. The most important bird of the rocky islands was the spear-billed one. He was tall, black and white in color, and could not fly in air but swam as if flying through water. Your folk would call him "Great Auk." But my people never took too many. The Wendigo and the Croatan made sure of that, and anyway, there were far too many birds for the people to hurt much. They would eat well these weeks, and thank the birds' spirits.

"Then the Wyrmbearers came with their giant canoes. Few at first, and then more. Even the first ones, starving from being so long at sea with little food, would take many, many spear-billed ones, herding them into the boats as if they were the Wyrmbearer's sheep. Then they would leave, or go down the coast, or up the Great River as far as the Great Falls or even Gitchigoumi,



maybe. And more boats came, and more men, and they would take many birds, too.

"But the Wyrmbearers weren't happy with just eating the birds, no. They also sold the meat to others like themselves. They also collected the eggs, and the spear-billed ones only laid once a year, whether or not their eggs came to young. They ripped young and adult alike to pieces to use as fish-bait, to catch the many, many cod that once swam here. And then they found the spear-billed ones had good fat, fat that could be rendered to feed their Weaver machines back home. So many, many more birds than ever before were boiled alive only for the fat to make this trayne oil, and others of their kind would fuel the fires right there on the treeless rocks. Most of the birds died this way, and that is how they began disappearing — boiled into oil every one, my ancestors say. They saw. They know. Even after these birds became few, white men came again to rip the very feathers from their bodies. Tons of feathers, for pillows and beds and blankets. So many. So many things. So many dead.

"And so the spear-billed ones left us. They died, every last one. Men did the Wyrms' work to feed the Weaver's machines."

— Voice-of-Stone, Wendigo Theurge, Newfoundland

The Weaver and Wyrms have a symbiotic relationship of sorts. Because the Wyrms is trapped directly within the Pattern Web, he not only directs much of his hatred at things of the Weaver, but is better able to affect Weaver-things than Wyld-things, corrupting them to serve his purposes. The Weaver, more often than not, fails to notice this. Or, if she does notice, she often assumes that whatever it is that is happening is somehow furthering her own cause. It all too often does.

While the Wyrms tries to remake the world through corruption and destruction to suit his own ends, the Weaver, too, has a goal. She wants to remake the world no less than the Wyrms does, but in her own image — an image of perfection, frozen in perfection, unchanging and static.

To this end, the Wyrms often unwittingly helps his most hated enemy.

Humanity and the Weaver

Nearly everything on Earth has the Weaver's mark on it. The very fact that things have definite physical form and substance to them is a hallmark of her work. Animals, too, have a touch of her within them, beyond the obviousness of their bodies. Some animals use simple tools in order to make food easier to get; chimps who use stripped sticks of wood with which to extract termites from their mounds are one example, and some troops have been known to use a hammer and anvil setup — involving a rock and a root — in order to crack tough nuts. Non-primates use simple tools as well, from the clamshell-cracking rocks of the sea otter to the cactus needles the woodpecker finch uses in order to dig insects from holes in trees and cacti. Some animals make their own housing, and in some cases alter their local environment somewhat in doing

so. Beaver dams and lodges come immediately to mind, as well as the hives of bees and paper wasps, and the nests of birds up to and including the extravagant bowers built by bower birds, which are even decorated with shiny or colorful objects. Some of these instances are engineering marvels, especially when one considers the limitations of the animals who built them. In this way, the Weaver has given gifts that lack a double edge; in fact, the simple beauty of a beehive is testament to the great debt the universe owes her.

But only one animal does all these things, and more, at a tremendous scale: *Homo sapiens*. While man was originally a creature of Gaia, like all others, the pact he made with the Weaver has weakened his link with the Mother, and he is barely even aware of it. Some have a sense of this loss, and try to regain it in their own fashion, but few are truly successful enough to shake off the Weaver's shackles on their souls completely. Humans, of course, know nothing about the Weaver or their relationship to it; all their accomplishments are utterly of their own doing, after all. But as with the Wyrms, people can feed the Weaver without even the slightest prodding. Many are; the Weaver need not waste her time and energy micromanaging human societies to make them dance to her tune eventually, though she does occasionally touch individual humans directly. But the bits of herself that she planted with the early humans to act as seeds provided the impetus for those accomplishments — as well as man's worst excesses and deepest hubris.

According to the lore of the Stargazers, the Weaver gave men three Gifts, three seeds, which she hoped would grow and help her in her tasks. When the seeds were first planted, they quickly spread to all ape-men living at the time; all took root, but not all flourished at once. In some cultures, which arose after the African Diaspora, those seeds were stifled at the level to which they had already grown, often at least partly thanks to the shapeshifters who managed to discourage excessive Weaverish behavior. In other cultures, however, which weren't watched so closely by Garou, or in which the Garou turned a blind eye or actively encouraged certain activities, the seeds blossomed. By the time the two sorts of cultures met, those whose technological Weaver-seeds had been stunted had little chance of surviving intact — as the Three Brothers, the Bunyip, and their Kinfolk were to discover the hard way.

The Three Seeds Dogma

Individual opinions aside, human religions most likely weren't directly handed down by the Weaver. The Garou sometimes assume that human religions are merely poor shadows of old Gaia-worship. In a way they are, and in some cases, the rituals and rites performed by the religions of the worlds have their basis in older rites once used before the pact.

But the Weaver is interested in religion because religion's main purpose is, or at least was, to explain the world in spiritual terms. The Weaver hoped to encourage humanity to systematically discover facts about the Umbral side of the



universe without interference from Garou, and to impose their own rules on the spirit world. But she had to wait; this seed did not begin to take root until after the Impergium, when men began building cities, and during the War of Rage, when all their shapeshifter kin were too busy ripping each other to shreds. Before that time, the Garou would work with the shamans — often the most respected of the tribe — to help the shaman convey the proper attitude towards the invisible nature spirits. This helped keep humans at least spiritually close to Gaia, even if they were already slipping from her bosom.

When humans were finally free to build their cities, however, the old ways just didn't seem to be enough. They began adding new concepts to old ones, instituting gods of the harvest and the flood alongside moon and earth gods and goddesses. Even household gods and gods of the hearth sprung up in human faith. This didn't trouble the returning Garou much. Where they could, they and other shapeshifters — such as the Kitsune in Japan — did their best to encourage these new beliefs to remain grounded in the faith of Gaia. Men had long performed rituals of their own to propitiate the spirits, and so the appearance of new sorts of rituals wasn't, in and of itself, seen as a problem. Indeed, in many parts of the world, newer religions still bear the mark of Gaia on them, particularly the peaceful, highly spiritual temples of Shintoism, and the myriad gods and rituals of Hinduism, which even still retains the concept of a Triat. Tribal beliefs barely changed at all, mostly because the people that held them did not pick up an intensively agricultural way of life or build cities. Those that did, such as the Aztecs, began to show the earmarks of what happened in the Middle East, where the Dogma seed came to full bloom.

It was in the Middle East that the religion of the One God, the male all-creating and anthropomorphic deity of the Hebrew tribes rose and flourished, eventually to take on myriad forms. Those worshippers, in whose breast this seed flowered, fully and finally turned their backs on Gaia in a conscious move. It is true that the Virgin Mary and even the Magdalene have been venerated from time to time in the Roman Catholic paradigm; witness a church dedicated to the Magdalene in the Languedoc of Southern France, about which many books have been written. But this weakened form of Gaia-knowledge has never been strong or widespread enough to offset the obviously male yet Weaverish nature of Middle Eastern monotheism.

And the worst part of this (as well as any) religion is dogma. Although some splinter groups chose to worship their god or gods in whatever fashion they desired, far too often the more common choice was for rules. Priests told their followers, "Do *exactly* as I say" (often with an unspoken "and not as I do"), cementing the One True Way to peace and redemption. Needless to say, there were consequences.

The Black Furies have long called it the Patriarch. Not quite the God of the Hebrews or their descendants, this Incarna has nonetheless grown quite strong off the unwavering faith of many believers. It is an entity of absolute

spiritual law, of unquestioned obedience and intolerance. Most Garou — even Black Furies — fail to see the Weaver-origin of this particular concept of God the Father, for reasons detailed below. Those who do often miss its full significance, or emphasize the Wyrnish effects of it instead. They're not too far from the truth; the atrocities committed in the Patriarch's name have tainted its (or rather, his) very being. Although still the Weaver's creature, corruption taints the Father's breath.

Still, many Garou overlook the Patriarch's connection to the Weaver. The most obvious one is that the Patriarch is seen as male, while Garou often think of the Weaver as female. To date, no Garou has ever been said to have encountered this Incarna in person, which is probably just as well. It is doubtful that any questers would survive an encounter with this likely unfriendly spirit. But those Garou who pooh-poo the Patriarch-Weaver connection use this as evidence that the Black Furies are merely being reactionary and paranoid.

The second is the effects that the three forms of monotheism have had throughout history. Wars, the Burning Times, the Inquisition, the Crusades, even the current violence between Protestants and Catholics in Ireland, Hindus and Muslims in the Indian subcontinent, and Jews and Muslims in the Middle East, all have the smack of the Wyrn to them, whether in its guise as Eater-of-Souls or as the Beast-of-War. And this is correct. Because of the Wyrn's special position to defile and corrupt the Weaver's works, he found it quite easy to poke his tentacles into the very roots of religion early on (and from there, into Dogma). Unsurprisingly, the worship that fed the Patriarch proved most fertile ground for his machinations.

Corrupted Dogma has loosed plenty of other miseries on the world. Consider the Normalites (*Freak Legion*, pg. 61). Garou who have encountered these horrifying fomori haven't failed to miss their potent Wyrn-taint. However, the underlying implications of these creatures' existence aren't as obvious. The Wyrn cares not for "normality" — indeed, everything its servitors do are perversions of what could even remotely be considered "normal." The Weaver, on the other hand, is very concerned about normalcy. The very concept of perfection brings with it the notion of homogeneity — there can be only one Perfection in the Weaver's mind, one lock-step way of doing things. Anything that deviates from the norm must be rooted out and eliminated.

This is where Normalites fit in. These fomori are often drawn from gays corrupted by the rigidity of Dogma, convinced that they're not "right" or "normal" in their homosexuality. And of course, many people don't consider homosexuals "normal"; indeed, the homosexuality is often noted to be prohibited in the Bible. Gays and lesbians often only get the idea that they are "abnormal" because of the religious influences around them — friends, relatives, Churches, televangelists, a host of others. While Normalites can in fact be produced from any human who has convinced himself, because of societal pressures, that he does not

belong and is not normal, it's a sad fact of today's society that homosexuals are the most common victim of this tragedy. Normalites are just one more example of how the Weaver and the Wyrn intertwine, with the Wyrn taking prominence — or at least the most blame — in the union.

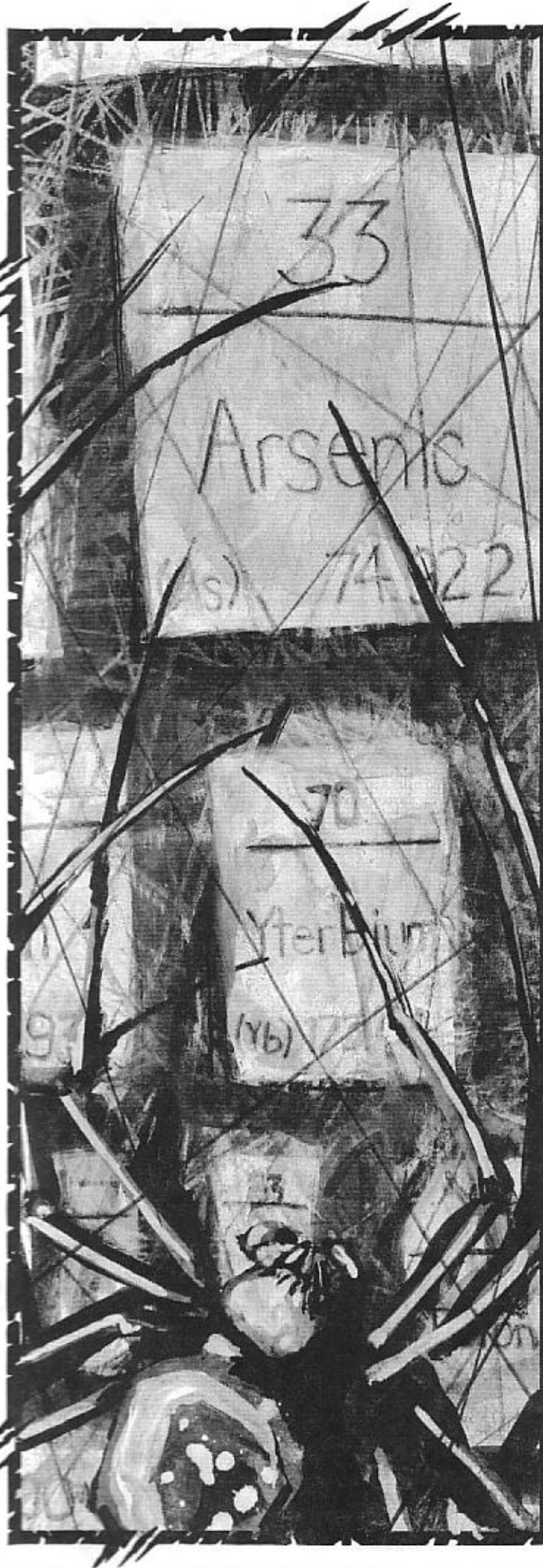
This is the terror of the Weaver's insanity. Religion has lost its original purpose for many people; there are countless "believers" who don't really care about spirituality, as long as they can be reassured that they'll "get what they deserve." As the Weaver's mind grew more unstable in her search for cosmological stability, the impulse to calcify began to take over and overwhelm her other desires. This tended to calcify the Dogma seed, making the most "developed" of religions static and highly ritualistic in and of themselves. Now, the most vociferous of these religions seek mainly to bring others into its fold, to force conformity to their ideals. The effects are generally somewhat less dramatic than the pathetic case of the Normalites, but can be no less devastating to its victims, or effective in its impact.

