

The World is a Lie: An Awakening

Ever felt like there's more to the world than meets the eye? Like there's a hidden truth just beneath the surface of reality? Joining one of the Nine Traditions is your chance to peel back that veil. You'll abandon the ordinary and learn to shape reality itself, not through blood or curses, but through pure, unadulterated belief. It's an invitation to become a living god, armed with the wisdom of ages and the power to defy the impossible. Are you ready to see the world as it truly is and become a master of its secrets? Welcome to the World of Mage.

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Overview of the Traditions

In the OWbN setting, the Traditions were formally re-established in 2019 under the New Horizon Council. This council, for the first time since the turn of the millennium, is once again active, with elected representatives from each of the Traditions.

While the Council of Nine houses delegates from each Tradition, political friction and competing visions for Ascension often challenge their unity. Despite these internal struggles, the Traditions have a global reach and often operate in secret or on the fringes of mundane society.

Mage society is unique in that it largely lacks a rigid, top-down structure at the local level. Unlike the strict hierarchies of other supernatural societies like Vampires or Garou, mages are not bound to a formal organization. Chantries may exist, but they are voluntary associations founded on their own charters. There are few set roles within a local chantry, and a mage can leave at any time. As a whole, mages do not have a single standard for how they organize locally, with the notable exception of the Technocracy.

The New Horizon Council

The New Horizon Council, a body much like the old Horizon Council, was formed in 2019. Its representatives were originally elected to nine-year terms, with elections held every three years. The most recent election in 2025 seated three new members.

Alexander Nguyen (Akashic Brotherhood): A Master of the Mo-Tzu Fa currently residing in Los Angeles, USA, who holds the **Seat of Mind**. Alexander is a radical philanthropist driven by the concept of equal love. He is a constant traveler who establishes stable, functional organizations to continue his humanitarian efforts after he departs.

Gideon Clay (Celestial Chorus): A Master from Wellington, New Zealand, who holds the **Seat of Prime**. Gideon is a venerable, jovial, and kind figure who serves as a quiet pillar of the Jewish community. He is a battle-scarred veteran of conflicts with both the Technocracy and the Nephandi.

Feliciana Montero (Cult of Ecstasy): A Master of the Erzuli Jingo from Barranquilla, Colombia, who holds the **Seat of Time**. Feliciana is a powerful and enigmatic force who stirs and steers chaos while protecting those she can from violence. She possesses a daunting information network and a subtle, influential charisma.

nipiy/Lavoie (Dreamspeakers): A Master from Saskatchewan, Canada, who holds the **Seat of Spirit**. nîpiy is an aayahkwew of the Cree nation and a member of the Baruti faction. They are a talented diplomat and educator, known for arguing both sides of an issue to uncover deeper truths and for their unconventional methods.

Eric Schaffer (Euthanatos): A Master of the Madzimbabwe from New York City, USA, who holds the **Seat of Entropy**. Eric is a down-to-earth man with a rich history of military service and spiritual exploration. He is widely considered one of the most subtle and powerful Masters to have emerged since the Avatar Storm.

Kallisti (Order of Hermes): An Adept of House Xaos, who holds the **Seat of Forces**. Kallisti is a charismatic and enigmatic figure whose philosophy is influenced by Principia Discordia, embracing chaos and paradox as catalysts for change. She is a fervent advocate for challenging rigid magical doctrines and encouraging experimentation.

Dominique Brodeur (Society of Ether): A Cybernaut from Paris, France, who holds the **Seat of Matter**. Dominique is a brilliant inventor and an unparalleled collaborator, known for his ability to rally disparate disciplines toward a shared objective. He specializes in designing sophisticated autonomous exploration vehicles.

Mateo Rojas (Verbena): An Adept Lifeweaver from Buenos Aires, Argentina, who holds the **Seat of Life**. A vibrant and charismatic individual, Mateo specializes in eco-mysticism, exploring how natural cycles manifest in urban environments. He embodies a fresh, living approach to magic and seeks to revitalize concrete jungles with the wisdom of nature.

Dmitri "Cipher" Petrov (Virtual Adepts): A Cypherpunk Master Mage from Leningrad, Russia, who holds the **Seat of Correspondence**. Cipher is a vocal proponent of a Free Information Society and is a formidable champion for digital liberty. He is known for his charisma and ability to foster collaboration, even on Mind Defense projects with Chaoticians. He is a tested veteran of the frontline against the N.W.O. and is committed to transparency.

THE STATUS OF THE WATZ

The heated war between the Traditions and the Technocracy has cooled down considerably. The era of the Pogrom - the Technocracy's *shoot on sight* policy against mages - has largely ended. This change was not born of reconciliation, but of necessity. The **Avatar Storm** and other cosmic threats have forced a fragile détente, and in some rare cases, a limited, temporary cooperation against a common enemy.