The rise of fundamentalism in several different religions in the late 20th century may be an ill tidings of a further deterioration in the Weaver's psyche. While not as ritualistic or hierarchical as "mainstream" religious sects are, the fundamentalist factions nevertheless demand a high degree of conformity in society, restriction of freedoms, and condemnation of those considered deviant. This may well be an indication that the Weaver has abandoned all pretense or hope of understanding, and now moves forward to simply perfect and calcify. It's a horrible thought that one of humanity's highest virtues — faith — has been terribly mauled and all but destroyed by dogma gone insane. But in the World of Darkness, it seems that save for a minority of people, this is largely true.

Science

Science is, at its very base, merely a method of querying the natural world to discover how it operates. It asks many questions, and tries not to impose its own presuppositions on what it will find. While many mages — and some Garou — think that the practice of science itself calcifies reality, this isn't so. It blossoms out of the Weaver's need to understand herself and what she has woven. Humans, through their pact with the Weaver, have inherited this need to know and understand, and so ask questions and investigate. They turn their eyes both to the stars and to the interior of matter itself.

Science makes many mistakes on the way to knowledge, but is ultimately self-correcting, as anyone with curiosity enough can ask the same questions over, and do their own investigations. Far from calcifying reality, the practice of science merely reveals it for what it always has been since the Weaver first wove it, mindlessly, in its own certain fashion. Theurgues often speculate that the reason the Gauntlet is higher around scientific labs and the like is because reality is defined more stringently around such places; rather, it is simply because Pattern Spiders and other Weaver-spirits are attracted more to such places, with their activity strengthening the barrier between



this world and the Umbra. Unfortunately, this cuts humans off even further from the world of spirit.

As scientific inquiry is open to anything which can be evidenced, measured, or otherwise studied, the world of spirit, contrary to what many contend, could very well be open to scientific inquiry. The same is, of course, true of the "supernatural" material denizens of the World of Darkness. Garou who have encountered the scientists of Developmental Neogenetics Amalgamated know this all too well. DNA is the premier research facility that has actually come into some contact with Garou. Werewolves, of course, can be captured and studied, and this is exactly what DNA wishes to do, now that they have some inkling that such odd creatures exist. While they do not entirely know the full truth of what Garou really are, it may well only be a matter of time and research before the truth is known. Similarly, spirits could be studied if scientists got a hold of them, as could be the Umbra if they could get there. Once this happens, Garou, spirits, and the Umbra would become as much scientific fact as atoms, stars, and gravity. The problem for Garou is that scientists can't keep their mouths shut, and are compelled by their trade to get their findings published. Should a DNA scientist actually get enough information on Garou, they will publish their findings in any journal they can, which will spur others to try to capture Garou for themselves.

This activity alone could prove very inconvenient for the tribes.

Science has been the Weaver's weakest seed throughout history. It has suffered incredible setbacks, both after the collapse of Classical Greece and during the later medieval period. In both instances, the servants of Dogma managed to stifle the growth of the Science seed, at least temporarily. While the Weaver's thirst for understanding has, at least at times, been strong, it is easily overridden by her other impulses.

That said, science is not without its faults. While most areas of science are benign — astronomy, for instance — the biological sciences are open to horrifying abuses. The naturalist in the field, the Jane Goodall observing her subjects, is the most popular vision of the biological investigator. Then there are the Charles Darwins and the Robert Bakkers who take a look at life's past in order to understand it in the present. Linnaeus and his intellectual descendants try to understand how life interrelates. Linnaeus' classification system has turned out to be relatively restrictive, as even modern taxonomists admit; but these restrictions affect only how people see certain "transitional" animals such as Archaeopteryx (which has the features of both dinosaur and bird) and does not affect the reality that such animals did, indeed, combine the features of more than one class. Working biologists keep this strictly in mind, and so the reality of the "transitionals" is little-affected in that wise. Microbiologists look within the cell to unravel the genetic code.

But the one thing haunting biology for much of its history is the practice of vivisection. Religious dictates at first decreed that biologists could not even dissect a human corpse, but no such limitation was ever set upon living animals. During the Renaissance, it was common for physicians to nail dogs to tables and slice them open, alive and publicly, to demonstrate how the organs worked or how blood flowed through the veins. In fact, this is the very method through which blood circulation was first described and understood. The squeamish were admonished to think of the animal's body as nothing more than, in the view of René Descartes, a bit of "clockwork." Cries of pain were to be ignored, as they were nothing more than the twanging of a spring that had been broken. The sensation of pain was not to be attributed to what the animal was feeling, because the animal could not feel.

As if this weren't bad enough, the same argument was eventually extended to human beings who were not of the right sort to merit consideration. Into this category fell the poor, the female, the non-white, the mentally deficient and combinations thereof. Most of what modern medical science knows of gynecology was attained through experiments done unwillingly and often unknowingly on poor, black female patients. While legislation has stopped the overt use of humans in this manner, the practice still continues covertly, especially in countries that lack the controls of the developed world — though a few exceptions are known to exist in North America itself. This attitude

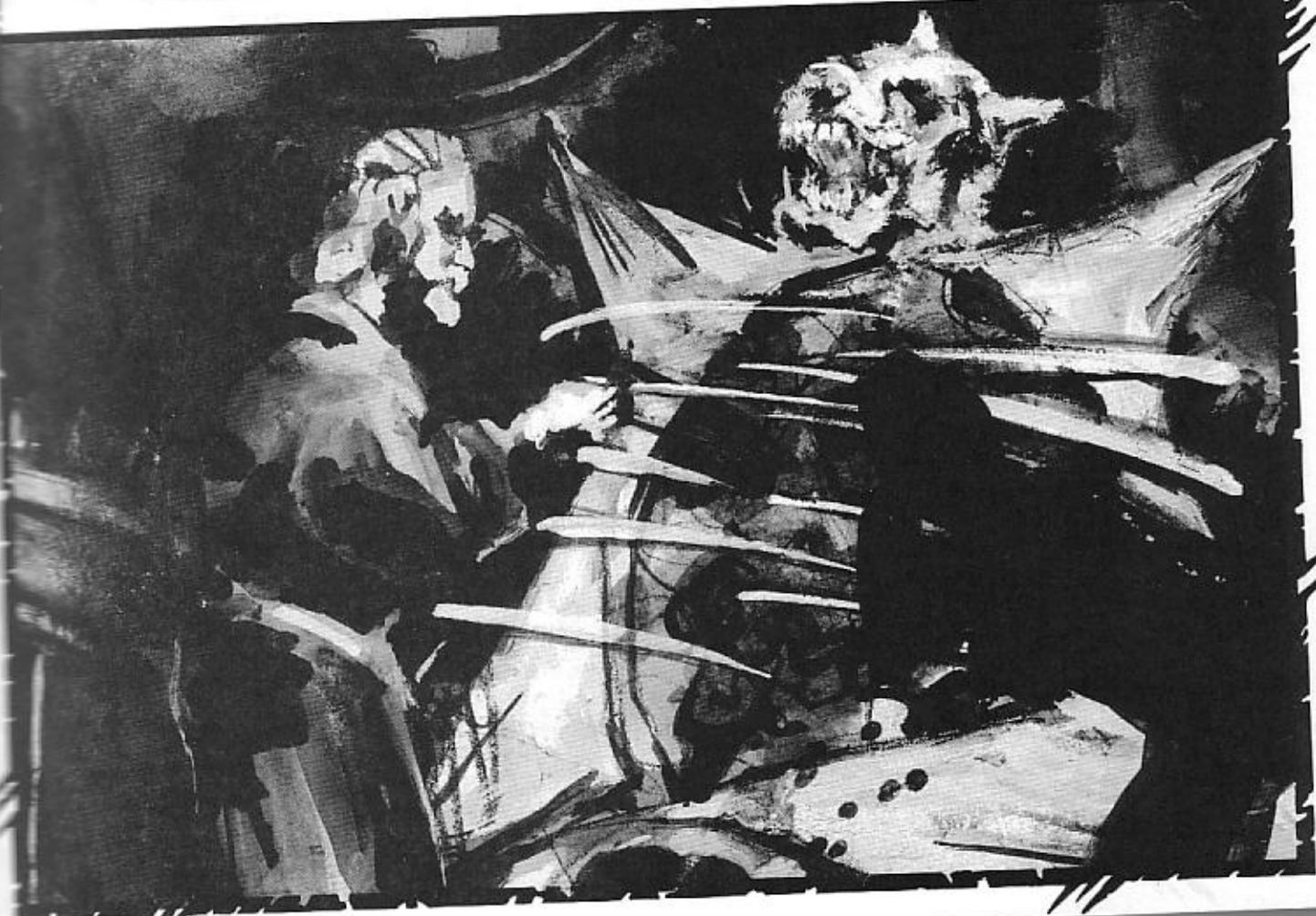
may well help to explain why DNA scientists feel so free to subject their Garou captives to any amount of torture in their investigations, even Garou who refrain from shifting from Homid while in captivity.

Wormish? The practice of vivisection in the name of science need not be of the Wurm; natural human curiosity and arrogance takes care of that well enough. The gifts of the Weaver are very powerful, indeed. Today, literally billions of animals worldwide — most of them rodents, but including dogs, cats, ponies, goats, rabbits, monkeys and chimpanzees, man's closest relative — are subjected to all manner of scientific torture, all quite legally and condoned by society at large because the public is assured that its own interests are at stake should the practice be ended. Less well-documented is the number of people subjected to the same treatment. Those in power who know about it also turn a blind eye, secure in the thought that their own interests — whether personal, medical, or financial — are at stake and also that their interests override the rights and needs of those used in such experimentation.

The other problem for Garou with regards to science is that it is said to be the father of the third seed — Technology.

Technology

While it is dependent on science — one has to understand one's surroundings to a certain degree before one can change them — Technology was the first seed to begin growing after the Weaver allegedly implanted it into the





human soul. It has also had the most profound and obvious effects upon Gaia, and so is regarded as the hallmark of the Weaver's hand. It is also the most attractive and obviously beneficial seed as far as humans are concerned. With technology, they have been able to shape the world to suit themselves, extend their lifespan, increase their population, and impose order upon society and nature.

The first form of technology to be utilized was that of food-production. Weapons for butchering and killing were, of course, the earliest known tools to be wielded by men, along with tools for digging and carrying roots, tubers, and other plant foods. Once humans learned how to plant seeds, the next great revolution came with the invention of the plow. At first a simple stick, agriculture took off when it was built into a wedge-shape that could be pulled by men or animals. Long rows could be tilled, and many more seeds planted at once. The increase in food production allowed more people to survive, and the sedentary lifestyle thus imposed encouraged the building of cities. The administration required for assigning work and plots of land, storing and keeping track of grain, and counting and keeping track of livestock stimulated the development of bureaucracies, classes, writing, and laws. With the development of such a simple implement, humans started to gravitate to a high level of social order all on their own. The Weaver watched in delight and amazement at this achievement; the Wyrms watched as well, finding dank nests within the new tangle of society in which to breed. Kindred,

however long they had been around by this point, also found the cities to their liking, as it concentrated their herds, making it easier to feed and hide amongst them.

The growth of agricultural technology has, since then, been slow but relatively steady, taking off only since the late 19th century. A few of those agricultural changes have proved quite detrimental. The Dust Bowl of the 1930s was caused by practices that ensured high yields — for a while. Then the water began draining off the land, and topsoil began blowing away, leaving nothing but devastation. Minions of the Wyrms took advantage of this condition and exacerbated it, leaving in their wake a great deal of suffering and starvation. Today, great amounts of highly toxic pesticides are used to protect crops against harmful insects and diseases, and animals are overdosed on antibiotics and fed unsafe feed in order to keep them growing as cheaply and quickly as possible in the most crowded conditions manageable on "factory farms." The twisting intercourse between Weaver and Wyrms is once again visible in such places to those who will see.

Ultimately, the three seeds are not in and of themselves corrupt, nor are they automatically the source of misery. But in light of the Weaver's insanity, and with the record of their abuses, it's easy to see that the Weaver's gifts have been horribly misused over the centuries. With a little bit of balance, they would hold the keys to a better existence for man and animal, flesh and spirit alike. However, we all know what happened to the force of Balance in the World of Darkness....

The Weaver in the Umbra The Pattern Web

The Pattern Web is best thought of as the mesh holding the universe together. Without it, all would dissipate into incohesiveness.

— Simon White Crane, Stargazer Galliard

The Pattern Web is the lattice that underlies all of reality. It can be said to be alive, but not really conscious. It is the spiritual scaffolding which supports both material and Umbral reality, the framework for all that exists.

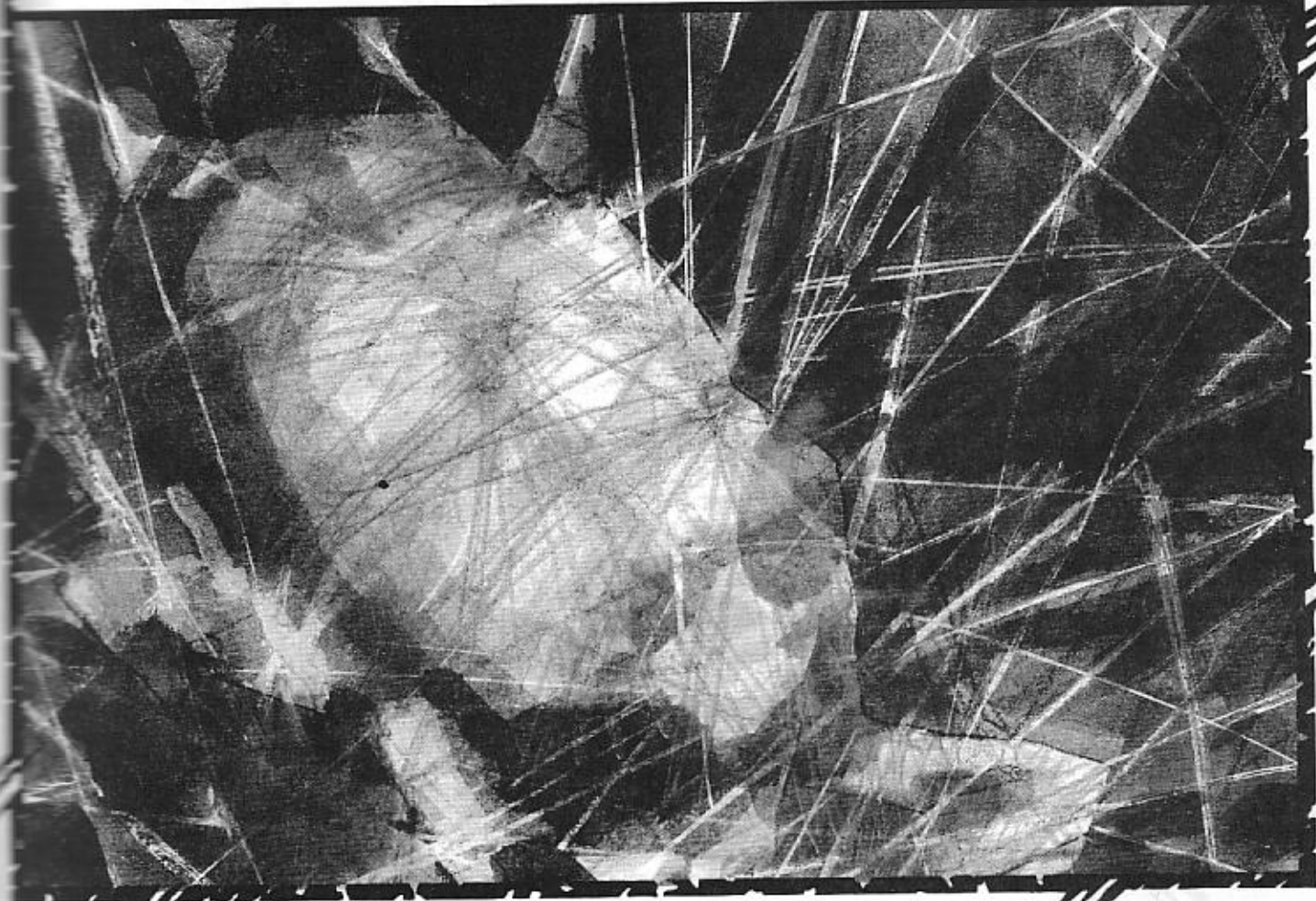
In the vast recesses of deep space, the Web is less tightly woven, allowing the Wyld to snake its way through much more easily. The result is the foaming froth of quantum mechanics that is the "vacuum" of interstellar space. Closer to Gaia, however, the Weaver has spun the web much more tightly, making it difficult for even the fluid Wyld to squeeze through and exert its influence on Earth. The Wyrms themselves are bound into a coarser section of Webbing, but it is simply too large to be able to slip through its bonds, and the Web itself is much too strong to be broken with ease.

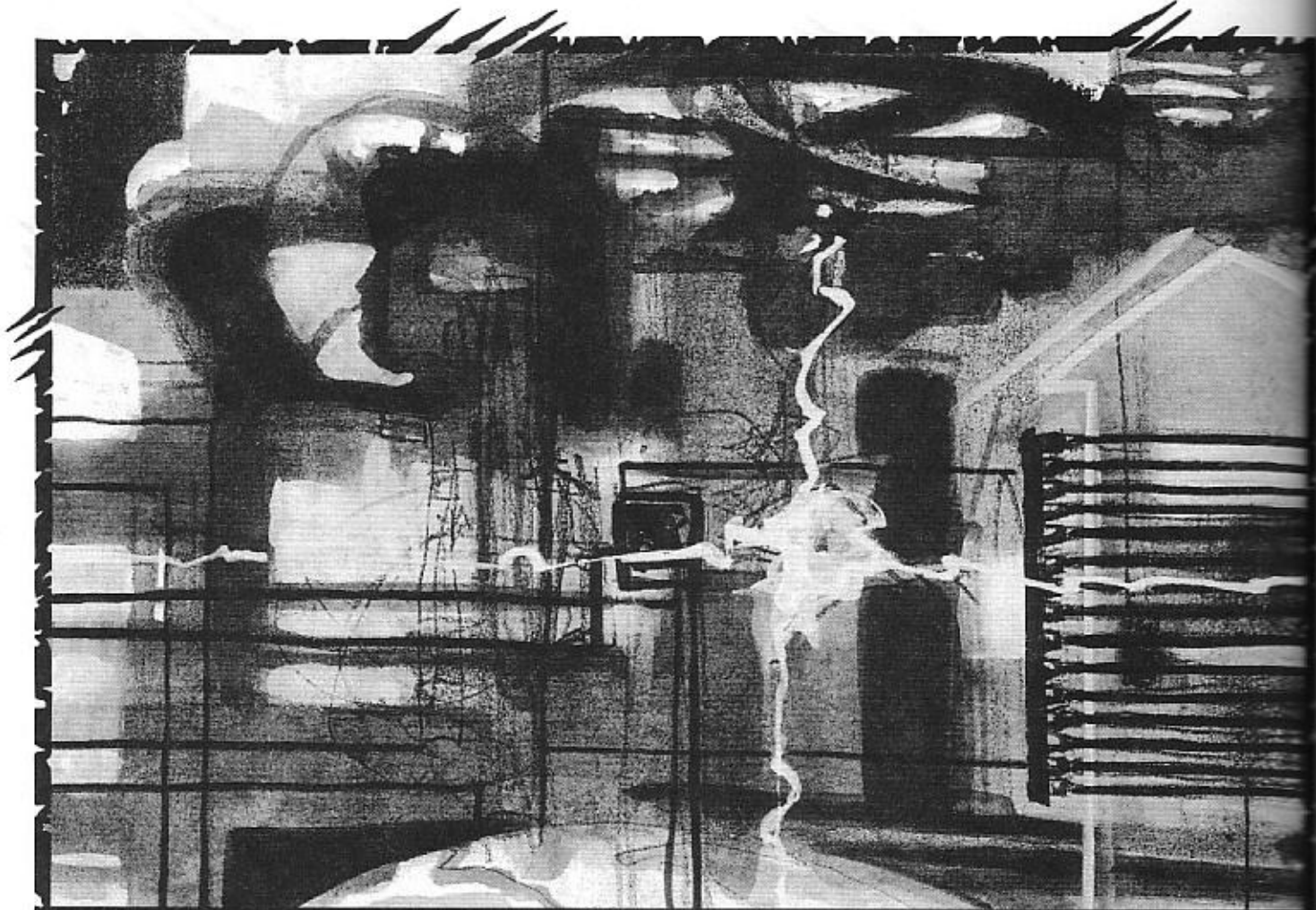
The Pattern Web is the oldest and largest structure in the universe, but very few Garou ever come into direct contact with it. Part of the reason for this is because it is quite

"remote," underlying reality rather than being an actual part of reality itself. The webs that coat portions of the Penumbra are actually reflections of the Pattern Web itself, the "tip of the iceberg," as it were. When a Garou walks on the Pattern Web, she is walking more or less within, behind, and beyond the universe all at once, traveling the interstitial void between spirit, matter, and anything which may be beyond the Tellurian.

Stretching as far as the eye can see and beyond, the Pattern Web can be disconcerting for inexperienced Garou trying to travel its strands. The webbing spreads in all directions, in three dimensions, and may often swarm with strange Weaver-spirits and Wyrms-spirits; even Wyld-spirits can be encountered in sections of Web where the mesh is loose enough to allow it. Where the webbing is tightest, myriad calcified spirits may be found if one looks closely enough. There are fewer in further reaches, but those unfortunate spirits bound there tend to be greater Jagglings or worse. Some Uktena Theurges, in fact, fear that the Totem of the Croatan, Turtle, is now trapped within the Pattern Web, calcified for eternity in some remote part of it. Glass Walkers scoff at the idea in public, but some entertain secret suspicions that the tales might be true.

The Web is patrolled constantly by various Weaver-spirits, who will attempt to entangle and calcify anything they encounter upon it. Woe to the Garou who can't manage to convince the spirits that they belong there!





Worst of all, communication between Weaver-spirits has improved in the past few years, as the Onesong has reached a new pitch with the appearance of computers and the Internet. A single Geomid stationed in the Pattern Web can summon, through accessing the Digital Web, swarms of Pattern Spiders in mere seconds.

The Digital Web itself has begun to weave itself into the Pattern Web, making access to it by Weaver spirits that much easier. As with the Pattern Web around Gaia, it too is tightening, its mesh becoming smaller as the years pass. What this ultimately means is any Theurge's guess.

Whether either Web can be considered a Celestine is also open to debate. However, many Glass Walker Theurges suspect that the Web itself spawns Pattern, Guardian, Net, and other Spiders at its need. This theory is supported by the fact that such spirits appear to come from the Web itself when alerted by a clumsy Garou.

The webbing seen marking buildings and other man-made objects in the Penumbra is simply an extension of the Pattern Web itself. Pattern Spiders work to weave the Pattern Web as close to Gaia as possible in their work to calcify the Earth's Shadow. In the long run, if they are successful, the Penumbra will become choked with tight webbing, and the Earth itself will be one endless city.

Weaver Incarna The Machine

The Machine grew up with the rising technological prowess of humanity. With the coming of the computer age, the Machine is now stirring almost to full awareness, now broadcasting its unconscious thoughts out through the Tellurian via the Digital Web. Computers are nearly ubiquitous in private homes, and most of these are linked to the Internet. The Machine is now growing faster than any spirit has ever been known to, and may soon reach Celestine status.

A few Glass Walker Theurges who follow the Machine's progress have become alarmed at the Machine's rise in power. They fear that if it does reach Celestine status, it may be powerful enough to challenge Gaia Herself. Other Glass Walkers feel that Gaia can take care of herself, and say that the Machine would never do this, anyway. The Machine is here to help Gaia, they insist, not to overthrow Her. The Machine's true intentions are unknown, and the Theurges are reluctant to report their theories to the other tribes for fear of serious reprisals against both their own tribe and the Machine itself.

This hesitancy may well bode ill, for the growing Machine has begun to flex its muscles for the first time in history, and could figure prominently in the coming Apocalypse.

The Patriarch

While the Machine's power grows, that of the Patriarch remains relatively stagnant. Its greatest influence was during the Dark Ages, and since the Renaissance its influence began to slide somewhat. However that tide may be turning yet again.

The modern fundamentalist movement proves that the Patriarch is as strong as it ever was. This new breed of mortals may not be as rigidly ritualistic as the old Church, but they are at least as concerned about conformity as their medieval counterparts. Even more, they tap into the Machine to spread their message and, sometimes, intimidate or even kill. With the approach of the year 2000 and increasing millennial hysteria, with the rise of fundamentalism in the Middle East amongst both Muslims and Jews, the Patriarch gains strength and prepares itself for the days to come, sending out Jagglings and Gafflings of its own to encourage humanity to walk its line. While it isn't anywhere near as powerful as the Machine, it may well be able to create problems in the near future for both the Garou and Gaia.

The Science Incarna

The Incarna of Science, if it can be said to exist at all, is becoming more tightly bound with the Machine. Knowledge for knowledge's sake has become passé — what matters in the dying days of the twentieth century are results. The Weaver herself has all but forgotten her passion for understanding in her drive to calcify and perfect. As such, Science has nearly become the complete servant of the Machine, and its lesser servants are becoming indistinguishable from the Machine's servants. This weak Incarna has been crying for help, but has been heard by very few; and those who do hear it, such as mages, often miss the point. In the not-so-distant future, this Incarna may well slip in power to become just another member of the Machine's brood, and any hope for healing the Weaver's mind will have been lost; the consequences of this may be very dire, indeed.