The relationship remains tense and is best described as a cold war. Both sides maintain their core beliefs and see the other as a fundamental threat to reality. However, the open conflict has been replaced by a more subtle, ideological battle. The Technocracy now focuses more on reinforcing the Consensus and controlling information, while the Traditions work to protect their enclaves and push back against what they see as the Union's sterile, soul-crushing vision of the future. The rebuilding of the Tradition Council may shift this balance, but for now, the two sides watch each other from a distance

Council of Nine - Auxiliary Positions

The following positions are available to any Traditions Player Character in good standing who wishes to serve the Council of Nine. If you are interested in one of these roles, please email the Mage Coordinator's office (in character, contact your respective Counselor to discuss an interview). Please note that some positions may be discontinued - or renewed - by the Counsel of 9 should the majority of Counselors not support it. All of these positions require a **Binding Agreement** and have some low-level reporting requirements.

Archivist: The Archivist is responsible for the administrative and logistical needs of the Council. This position oversees the collection, codification, and maintenance of all Council records, including meeting minutes, legal documents, and official correspondence. The Archivist is also entrusted with the security of this knowledge, ensuring that sensitive information is protected from unauthorized access. This role is ideal for those who are highly organized and possess a deep respect for the preservation of information.

Diplomat: The Diplomat serves as an official representative of the Council, empowered to act as a liaison to non-Tradition mages and other Awakened beings. This position requires strong communication skills and the ability to negotiate on behalf of the Traditions, advocating for their interests while respecting the sovereignty of other supernatural groups. The Diplomat's primary goal is to foster relationships and prevent conflict, ensuring that the Traditions maintain a positive standing in the wider supernatural world.

Executor: The Executor is tasked with carrying out the decisions of the Council's Justices. Its purpose is to ensure that the Council's rulings are enforced. The Executor must be capable of independent action and possess the fortitude to enact justice, with the sole exception being the sanction of Gilgul, which is a matter reserved exclusively for the full Council.

Herald: Heralds are the official messengers and observers of the Council of Nine. They are responsible for conveying official communiques and ensuring that all parties are informed of the Council's decisions. While their primary role is communication and observation, Heralds are also granted limited enforcement power to ensure compliance with Council rulings. There is one Herald assigned to each of the nine Councilors, making this a highly selective and trusted position.

Investigator: The Investigator is a specialist in gathering information and evidence for Council tribunals. This role involves in-depth research and, when necessary, field work to build compelling cases for the Council's consideration. Investigators must be meticulous and discreet, able to follow instructions to the letter while maintaining a high degree of integrity and neutrality.

Marshal: The Marshal is entrusted with the military and logistical duties of the Council, responsible for preparing for and managing any organized conflicts. This is a strategic role that involves planning, training, and coordination to ensure the Traditions are prepared for any threat.

Savant: The Savant is a recognized specialist in a specific field of arcane knowledge. As a consultant to the Council and the Traditions as a whole, the Savant provides their expertise to any member who requires it. This is a role of academic and practical authority, requiring deep knowledge and the ability to effectively communicate complex information to others.

Chantries: Tradition Hearth & Home

While there is no single, codified structure for Chantries, they are the primary local organizational unit for many mages. Membership is voluntary and bound by a Chantry's own charter. The roles within a chantry are often flexible and created by the members themselves, though some traditional positions may be adopted. There are several potential styles of Chantry, ranging from a shared physical space to a communal Horizon. Likewise, there are a multitude of ways that Chantries are run that differ Chantry-to-Chantry.

Common Roles Most Chantries Honor:

- Deacon: A leader of a Chantry, possibly a founder. Usually very powerful.
- Fellow: A Member of a Chantry who is not a founder.
- **Sentinel:** A mage who serves as a quardian of a Chantry, but is not a member.
- Consor: A non-mage who is allied with mages.
- **Herald:** A messenger whose job it is to carry messages and do minor diplomatic tasks between Chantries

Interactions: Chantries interact with each other in a variety of ways, ranging from close cooperation to outright rivalry. Alliances may be formed to work on shared magical projects or to defend against a common enemy. A chantry might also maintain diplomatic ties with other supernatural organizations in the area.

PROTOCOLS / RULES OF SHADE

The following protocols serve as a general ethical code for the Traditions, though they are not always strictly enforced. The council is currently in discussions to rewrite the fourth protocol.

- Respect Those Of Greater Knowledge.
- A Tutor's Debt Must Be Paid.
- A Mage's Word Is His Honor, Do Not Break A Sworn Vow.
- The Will Of An Oracle Must Always Be Obeyed.
- Betray Not Your Cabal or Chantry.
- Conspire Not With The Enemies Of Ascension.
- Protect The Sleepers, They Are Ignorant Of What They Do.
- Be Subtle In Your Arts, Lest Sleepers Know You For What You Are.