What's in a Name?

Some say Gaia began Naming; others claim the Weaver has always had this power. Whatever its origin, most Theurges agree that the Weaver now abuses this power over the very nature of the universe.

Once a thing — or even a group of like objects — has a Name, its potential and limitations calcify so that even the Wyld has difficulty changing it. Thus, the Weaver has become obsessed with Naming. The use of Names has become one of the Weaver's chief tools in facilitating the stagnation of the Tellurian. Humans, possessing some small bit of this power through the Weaver, unwittingly aid in this.

The Weaver's lust for order made Naming very attractive to her; once things are Named, they can then be

classified, pigeonholed into hierarchies and such down to as fine a detail as you please. With this comes the ability to control via the use of a Name. This is partly why humans have such influence on the environment, probably moreso than even their technology should allow on its own.

Of course, the abuse of Naming has come back on humans; in the 20th Century it has become increasingly difficult to hide or alter one's identity. With the advent of multiple pieces of ID for just about everything, cradle-to-grave social security or insurance cards, and vast databases, humanity is falling ever more quickly into a trap of their own — and the Weaver's — devising.

Individuals are much more easily affected by the use of Names than are groups, which is why "primitive" peoples made very sure to hide theirs, having a false name for every day use. They knew that a wicked sorcerer could easily use their true Name against them, should it be revealed. Spirits, too, know well how powerful a Name is, keeping their own secret lest anyone gain direct and complete control of them.

With the abuse of Naming, life becomes more depersonalized. Individuals become lockstepped into roles defined by the myriad Names to which they have become attached — personal, group, ethnic, company, etc. Names are collected in centralized databases, and it becomes increasingly difficult to change one's life by changing identity. Young homid Garou often have difficulty with this, finding that their new lives are complicated by their human name being left in the system, while lupus Garou often have trouble functioning in human society because of their lack of ID cards.

The stringent use of Naming also affects nature, to some extent. The development of Linnean binomial classification for biological species may be spiritually linked with a slowdown in the ability of many creatures to adapt to a rapidly changing world; as their Names become more defined, species lose their flexibility of behavior. How this may affect their attendant spirits is not yet known, but may be the cause of the decrease in spirit activity and the increasing phenomenon of spirits falling victim to calcification in the Web.

The process of Naming has become very important to the Weaver, as it has for human society. In fact, this may be her biggest obsession, and possibly her biggest weakness. As she dotes more and more on Names and the classification and ordering that go with it, she may be easily distracted from other, possibly more important things. Unfortunately, neither the Garou nor mages, the two groups best equipped to deal with the reality-endangering consequences of excessive Naming, are fully aware of the Weaver's influence in this matter, and so can do little to halt or reverse the process. (It's worth noting that the Garou want no help from the magi in this regard; to their eyes, most mages are as guilty of abusing the power of Naming as is the Weaver herself.)



The Realms

The Weaver's effects are felt all throughout the Tellurian, but are most vivid within the Near Umbra. As the Pattern Web tightens further and further from Gaia, the Near Realms are more at risk of becoming calcified within it. Although Near Umbral geography is not set, as it is in the Penumbra, some Umbral travelers have begun to speculate on the nature of certain Realms.

The Scar

The Scar is probably the best evidence of a Weaver-Wyrm connection to be found, but most Garou — even Theurges — simply assume the Wyrm has invaded what was a purely Weaver realm. From its first discovery, however, it has always formed a home for Banes as well as Weaver-spirits. Both Weaver and Wyrm feed on the travesty of this Realm — the Wyrm on the worker emanations' pain and despair, and the Weaver on the strict order imposed upon them. It is the Bane overlords which see that the emanations are kept in line, endlessly toiling in the Weaver's factories and office buildings. The Scar is, in fact, probably the best representation of the Weaver's mad desire to control and calcify while incidentally making the world a living nightmare. If the Weaver does not notice (or care about) the Wyrm's doings in such a place, what hope is there for the material plane?

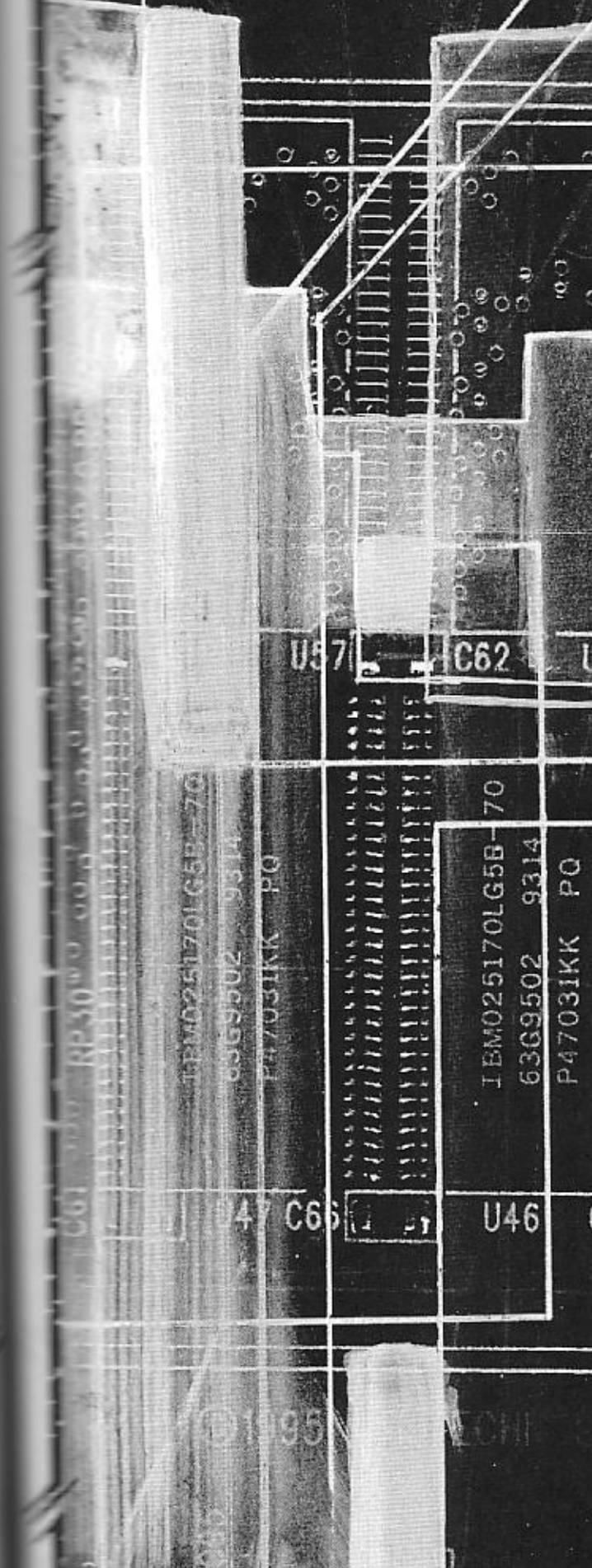
The CyberRealm

The CyberRealm is more purely Weaver than the Scar ever was, as it represents technology itself. It has likely been around for a very long time, but until the 20th Century it was too small to be noticed or at least considered a Realm. Now, however, it grows exponentially as the pace of technological change picks up. It is also the only Realm that does not appear to "move"; once this Realm is found, it can always be readily revisited by the same Moon Paths. In recent years, it has grown noticeably in size, while becoming more difficult for creatures of the Wyld — especially non-Glass Walker Garou — to access and navigate.

From the CyberRealm one may access both the Pattern and Digital Webs, and possibly even the Weaver's own Deep Umbral domain, though no one has yet found the Anchorhead site. From Uptown one can also attempt to enter the resting place of the Machine, though the route is strictly guarded by various technospiders and other Weaver-spirits. As the Machine grows in power and consciousness, so too does the CyberRealm. There is no telling what will happen when the Machine fully awakens and begins to assert itself more strongly.

Other Near Realms

The Weaver is also having an effect on the various other Realms and Domains. Wolfhome especially has been



experiencing such encroachment; where it was once a paradise for lupus Garou, it has increasingly become a nightmare of traps, cities and human emanations. The Umbral homelands of other creatures have also begun to change for the worse in like manner.

The Flux Realm has long been encased in a shroud of Pattern Webbing, and Pangaea is also a recent target of busy Pattern Spiders, who have been discovered trying to encase this Realm as well. So far, Pangaea has been able to escape Flux's fate, but how long this state of affairs can last is unknown. In Battleground is a little-known subrealm in which spirits allied with the various members of the Triat fight it out. What few reports come from there suggest that not only are Weaver spirits gaining the upper hand, but have allied themselves with Banes in order to better overcome minions of the Wyld. It is difficult to find, however, so it is hard to verify these tales for those who give them any credence at all.

The Weaver in the Deep Umbra

While the Wyld still holds sway over much of the Deep Umbra, the Weaver, like the Wyrn, has her home in its furthest reaches. No Garou has visited her actual home yet, which is probably just as well. Anything entering her Realm would be instantly calcified. This is a domain where nothing changes, where webbing holds everything in stasis. It also holds the shades of technology-yet-to-be, advanced devices any Glass Walker or Technomage would give their eyeteeth for. The true Names of everything known and unknown in the Universe are inscribed on the walls of the Perfect City that is the Weaver's home, categorized and arranged with utmost care and order. Every place in the entire cosmos — including Malfeas — can be accessed from here, as it is the hub in the vast spider web of spiritual and material reality. Gigantic Geomids store information about things mere Earthlings can't even imagine. Within the mass of Webbing at the center, sits the Weaver herself, madly spinning her insane schemes and seeking meaning in perfection, protected by her own weaving. No other spirits reside here; all is perfect in the Weaver's home, and it is too well protected from the Wyld and Wyrn to be in any danger of change or corruption. At least, so the Weaver thinks....

The War Upon the Wyld

Nature is a system of finely tuned chaos. The "Balance of Nature," if it exists at all, is quite tenuous. A small alteration in a given local system may well have a larger impact elsewhere. Even the cycle of the seasons can be affected by slight changes in the atmosphere, whether it be by volcanic emissions or man-made effluvia. Such climatic changes can lead

to the extinction of some species, and encourage the diversification and subsequent speciation of others. Over long periods of time, nature fluctuates rapidly, and often.

The Weaver finds this state of affairs absolutely intolerable.

Being the perfectionist that she is, even the controlled dance of evolution represents too much messiness; she would much rather see all of creation frozen in a state of perfection. And if that happens to mean that creatures die, then so be it — living species are unruly things at best, always mutating all over the place, never staying the same for more than a few million years at a time with very few exceptions. But with the Wyld free, biological species will continue to change; the Weaver is yet unsuccessful in binding it.

The answer to this "problem" is, of course, human endeavor. The call of progress has all too often been a call to bloodshed. As species after species vanishes, the apologists cry that such is the price of progress, that the bison or what have you were "in the way." While the Wyrms represents destruction for destruction's sake, the Weaver inspires destruction for the sake of continued human expansion for her benefit. As technology progresses, the task of clearing the way becomes that much easier.

But some animals are directly useful to modern society, and so these are not only protected, but bred and "improved." Such improvement has become highly technical in the 20th century, incorporating gene splicing, *in vitro* fertilization, even cloning. Most livestock and food plants are now tightly limited in genetic variation, and thus highly dependent upon man to help them survive and propagate. The ultimate goal is, of course, to have genetically homogeneous breeds that always breed true for certain chosen traits. With the Weaver's gift of Technology, this is becoming reality. The downside is that these engineered breeds are highly susceptible to disease, pestilence, and genetic problems, but this is simply an obstacle to be overcome by yet more highly developed technologies.

As the 20th century draws to a close and Apocalypse is nigh, the world's wildlife finds itself increasingly stranded in biological "islands," surrounded by cities, farms, and other trappings of civilization. No longer can herds migrate freely, and conflicts between humans and animals increase. Even national parks set up to protect wildlife are under continuous pressure by developers, "sportsmen," and others to strictly control the Wyld and make conditions more comfortable for humanity. Reintroduced wolves are not welcome in Yellowstone, and calls for bears to be more rigidly confined or completely removed from parks increase in proportion to the amount of tourism in the parks. Wild animals are simply too unruly; they may leave the park boundaries, or bother campers within the park. And of

course, the real, unstated purpose of these parks is not to protect wildlife, but to entertain people. If nature must be altered, contained, controlled or even annihilated to make the parks and preserves more attractive to Weaverish, comfort-loving humans, then they will be. What, one might ask, will be the ultimate outcome of this policy?

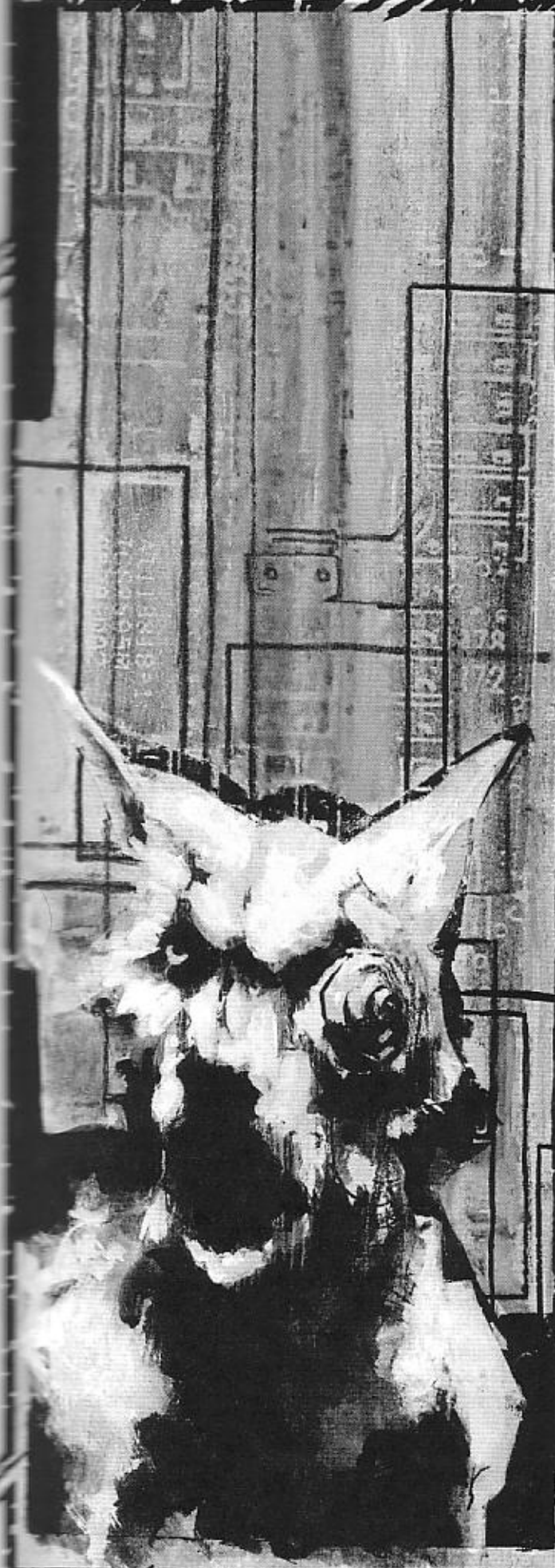
A Mickey Mouse Solution

If the media is a reflection of the human "ideal," then imagine what wilderness would be like if the Weaver had her way. Major entertainment studios have always delivered a "palatable" vision of nature — neat, clean, and sanitized beyond reality. Cartoon animals are typically sexless and highly civilized anthropomorphic beings. In fact, they are barely recognizable as animals save for the appearance of their heads (and even then that's often a stretch). Even the highly "realistic" renderings of animals in cartoon opuses like *Bambi* barely mask the very unrealistic behavior of the creatures thus depicted.

Actual wildlife films started off in much the same way, with staged shots and cutsey narration to make the animals seem more "human" in their motives and behaviors. Although wildlife documentaries now take a more nitty-gritty view of the actual business of survival, this isn't always an improvement. OmniTV is particularly notable for running specials such as "When Animals Go Bad," horrorshows of animals mauling people and going on "rampages." Unsurprisingly, these programs tend to encourage suggestible people to strive for a more controlled wilderness, one where animals "know their place."

The ultimate extension of this mentality is the modern theme park. No real animals are to be seen in these parks; rather, realistic robots act as stand-ins. Animatronic birds talk and sing in Hawaiian rhythms; bears lose their predatory nature in favor of being lovable hillbilly jug-band performers. Many of these parks have employees lurking nearby to snatch up litter the instant it hits the ground — after all, in a perfect environment, there are no imperfections. Perfect people don't litter... and if they do anyway, best to keep up the illusion of perfection, rather than make a fuss.

Various theme parks in America, Europe and Japan teem with Weaver-spirits that practically clog the local Umbra. Indeed, there is no place on Earth more Weaverish than these parks. They are immaculately clean, appearance codes for workers are strictly enforced, everything works smoothly and efficiently, and an air of artificial bliss permeates the atmosphere. If the Weaver gets her way, the entire world will be a theme park writ large — a world micromanaged down to every last individual's behavior and devoid of anything resembling a natural plant or animal.



The Shapeshifters Glass Walkers

The Glass Walkers have unwittingly become the Weaver's pawns in her war against both Wyrms and Wyld. Over time, they have even become uncomfortable with Wyldish Gifts and fetishes. They aided the Weaver in encouraging the humans to build cities.

Yet through all this, the Glass Walkers do not realize just how entwined with the Weaver they are. They seek to guide her, without understanding how she manipulates them. The Walkers are vigilant about keeping the Wyrms from corrupting technology without comprehending how they further the Weaver's interests — or even what the Weaver's interests really are.

A few Theurges have begun reporting worrisome behavior among some Weaver-spirits. Unfortunately, their explanations for these phenomena often fall far short of the truth. As the Weaver's mind becomes more erratic as it wars with itself, the repercussions reverberate through all Weaver's children and servants. The Glass Walkers themselves are more divided than ever before, with the techie factions rising in power over more traditional camps. The appearance of the Cyber Dogs may well be one such symptom.

The Cyber Dogs are made up of Walkers unabashed about their connection to the Weaver, though members of this camp keep their more extreme views to themselves. They seek to better the Garou through high technology, sometimes going as far as forcibly implanting cyberware into unsuspecting lupus. In this fashion they have tapped directly into the Weaver's technomind which seeks to calcify everything through the spread and ultimate total domination of technology. Whether or not they are aware of this is anyone's guess; what is clear is that they have indeed given themselves over willingly and completely to the Weaver. While the old Mafia dons and corporate wolves struggle to retain power in their respective areas, the Cyber Dogs thrive and are growing in number. The Dogs have little if any respect for their woodland brethren, and little more for the more traditional of their own tribe. Any mention they make of the Wyld is merely lip service, and their only thoughts of Gaia are how she can be "improved" through the use of more technology.

Most of the other tribes are unaware of the subtle transformation taking place within the Glass Walkers; indeed, the Glass Walkers themselves are barely aware of it. Fewer and fewer Walkers even come into contact with the world outside the cities, and many younger members fail to see any use at all for the Wyld in aiding Gaia. Indeed, many lose sight of Gaia completely in their Weaver-thrall — an old fear voiced by other tribes that is becoming reality. The Walkers themselves turn a blind eye towards this, and still

insist they serve Gaia rather than the Weaver. Soon, alas, this may no longer have any truth to it at all as the tribe teeters on the brink of giving themselves over completely to the Weaver. Under the influence of the Cyber Dogs and other high-tech camps, it may happen sooner rather than later — and Gaia will have lost another tribe to a member of the Triat.

The Others Ananasi

The Weaver is the heart of the war that splits our kind today. Our Queen resides in the heart of all foulness, and some say that the Weaver's betrayal was what cast her there. I and my kind know better; what could protect our Queen from falling into corruption, were it not the Weaver who bears our likeness? It is the nature of spiders to spin and weave; the Hatar are fools, and the Kumoti doubly so.

— Shantayne Piroqui of the Skein-Spiders

Bastet

Rajah's works are something we do not fault him for, and something we can do little about. Forget the other tales — it was the dogs that dropped the wall between flesh and spirit, and the dogs who have barred us from our right to the spirit world. They would make everything out of proportion, including the deeds of Cahlash. Fret not about the affairs of the spirit world; surely things could be doing better with our presence, but the dogs should have thought of that sooner.

— Toby Shining Coat, Bagheera Tekhmet

Corax

You ask me, things aren't as bad as they could be. Sure, there's some people using all this tech in really hideous ways, but let's face it — people would kill people even if all they had were rocks. The only thing we really need is for the Garou to drop some of the really nasty offenders with a little more regularity. Of course, it'd help if there were some more of the wolves around for that — and hell, some more of everybody else, too. I guess the Weaver's messed up along with the rest of the universe, huh?

— Dead Man Steve

Gurah1

Tapestry Maker is indeed wounded, but no less so than her siblings. Perhaps the only chance of winning the Apocalypse is to take a great many people and follow the Pattern Web into her lair, there to cure her of her madness. In curing her, perhaps we can cure the Triat. But such a task would require more of us than there are living today....

— Oleyah Voice-of-Mourning, River Keeper Kojubat

Kitsune

Neh! Weaver, it all over place! Everywhere you look, is all schedule and government and say-so and passport. Sunset people fools for letting Spiders run crazy and put glass and metal all over

place. Now it run crazy all over East, too — where place left to stand? Crazy. And Yomi knows trick of running on the strands that don't stick, just like they live there. Were up to me, I tell people go nuts cutting web strands, dump Yomi on heads and maybe make place a little easier to breathe in. Us Foxes would do it, but we're very small. Other guys get better results — well, need to, or Sixth Age catch us with trousers around ankles!

— Blackfoot, roko Gukutsushi

Mokolé

Everything spins out of hand, faster now than it did so long ago. Few people see the ties between Weaver and Wyrn, but we can remember so many times that the two worked hand in hand. In fighting one, we fight the other — there is no longer time to be selective.

— Red Sky Waiting, Noonday Sun

Nagah

Only the truly blind would be unable to see that there is trouble here, and only the truly ignorant would not realize that it is the failure of Balance which is at fault. Our shapechanging brethren would do well to be reminded that they are the incarnations of balance in this age — how else would one explain their mixture of tradition and change? — and that it is their responsibility to address the troubles at hand.

— Astika Bloody Dart, Ahi Kamsa

Nuwisha

You walk the Umbra as long as I have, you'd think you'd have seen it all. Not hardly. I had to drop in and out of the physical world about ten times in a year, just to make sure I was judging the passage of time right. The Webs are piling up in here about fifty times as quick as they used to, and it's not showing any signs of slowing down. Soon there won't be enough room to stand. That's right, it's a serious problem. And if we're taking something seriously, then maybe those other guys ought to be paying more attention, too.

— Kokopelli Steals-the-Wind

Ratkin

Yes. The other bastards haven't bothered to get off their asses long enough to slow down Mama Spider. Yes. Now they're shocked that she's gotten so tough. Pah. Big fucking deal. We get by in the crannies and holes between the webs. Just like we always have. We will learn to gnaw holes in the Pattern Web, if it comes to that. We'll survive. It's what we do.

— Cat-Chewer, rodens Shadow Seer

Rokea

It is known to us that C'et walks on the Unsea, and that her tracks coat the lands there. That is her affair. In the oceans, she must bow to Kun, and the Shelled One is not strong enough to challenge the Mother of Fishes. Our place is secure — Unsea is its own children's concern.

— Seven-Lives, Brightwater Rokea



CHAPTER TWO: WEAVERTECH

I do not even know where to begin.

Where I once saw warmth, life, and joy, all is cold, grey, and sterile. When others touch me... it is like the distant memory of a touch. Slowly, surely, I lose resolution — the me I used to be is being rewritten by a pale, antiseptic replica. A meaningless string of zeroes and ones, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing, if you prefer.

And I fear this mechanized shell devouring me — more than I fear burning in a mythological inferno, or even fading into insensate oblivion, if it comes to that.

I hope that others will carry on the battle where I have fallen.

End recording.

— Teeth-of-Titanium, once-Glass Walker Ahroun

Deus Ex Machina: Technology in the World of Darkness

Afficionados of multiple genres within the Storyteller system (particularly *Mage: the Ascension* and *Werewolf: the Apocalypse*) will doubtless find the distinctions between real-world technology, spirit-driven WeaverTech, and Device/consensual Technomagick somewhat arbitrary and vague.

Confusing though it might seem, use the following as a representative set of general guidelines:

- **Mundane Tech** — pretty much anything encountered or expected in the real world. As a rule of thumb, anything in a sci-fi film which evokes “Wow, that’s neat” reactions as opposed to “What the...?” (Batman’s complex belt-mounted grapples vs. *Star Wars* lightsabers, etc.)

- **Technomagick** — creations ridiculously above and beyond the pale of reality, but limited in lifespan by popular belief/disbelief. Many mages would argue that cold fusion and room-temperature superconductors don’t exist yet due to a dearth of true believers! When Technomagick Devices fail, they usually fail *hard*, as the crushing weight of reality’s laws comes down on the offending gadget. The Weaver is willing to go easy on the Technocracy’s magick — they do tend to honor her laws — but ultimately, not even these Namers are safe from the consequences of meddling with reality’s pattern.

- **WeaverTech** — mystical gadgets not bound by strictures of Sphere magick, but not as versatile. Triatic magic, like any Changing Breed, is a symbiosis of spirit and flesh, and not limited by beliefs — if anything, it’s governed and powered by the *spirit’s* beliefs, which are anyone’s guess.

Like any creature new to its environment, the Weaver’s brood tries to blend in with its surroundings; consequently, Weaver fetishes are often indistinguishable from high technology. In the absence of like-minded forces, however (other spirits, members of the Changing Breeds, even those few mages with world views sympathetic to the Gaian

pantheon, etc.), Weaver-magic withers and dies, as would a flower deprived of water or sunlight.

For example, a prosthetic/replacement arm, close if not passably similar to flesh (color/detail/synthetic materials), with rudimentary control/dexterity (tensile springs, a Boston elbow, perhaps even crude extensions into muscular/nervous systems), is a classic example of "cutting-edge" medical technology reaching into the twenty-first century. (The MIT/Utah "Dexterous Hand" robotics project is just such an example.)