Akashic Brotherhood

The Akashic Brotherhood is a Tradition of mages who pursue Enlightenment through a path of rigorous internal mastery and discipline. Their core paradigm centers on the unity of thought, spirit, and action, a state of perfect harmony they seek to achieve within themselves and the world. Their practices are not just about passive meditation but also involve embracing personal conflict, suffering, and renewal as essential steps on the journey to self-perfection.

Practices and Magical Foci

Akashic magic is expressed through a variety of martial and meditative disciplines. Their rotes often manifest as feats of mental and physical prowess.

- Martial Arts (Do): Their martial arts are both a physical discipline and a magical focus. Techniques like the Bone Twisting Palm are not just strikes but an expression of the mage's will, channeling power into their physical actions. This focus is directly tied to their mastery of Forces and Life.
- Meditation and Calligraphy: Practices like meditation and calligraphy are used to achieve mental discipline and control. They serve as a primary focus for their mastery of the Mind Sphere, allowing them to hone their mental abilities and access the thoughts and memories of others.
- Internal Conflict: Many Akashics believe that true
 wisdom is forged through suffering and overcoming
 personal conflict. This means that a mage's magical path
 may involve facing their own fears, past traumas, or
 physical limitations as a means to achieve a deeper state
 of being.

Beliefs and Philosophy

The Brotherhood's philosophy is rooted in a deep-seated belief that true power comes from within. They hold that the physical body, the mind, and the spirit are interconnected, and mastery of one is impossible without mastery of all three. This pursuit of internal balance is how they seek to access the Akashic Record, a communal memory of all events and thoughts, from which they draw wisdom and power. This focus on internal perfection also leads many Akashics to a quiet, and often fierce, commitment to philanthropy and social justice, believing that alleviating suffering in the world is an extension of their own internal struggle for unity.

Role in the Traditions

Their role within the Traditions is to provide a counterbalance to the more esoteric and intellectual approaches of other groups. They are the practitioners of **Do**, a form of spiritual martial arts that serves as their magical focus. While they are often seen as the primary combat experts due to their martial prowess, they also value wisdom and enlightenment, striving to help others find their own path to Ascension. They can serve as mentors, guardians, and moral exemplars within the broader community of mages. They are also known for their long-standing conflict with the Euthanatoi Tradition, which stems from philosophical differences.

Internal Tensions

While united by their philosophy, the Akashic Brotherhood is not without its own internal strife. A significant tension exists between the traditionalists and a more modern faction.

- Jnani: The mystics, hermits, and shamans of the Akashic Brotherhood who seek Oneness through
 practices like yoga and meditation. This faction includes several distinct groups: the secretive
 Black Water sect that practices Tibetan rites, the covert Vagabonds who are trained as ninjas for
 shadow wars, Wu Shan who are Taoist mystics who practice internal alchemy to bind spirits, and
 Yamabushi who are Japanese aesthetics who blend Shinto animism with Buddhist esoterica to
 perform cures and exorcisms.
- **Kannagara:** Ascetic monks who believe that right action is the only path to a right mind and soul. This faction includes the **Jain Brothers**, extreme pacifists who renounce possessions; the **Scholars of the Great Wheel**, who act as historians and arbitrators; and the most common sect, **Shaolin**, which blends the discipline of Do with Zen Buddhism.
- Li-Hai: A pragmatic Akashic faction that believes in Universal Love and rational thought. They draw
 on Western science, oppose tyranny, and are composed of three main groups: the Blue Skins, who
 use Crazy Wisdom and intense emotions for Ascension; a group of folk heroes and vigilantes called
 Mo-Tzu Fa who view spirits animistically; and the Roda d'Oro (Circle of Cold), a faction with
 South American belief styles.
- **Shi Ren:** Also called The Benevolent Aristocracy, are the political and traditionalist faction of the Akashic Brotherhood. They use rituals and calligraphy to influence diplomacy and finance. The faction includes the **Gam Lung** (Golden Dragons), a former underworld network; **Han Fei Tzu Academy**, an administrative think tank that promotes meritocracy; and **Kaizankai**, a Japanese cabal of patriotic legalists descended from Emperor Shotoku.
- Vajrapani: Diamond Thunderbolt, are the protectors of the Akashic Brotherhood, specializing in
 martial arts to fight the Technocracy. The faction includes The Banner, a secret society that
 teaches kung fu; the Sulsa, Korean warrior-spies who use hypnotic dance and invisibility; and the
 Tenshi Arashi Ryu, a Japanese fellowship that practices swordsmanship and archery in their
 global schools.
- Wu Lung: Dragon Wizards, are a faction of nobility who advised the Chinese Emperor for
 millennia, communing with ghosts and spirits. They joined the Akashic Brotherhood after the
 Technocracy's conquest but reject Do. The faction includes the Dragon School, who master the
 Spirit Sphere to serve as judges; the Tiger School, a practical group focused on martial arts and
 punishing wrongdoers; and the Phoenix School for female members that rewards righteous
 behavior, which is officially ignored by the rest.