The same prosthetic, constructed from a metal-and-microchip base, capable through as-yet impossible bio/nanotechnology of perfect manual control/flexibility/strength (if not greater) — or, better still, an actual functioning clone or graft which yields true blood/marrow/tissue samples — sits firmly on the side of Technomagick, at least for the next few years. (In fact, many such experiments doubtless line the halls of countless Progenitor labs somewhere.)

New Background: Device

You possess one or more pieces of state-of-the-art technology. These may be simply highly advanced mundane technology, or might be gimmicks fueled by Technomagick and designed so that people other than actual mages can use them. They are typically of great value and possess a number of built-in "facsimile powers" (often similar to fetishes or Gifts) based on their design. The greater your score in this Background, the more valuable the Device. The Devices in this chapter can be used as samples or springboards for new ideas, or even take a look at *Mage: the Ascension*, if you own that book, for other possible Devices.

- A weak item (eversharp carbon-fiber knives, polymer-crafted firearms, clean-burning fuel)
- A useful Device (powerful handheld electromagnets, simple prosthetic limbs)
- A significant Device (room-temperature superconductors, other cutting-edge technology)
- A Device slightly ahead of the scientific curve (brainwashing/mind control hardware)
- A powerful Device with unprecendented impact on mortal science (anti-gravity generator)

Now take the same approach from a spiritual direction (an intricate, many-fingered hand spun from crystalline fibers, an amalgam born from the union of carefully-crafted silicon-and-steel moving parts with a sensitive spider-spirit, or perhaps even an alien creature camouflaged as a perfect flesh-and-blood replica coexisting across both planes and capable of reaching into the Umbra) and you have the makings of a Weaver fetish. (Stephen Hess, powerful Philodox and CEO of John Henry Enterprises, brought great dishonor upon himself and his tribesmen when made an end-run around his metis-deformity in this manner.)

The devil, they say, is in the details...

Crafting

Many of the following "fetishes" and "Devices" are in fact, not quite fetishes or Devices in the strictest definition. Many are crafted by ordinary mortals and quietly infused with supernatural power by Weaver-spirits; their makers probably have no idea that their gadgets' efficacy comes from a supernatural backing.

Ultimately, it's up to the Storyteller to decide which of these fetishes work nicely as actual Garou fetishes and which are more WeaverTech in nature; similarly, some of these Devices might actually represent the state of the art in mundane technology in your chronicle, while others are Technomagickal Devices specifically designed so that non-magi can use them. In all, it basically depends on what sort of tone you want technology to take in your game.

[Mage Storytellers take note: This is a Werewolf supplement; that's why we're talking about the Weaver instead of "Stasis," after all. Don't use it as the last word on the blurry line between real-world technology and the domain of Technomagick in the World of Darkness. Unless you really, really want to.]

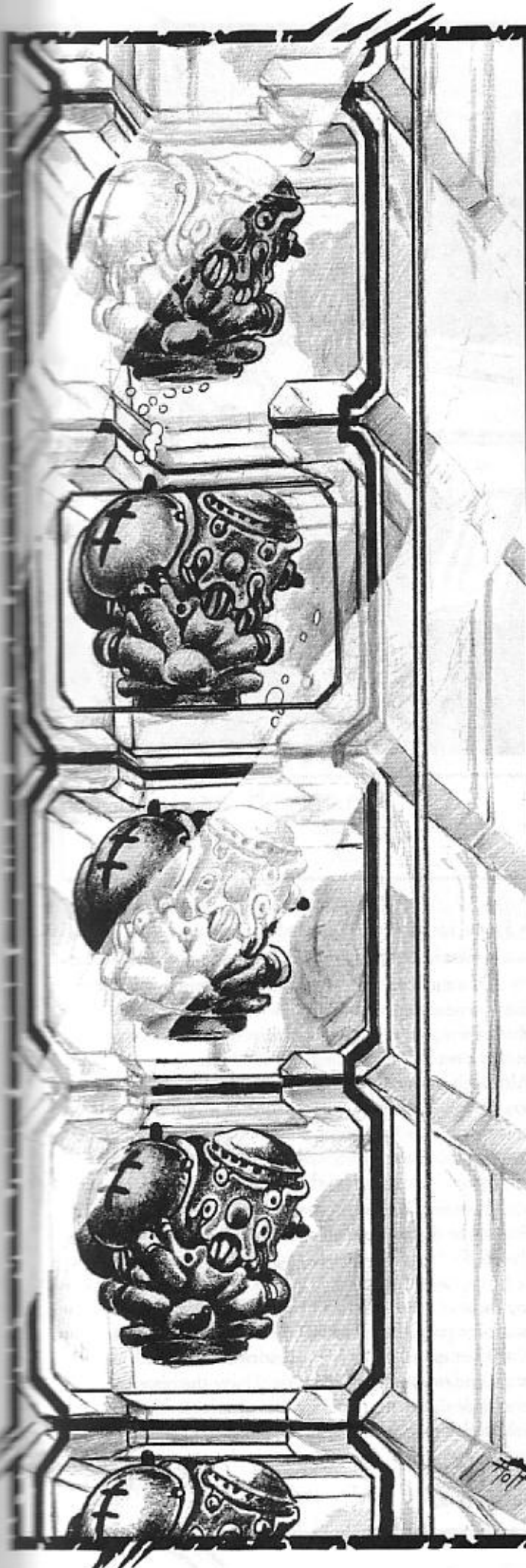
Hardware Animus Energy Alternative Adapter

Level 3, Gnosis 6

On first glance these fist-sized devices, cabled, complex, and crafted from a blue-black nitinol-titanium alloy, resemble something out of a Gigeresque gallery. These squat, sinister units, each strangely reminiscent of a human heart, are docked in eight-foot columns of translucent plasteel filled with a weak saline solution similar to those found in sensory deprivation tanks, furthering the freakish B-movie parallels.

An accidental offshoot of research involving self-sustaining cybersystems, the Animus adapter was originally designed as a cardiovascular backup — a piece of drop-in metabolic machinery serving as a go-between bridging biological and mechanical energy sources, setting up a mutual recharge cycle in much the same way as an automotive alternator.

As is too frequently the case, however, initial conceptions gave way to unforeseen incidental applications, and



the theory of the thing was quickly surpassed by its practice. Hundreds of these grotesqueries are said to line the innermost chambers of Pentex and Developmental Neogenetics Amalgamated laboratories.

System: When installed alongside a cardiovascular bionic conversion, the Animus adapter functions as expected — the system both regulates (as would a pacemaker) and revitalizes. Treat Stamina as the user's +2 for purposes of soaking damage or resisting unconsciousness, and as effectively unlimited for prolonged or steady exertion (load-bearing or running). The adapter uses only the wearer's digestive and respiratory systems for fuel (which it in turn replenishes).

An unaided human adrenal system *may* be coupled with an adapter, but is quickly outpaced (and fatally overstressed) by its energy consumption. This has led to the commission of heinous deeds in the name of science; rumors abound regarding comatose human batteries wasting away in Animus cylinders, slow-acting systems introduced into hospital and life-support equipment, and even more unspeakable atrocities.

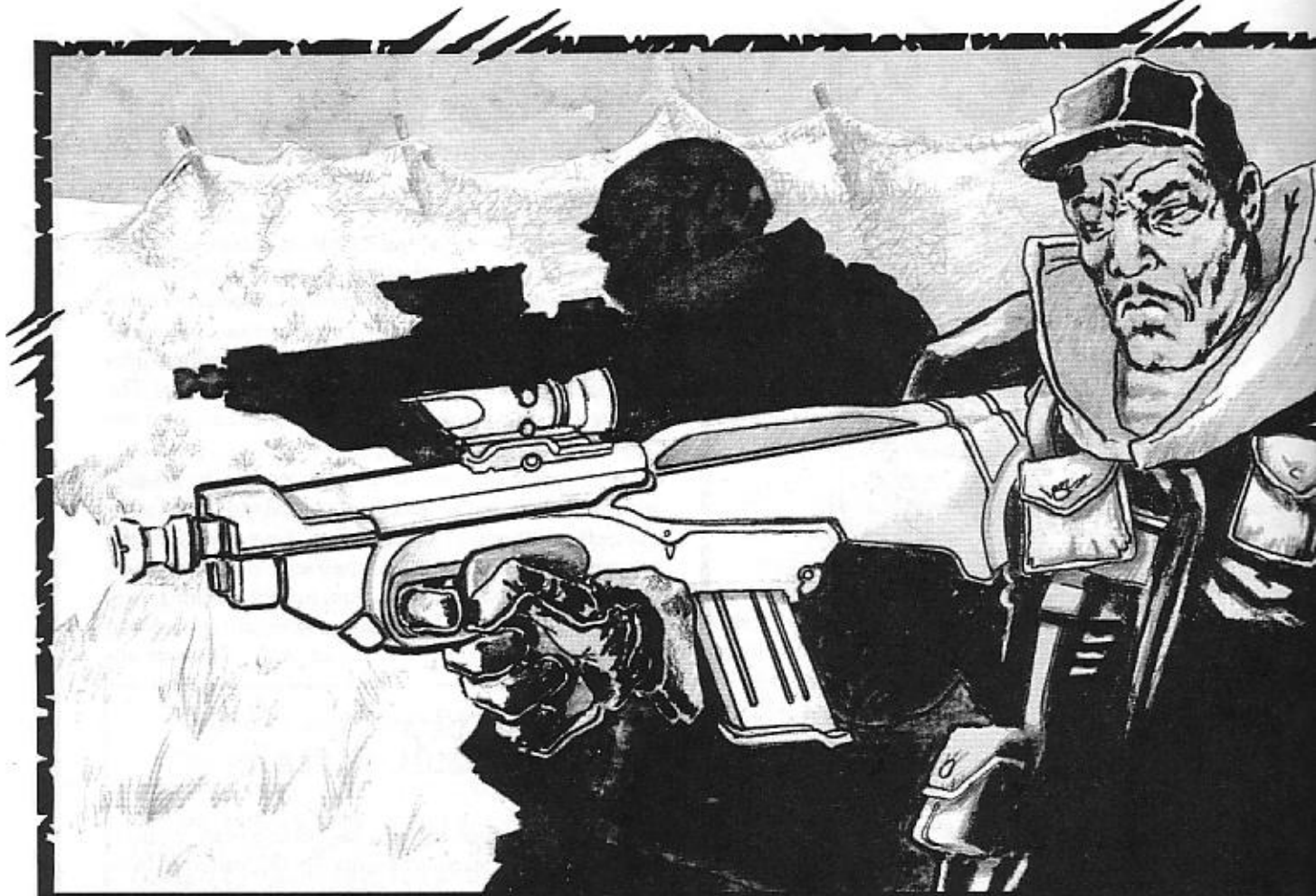
Armalite-Steyr AS-115 Assault Rifle

Device 1

A seamless union between Eastern European engineering and American manufacture, the AS-115, patterned by its designers to a rigorous set of computer-optimized schematics and military specifications, may be the answer to Rutger Hauer's signature snarl, "We need... *bigger fucking guns.*"

Although similar in color and overall size to the M16 rifles and M4 carbines issued to American troops, the similarities end there. The AS-115 comes in a bullpup configuration (although conventional stocks are also available); breaking from the Vietnam-inspired .223 trend of the 1970s and 1980s, the carbine is chambered for high-velocity aluminum 7.62mm caseless ammunition (rare civilian semi-automatic models will accept any .308 cartridge). Equipped with an electronic ignition system in the place of its traditional firing-pin-driven counterparts for underwater and deep-space operation, more than 98% of the rifle is crafted from a unique injection-molded polymer. Although the AS-115 will not pass through a metal detector unnoticed, it is easily broken down into a handful of small metallic parts not readily distinguished to the untrained eye as belonging to a firearm. Unsurprisingly, the AS-115 is already enjoying great popularity among certain security companies and military forces; Garou can probably expect First Teams to be packing these monsters in the near future.

System: The AS-115 has four settings: safe, semi-auto, three-round burst and full-auto. Despite its light weight, an ingenious mercury-column recoil compensation system reduces burst/spray penalties by one (difficulty 8 for full-auto, 7 for a three-round burst). Approximately one out of every twelve rifles (one per platoon) comes equipped with an underslung M203 grenade launcher (difficulty 6, range 400 yards, damage as per grenade type used).



AS-115

Caliber	Difficulty	Damage	Rate	Clip	Conceal	Range
7.62mm	7	8	25	25	T	275

Bionics/Cybernetics

Variable Rank, Gnosis (2 + Rank); alternately, Device 1-5

From fantastic machinations of Asimov and Gibson to crudely-fashioned appendages dating back to dynastic China, the marriage of man and machine has been a longtime dream of scientists and storytellers. Though widely regarded as science fiction even by the 'World of Darkness' diverse denizens, a select number among the Glass Walkers and Hakken know otherwise from firsthand experience, and distressing rumors abound regarding tragic DNA experimental subjects and sinister perversions wrought by Pentex technicians.

So-called 'basic' bionic/cybernetic modifications (that is, those without subsidiary spiritual attachments (Gifts *et al.*)) artificially augment physical and/or perceptual attributes.

Examples include:

- *Alloyed Endoskeleton* [reinforced Stamina]
- *Lexical Database* [book-knowledge Intelligence add-ons]
- *Myomer Musculature* [temporary Strength boost]
- *Ocular Recognition/Targeting System* [heightened Perception]
- *Pheromonal Secretors* [enhanced Charisma]
- *Reflex Filaments* [inhuman coordination/Dexterity]
- *Subliminal Harmonizer* [voice-augmented Manipulation]

- *Synaptic Accelerators* [preternaturally quick Wits]
 - *Syntheskin* [artificially-altered Appearance]
- ...as well as half a hundred other artifacts of cyberpunk legend.

Of somewhat more scholarly interest in recent years is the introduction of 'chipware' — miniaturized units of throwaway memory, hardwired directly into the lower mnemonic centers surrounding the cerebral cortex and stem. Although unimaginably expensive, prohibitively difficult to come by, and often incompatible with individual brain chemistry, this cunningly-guised biotechnology offers a quick and comparatively easy alternative to the tedium of subliminal learning or by-the-book instruction.

System: One additional point in any Attribute (or Ability, in the case of chipware) per Rank is a good rule of thumb for basic bio-booster hardware. Additional effects (e.g., multiple Attribute/Ability bonuses, powers mimicking those of other fetishes and/or Gifts) may be added on a point-for-point basis (using the rank of the fetish(es) or Gift(s) in question)... with their own associated spiritual issues and negotiations, of course. Halve the benefits, however, if dealing with implants that can shapeshift to match a shapeshifter's various forms; ergo, a shapeshifter's four-dot

cybernetic limb only grants two dots of Attribute modifiers. In no cases will a shapeshifter's body accept an implant that isn't a fetish — even Technomagick isn't capable of adapting to the half-spirit nature of the Changing Breeds.

Players and Storytellers should keep in mind the potential hazards of mismatched muscle groups and unrehearsed physical activity; an over-enthusiastic guinea pig who attempts a 75 mph sprint on same-day cyberlegs or a series of fresh-chipped circular kicks without an accompanying regimen of physical conditioning is going to be in for an unpleasant surprise when she tears multiple muscles and surrounding ligaments.

But the physical dangers of overpressure pale before the psychological. Although it seems second-nature to us, the cerebral burden of controlling four autonomous appendages is computationally daunting, and tampered with only at great risk to the experimenter. Radical bionic replacement (or installation of any additional limbs) invariably results in unwanted side effects, from psychosomatic discomfort (cramping/muscle seizure, severe migraines, phantom pain) to irreparable emotional trauma (antisocial Derangements, autism, withdrawal, even catatonia) to subtler internal complications (such as the onset of Parkinson's Syndrome or similar degenerative nervous conditions, given the morbid moniker 'Black Shakes' by fanboy Cyberphreaks). These risks (and subsequent afflictions) should increase in frequency and severity with the Rank of the fetish(es) in question, and are left to the Storyteller's discretion.

Bottomless Magazines

Talen, Gnosis 3

Crafted from a nondescript matte-black metallic alloy, these war talens are made from standard high-capacity autopistol magazines, and must be tailored to specific makes and models of firearms. Identical in every way to their mundane counterparts save for the lack of load indicators, they never run out of ammunition for the duration of the firefight in which they were loaded. A pack of militant Monkeywrenchers operating out of Hong Kong's Mother of Peach Trees Caern refer to these showy and ostentatious items as "John Woo Specials."

System: Truly ridiculous feats of sustained fire are possible using these items, whose preternatural effects last for one scene. At the end of the scene in which it was first used, the talen runs dry, becoming an ordinary magazine of manufacture and capacity appropriate to its associated firearm (and, without load indicators, not a very useful magazine at that).

Breakneck Overthruster

Level 2, Gnosis 4

An intricate fist-sized mass of cable and chrome, mated with turbine collars, fuel intake valves, and/or other electro-mechanical modules suitable to its target platform(s), the

Bionics versus Cybernetics

Although these two terms are often confused, used interchangeably, and/or regarded as "technobabble," they refer to very different things. Bionic science concerns itself with the enhancement of normal biological capability or performance through electronic or electromechanical devices, while cyberneticists make a study of similarities, differences, and possible connections between computers and the human nervous system.

Put more simply, bionic systems are simple (if powerful), physical in nature, and typically motor-driven; cybernetics, on the other hand, tend to be intricate, internal, and, to some degree, intelligent. Functional prosthetics, mechanical servos, structural reinforcements and inserts — these are the stuff of bionic engineering. Synaptic accelerators, pain-limiters, and optimized nanoprocessors operating in parallel with the prefrontal lobe — these, on the other hand, are textbook aspects of cybernetic theory.

Overthruster (brainchild of the mysterious hengeyokai sentai Gaiamon) interfaces easily with any air-, land-, or sea-based propulsion system. Although perpetual motion appears to be beyond the capabilities of even the greater Celestines, this device *does* come pretty close.

This awesome technofetish augments the efficiency and output of its parent drive by at least a factor of three, stretching the limits of believability — automobiles coupled with the Overthruster experience dramatically lessened acceleration curves and consumption approaching hundreds of miles to the gallon, while impellers and jet turbines seem to shrug off the limitations of surface friction, soaring to still greater performances. (Indeed, this device might enjoy greater airborne application, were it not for the inescapable setback posed by pilot blackout at or around Mach 3....)

Dumbed-down versions of the Overthruster (including but not limited to the afterburner systems employed by F-18 jet fighters) have apparently cropped up in unaided human endeavors; whether this is a case of true serendipity or some gently guiding hand, no one is certain.

System: Miraculous as this device might seem, it quickly outpaces even the most sophisticated mundane components; assume a maximum lifetime of two or three hours' continuous use (somewhat longer if uses are short-lived and/or widely spaced) before system-wide failure (seizure, overheating, part fatigue, etc.) effectively disables the host vehicle.



Cerebral Conditioning Systems

Device 4

These devious little items, each no larger than the head of a match, are as close as the mortal world has yet come to the "mind control" theme recently popularized by conspiracy theorists and science fiction enthusiasts.

The 1990s version of the "Queen of Hearts trigger" is actually an experimental union of several pioneering technologies. Fiber-optic shunts piggybacked directly onto the surface of the brain are used to stimulate pain and pleasure centers (in accordance with obedience and disobedience, respectively) during the first few weeks of conditioning. Microdiffusers tied to the recipient's glandular system time-release mild narcotic agents, pituitary extracts, and adrenal additives directly into the spinal column. Inner-ear implants emit carefully-selected subharmonics of the 443 Hz tone observed to induce susceptibility to suggestion. [This last effect is clearly audible (if difficult to pinpoint) to those using the Heightened Senses Gift or some equivalent.]

System: The conditioning relies on time and repeated exposure, though long-term recipients gradually slip from eager-minded receptiveness into a slack-jawed, unquestioning zombie state.

Roll the target's Willpower (difficulty 8) for each week of continuous exposure. Success means no change for that week, failure a permanent decrease in Willpower by one. At

Willpower of two or three, the subject is under more or less complete control; below this number, the target becomes all but a mindless vegetable in need of coaching to exercise or even eat.

Cornerstones

Level 1, Gnosis 6

Countless unassuming talismans of this type were introduced into North America with the immigration and labor-intensive periods of the early twentieth century (many of which were Mafia- and Glass Walker Don-controlled). When built into the foundations of buildings, these cubes of grey stone (some of which bear peculiar engravings) bind a sympathetic spirit into the structure's Umbral manifestation. This stowaway-presence often takes on a cohabitant relationship with the building's original "tenant"; in many cases, the Building-spirit is subsumed and/or replaced altogether.

A handful of powerful Dons and Theurges among the Glass Walkers have rekindled the ancient vows of friendship and loyalty with these symbiont spirits; the networks of information and influences made available to these few are considerable indeed.

System: There are no explicit game mechanics, although building-spirits bound using Cornerstones are far more favorably disposed (and helpful) towards those who bind or otherwise invoke them.

DERVISH (DExterous Remote Vehicle, Ishapore Series)

Device 3

Based on full-body waldo designs for HAZMAT and hostile-environment applications, this state-of-the-art feat of mechanical engineering appears at first glance to be a metallic mockup of a diminutive (approx. 140cm tall) human skeleton. Networks of cables, pneumatic pistons, and microsensors run alongside the alloyed 'bones,' and redundant ocular sensor arrays give the 'head' a rather disturbingly skull-like appearance.

Units are frequently outfitted with mission-specific equipment, SCUBA-derivative gear for aquatic operation, or even camouflaged in clown garb or other innocuous-seeming attire. One DERVISH unit, generally believed to be property of the LAPD (who affectionately refer to it as "Arnie"), has been lovingly detailed with stenciled labels proclaiming it a "Cyberdyne Systems Prototype," product of "J. Cameron Engineering."

System: Although the system takes a little getting used to, the DERVISH vehicle, through a complex series of joystick grip-actuators and stirrup-pedals, potentially affords an operator full motor control of a remote set of limbs and sensors (treat as operator's Dexterity - 1; the one-die penalty may eventually be overcome with time and training). Telemetry with the head-mounted audio and visual recorders (which extend into ultraviolet (night-vision) and

infrared (thermal-vision) spectra) provides a virtual real-time what-you-see-is-what-you-get navigator's interface.

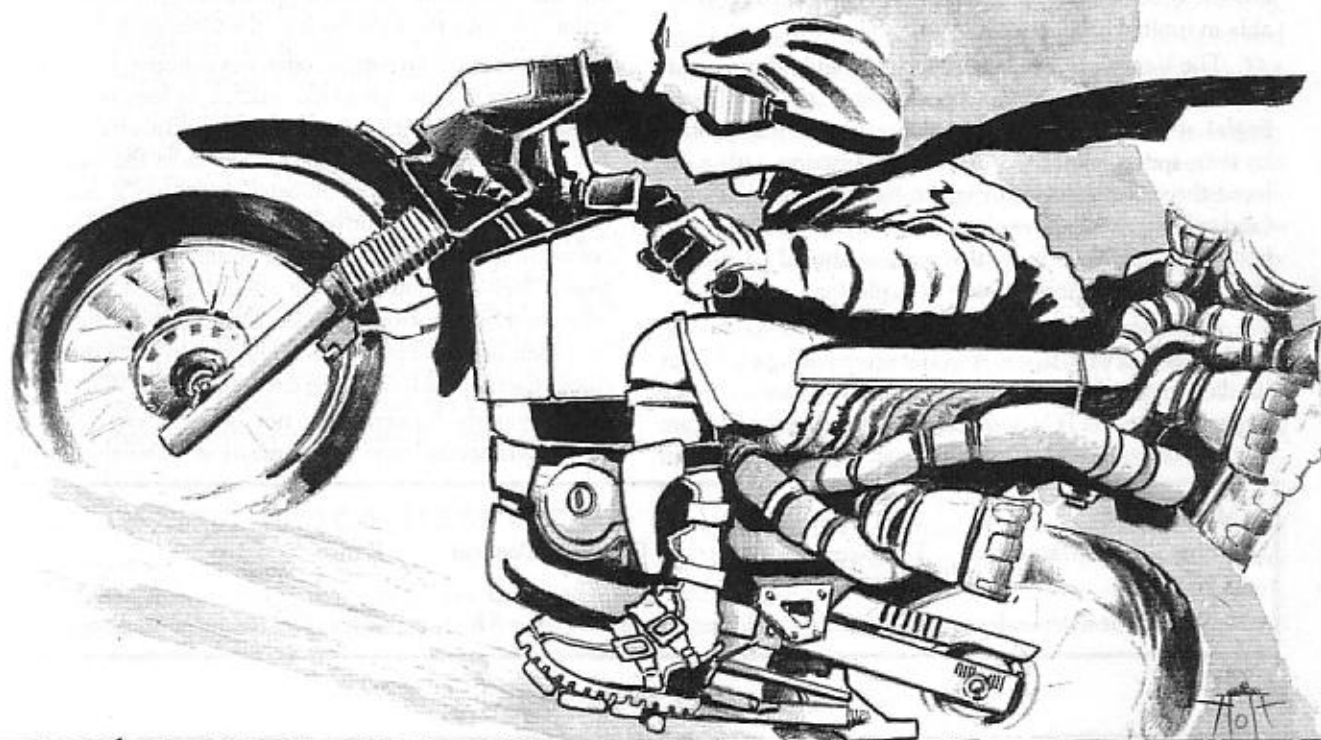
In a pinch, the DERVISH may even be used in combat; its four-fingered hands (the fourth is an opposable thumb) are capable of balling into fists or open-handed slaps, as well as picking up and operating whatever objects and/or weapons prove necessary for the task at hand. (The unit possesses a high degree of manual strength, but suffers from asymmetry, imbalance, and an extremely lightweight frame; treat Strength as 4 for crushing and/or gripping, 1 for all other purposes. The endoskeleton is lightly armored and has three soak dice.) Storytellers may wish to assign operators a new Skill, Pilot (Waldo Vehicle), after a sufficient breaking-in period.

Work is already underway to improve upon the DERVISH design; the next generation of such devices, custom-tailored for specialized applications such as dance choreography, are rumored to incorporate inverse-kinematic interfaces tied directly to a full-body suit worn by the operator, whose physical motions guide and drive the vehicle. Clearly the unmanned-technology revolution begun by such innovative pioneers as Project Pilgrim and the Voyager space probe is far from over...

Easy Money

Talen, Gnosis 4

The Weaver's crusades against change do not always manifest themselves in predictable or traditional fashions. An old financier's in-joke claims that money can be neither



created nor destroyed, simply forced back and forth through the system in different forms — and nowhere is this more true than in the case of these quixotic talismans. Though the overwhelming majority of these Talens take the shape of hard currency, a few representative specimens have arisen bearing the stamp of newer technologies (traveler's checks, credit cards, secure e-cash).

System: Regardless of when, where, or how this money is spent, every penny will somehow end up back where it started — circulating through local/remote banks, merchants, miscounted change, invalid transactions, fortuitously dropped bills, even subtle computer errors, until the exact sum returns to its spender's pockets, distinguishing marks, serial numbers and all. The cash always finds its way home, unless physically destroyed, in which case an equivalent number of differently-denominated bills and/or lines of credit are returned. Needless to say, since the Easy Money is a talen rather than a fetish, it's good for only one refunded spending spree — after that, it's simply money.

Of course, a few cagey Theurges have prepared sums of cash that return to their *enchanters'* pockets after expenditure, regardless of who actually does the spending.

Gyrojet Pistol

Device 2

Although self-propelled rocket ammunition technology existed as early as World War II, it was shelved by most nations after a preliminary analysis showing the projectiles to be impractical and unsafe. (This opinion was seconded on the field following a tragic series of explosions resulting from Russian tank turret-thrown rockets.)

In the World of Darkness, however, desperate times often necessitate desperate measures. Two competing corporations have submitted gyrojet prototypes for the military market's perusal; Heckler & Koch's SRP (still being tested) and the Israeli Military Industries (IMI)'s Vanguard (available in limited production).

The Vanguard, a (marginally) handheld sidearm similar in size but heavier than its predecessor (the IMI Desert Eagle), sports a fully-shrouded 6" barrel and slabside profile. Its twin-spring launcher works in conjunction with a delayed-thrust mechanism to ignite rocket projectiles after (and *only* after) they have cleared the barrel; needless to say, botches rolled while using this weapon should have catastrophic consequences (misfire or explosion).

Expansion of this design into a gyrojet rifle is unlikely; for the size and weight, you're better served using a LAW or similar device. Nonetheless, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is currently considering the 12.7mm Sagittarius round as a possible successor to the 9mm

Parabellum. This news, accompanied by reports of newly-developed smartweapon and microelectronic guidance systems, may make the proverbial "bullet with your name on it" a terrifying reality.

Metamorphosis Inhibitors

Level 3, Gnosis 4; alternately, Device 3

Gaia's guardians have always numbered among (and dealt in return) the chiefmost casualties of the centuries-old friction between Wyld and Weaver. Consequently, sinister constructs intended to injure and incarcerate the Changing Breed have matriculated into the dreams and dungeons of mankind since the dark days of Torquemada's Inquisition.

The world has come a long way since that bygone era of silver manacles and spiked collars, however. Such devices now take on a microtechnological likeness — digital wristbands, latent intravenous agents, subdermal implants, and the like — skating a dangerous precedent towards malevolent Weaver-magic recognized, accepted, and utilized by the planet's mundane population.

System: These cruel implements force their wearers into a single form (generally Homid), making it difficult and/or excruciatingly painful for them to shift into others. Such unfortunates experience a +3 difficulty modifier to all shapeshifting rolls and suffer three aggravated wounds (soakable) every turn spent in another form (or trying to). Some few units are known to exist which restrain painlessly; sadly, they are rare.

Myrmidon Exoskeleton

Device 4

Mechanized monstrosities torn whole and beating from the stuff of science fiction, these anthropomorphic harnesses, built on ultra-lightweight carbon-composite frames and microsecond-response myomer fiber networks, represent mankind's latest attempt (spearheaded by those "in the know") to take the fight back to the Changing Breeds.

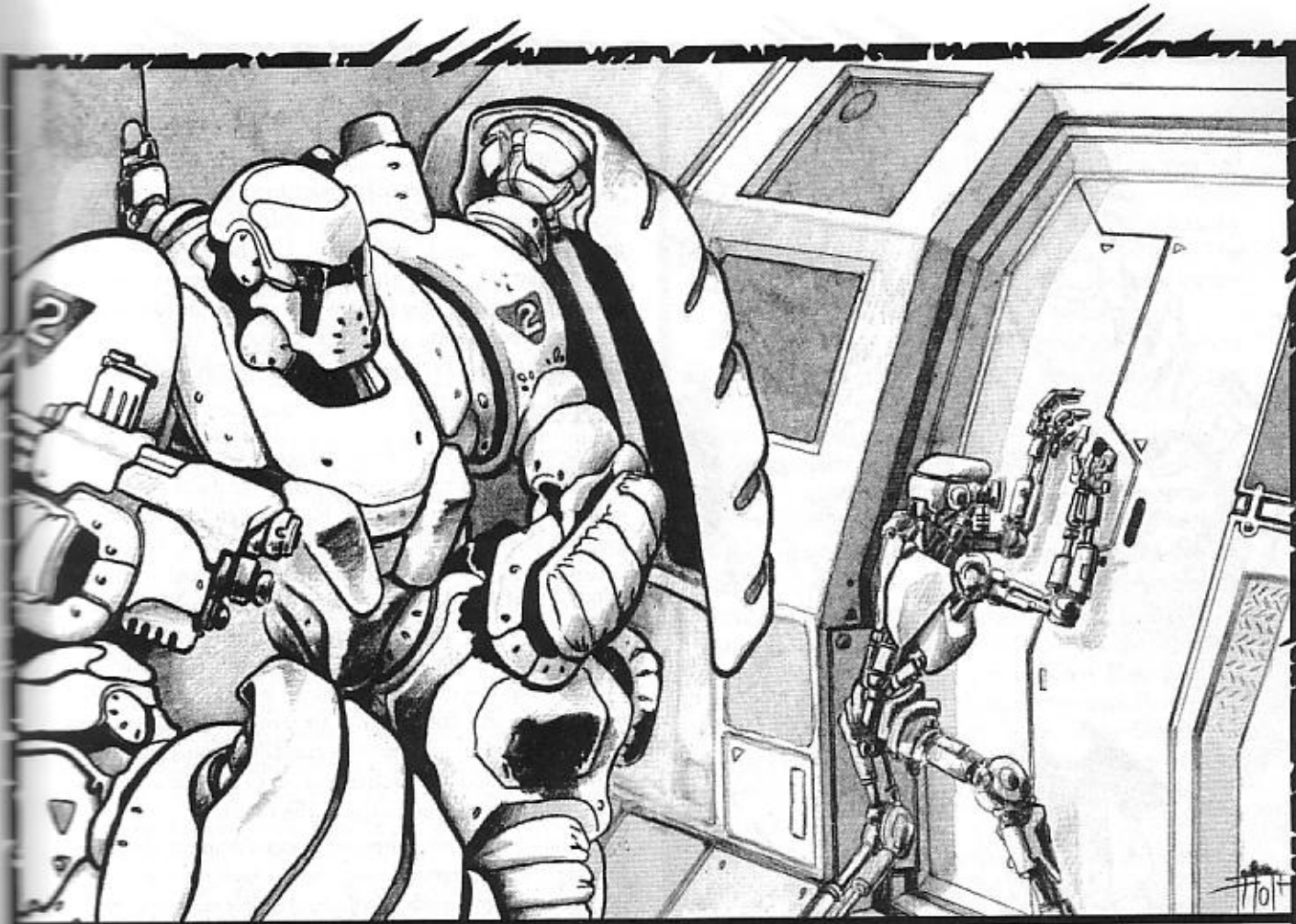
However the prototype design was conceived, its inspiration appears to have spread like wildfire; at least ten of these exoskeletons occupy a secure annex of Massachusetts' Hanscom Air Force Base (developed and funded under the auspices of "construction/hostile environment operations"), and additional units have been unveiled in selective screenings held before the United Nations' Nuclear Security Council. Furthermore, 'Web-distributed bootleg satellite photos purportedly taken over Siberia strongly suggest that these battlesuits (or at least their primitive predecessors) have seen more than their share of action since the dying days of the Cold War.

Obviously influenced if not outright controlled by some paranormal-savvy organization (Developmental

IMI Vanguard

Caliber	Difficulty	Damage	Rate	Clip	Conceal	Range
12.7mm	8	12*	2	6	J	40

* Damage is dependent on ammunition used; current standard-issue is high-explosive. Treat as aggravated damage.



Neogenetics Amalgamated, Special Affairs Division, Pentex, Shinzui, or the like), these man-sized assault vehicles, although considerably slower and clumsier than their furred-and-fanged counterparts, are more than capable of holding their own in a fight against supernatural opponents.

But what, wonder armchair soldiers and joint tactical commanders alike, were these behemoths forged to fight?

System: The Myrmidon stands approximately nine feet tall and features a three-quarter-ton servo-driven chassis (Strength 6, Stamina effectively unlimited for purposes of lifting or running).

It operates on crude electrostimulus from a trained pilot, handles more like a forklift than a piece of Japanese animation (treat Dexterity as operator's Wits minus two), and bristles with armor as well as armaments (Armor Rating 5, choice of arm/shoulder-mounted .50 caliber turrets (difficulty 7, damage 8, burst-capable), 30mm cannon (difficulty 7, damage 10, burst-capable) or even rocket launchers (difficulty 8, damage 15); needless to say, these features are not generally made known to those outside the laboratory). Tempest-hardened, silver-alloyed, and aquatic variants may also exist.

Noetic Navigation Interface

Device 1

Man's greatest works often spring from the humblest beginnings, or so an old adage reads.

The first publicly-acknowledged noetic (from *noetikos*, Greek, "of the intellect") system was, of all things, a video game — a primitive 3D bowling-alley simulator in which the player, connected via cranial electrodes to an alpha-wave monitor, "steered" the ball right with structured thought and let it drift leftward by relaxing or daydreaming.

Although the product and its parent company failed to popularize the niche market at which they were aiming, immediate extensions of the technology were obvious, and several governments quickly snapped up the project. The abortive F-24 fighter and Pawnee-class helicopter contracts, shelved following a handful of fatalities in testing, were widely believed to feature low-level cerebral interfaces in their test-bid models; indeed, at least one hush-hush military vehicle has used rudimentary noetic predecessors for years (see the Myrmidon, above). And the best is surely yet to come...

System: Although noetic technology is still decades away from being practical or even reliable, its earliest incarnation — a convoluted and fragile series of electronic contacts, encephalogram translators, and sensitive switching elements — does permit elementary mind-driven motion.

Initially, mobility is spastic, jerky, and exhausting; treat Dexterity as operator's Wits - 3. (Although this penalty may be lessened with time and practice, mobility will never exceed the user's Wits - 1.) Users may "drive" noetic machines for up to their Stamina rating in hours, after which



they succumb to exhaustion and must rest (preferably eight hours' sleep).

For reasons not yet fully understood, noetic systems are more responsive to left-handers. Miles Cassel (Vice President, Research and Development, Lockheed-Boeing Incorporated) attributes this phenomenon to differences in cerebral connectivity, going so far as to postulate the existence of a new subpopulation of "noetic naturals" (*Homo sapiens mentis*). His words, however, have fallen largely on deaf ears...

Raiden Unit

Level 3, Gnosis 7; alternately, Device 4

Some two or three dozen of these artifacts were allegedly constructed for Emperor Hirohito and his chiefmost generals during the dying days of World War Two. They consist of half-dollar-sized zinc inserts crafted to fit the palms of both hands. These inserts branch into hundreds — thousands — of copper filaments, equally spaced in an unseen mesh around the wearer's body, which terminate in a three-pound rectangular controller worn against the small of the back. All components are exceedingly brittle and corrosion-sensitive, and must be carefully cleaned and maintained lest accidental discharge occur (a liability which did not endear the system for use in the field).

The Raiden unit gathers and focuses ambient electricity (atmospheric ionization, static charge, even the surface tension from nearby liquids), projecting and/or releasing it upon command. The resulting shock is virtually like being hit by a lightning bolt. Those few Shadow Lords (Hakken or otherwise) who even remember these increasingly rare devices (as "Mantles of Thunder") revere them as holy relics.

System: Assume a maximum charge of ten damage dice (aggravated to most creatures), which may be discharged in whole or part at the user's option, and which replenishes at a rate of one die every other turn (faster in direct contact with a battery, generator or other power source). Effective range is fifteen feet; the player must roll straight-up Dexterity, difficulty 7 to hit (there aren't any skills that adequately represent accuracy with this thing).

Semiorganic Storage Elements

Device 1-5

The latest controversy fueling the long-standing conflagration between knowledge-based AI programmers and neuroscientists, this marine biologist's fantasy was first conceived in the Silicon Valley (Palo Alto's up-and-coming OrgoTech Laboratories). It has since been heralded as the fulfillment of technology's fabled "fifth generation" — a potential missing link between man and machine.

This miracle of biotechnology sounds considerably more impressive than it seems at first glance; a standard SoSto (Semiorganic Storage element) appears to be nothing more than a glass-cased cube, almost twelve inches to a side, lined with honeycombs of an unremarkable off-white calcified substrate. (This jealously-guarded "secret recipe"