Celestial Chorus

The Celestial Chorus is a Tradition of mages who advocate for unity under a single divine Truth. While their membership spans a wide variety of faiths - from strict monotheists to broad universalists - they are united by the core belief that all religions are different expressions of a single, universal divine reality, which they refer to as the shared divine song or the Logos.

Practices and Magical Foci

The magic of the Celestial Chorus is deeply intertwined with their spiritual and religious practices. Their rotes often manifest as acts of faith and devotion, drawing upon divine grace to alter reality.

- Hymns and Prayers: Chanting hymns, reciting scripture, or engaging in fervent prayer serves as a primary focus for their magic. These acts of devotion allow them to tap into the divine source, which is the very essence of Prime, their core Sphere.
- Sacramental Acts: Rituals of their respective faiths, such as lighting candles, anointing with oil, or performing acts of charity, serve as magical foci. They believe that these acts consecrate the physical world, allowing them to channel divine will into the forces of creation (Forces).
- **Ethical Code:** The Chorus is often seen as the moral compass of the Traditions. They are compelled by their faith to serve as metaphysical guides and chaplains, offering counsel and spiritual support to other mages. Their magical practice is therefore inextricably linked to their ethical commitment to justice and compassion.

Beliefs and Philosophy

The Chorus's worldview is built on the concept of the Logos, the underlying spiritual truth that binds all things in the universe. They believe that their magic is not a product of their own will, but a tapping into this divine power. Each faith is considered a different verse of the divine song, a unique way of understanding and expressing the same core truth. This perspective leads them to serve as spiritual guides and diplomats, often seeking to find common ground between disparate factions. They view their purpose as not only achieving their own Enlightenment but also guiding others towards a unified spiritual understanding.

Role in the Traditions

The Celestial Chorus often acts as a spiritual and diplomatic anchor for the Council of Nine. Their focus on unity and their willingness to serve as chaplains and advisors provide a unique perspective on inter-Tradition politics. They are often at odds with mages who rely on more chaotic or materialistic paradigms, and their faith-based magic can be a potent foil to the cold science of the Technocracy.

Internal Diversity

The Chorus is far from a monolithic religious body; it is a tapestry of different faiths, each with its own perspective on the divine. This diversity is a source of both strength and tension.

- Guardian Orders: the most respected and feared of the Celestial Chorus, dedicated to protecting innocents despite their reputation for misjudgment. This diverse faction includes several groups: the liberal, recently founded Brothers of St. Christopher; the Jewish Chevra Kedisha who assist the dead; the dwindled Knights of St. George and the Dragon who once fought monsters; The Order of St. Michael, social vigilantes against corrupt powers; the conspiratorial Poor Knights of the Temple of Solomon; and the all-female Sisters of Gabrielle, the oldest order, dedicated to slaying demons.
- Theological Orders: The Celestial Chorus focus on introspection, philosophy, and religious orthodoxy. This faction, driven to improve the world, includes several distinct groups: the Alexandrian Society, who reconcile faith and technology; Anchorites, hermits who find divinity in nature; the Children of Albi, a Gnostic sect that sees the material world as corrupt; Latitudinarians, who want to decentralize the Chorus; Monists, who emphasize the unity of all faiths; Nashimites, who believe purifying the mortal world heals the spiritual one; and Septarians, a conservative Christian faction that rejects all other Traditions.
- Other Religions: The vast spiritual diversity within the Celestial Chorus. This faction includes Hare Krishnas, who see Krishna as a manifestation of the One and serve as mediators; Hindus who are Brahmin Priests in a conservative group that advocates for a return to ancient traditions; Jains, ascetics who follow the principle of non-violence; the Sons of Mithras, a disciplined cult with roots in the Roman Empire; Rastafarians, the newest faith, who call the One Jah; Sikhs, who rarely become Choristers due to their religion's prohibition against miracles; and Sufis, who often act as guardians of intellectual and material treasures from the Ahl-i-Batin.
- Miscellaneous Factions: Groups that don't fit into the other major orders. This faction includes
 the Bat Binah, Jewish women who study forbidden texts and master the Prime, Matter, and Life
 Spheres, and the Song of the Ancients, a gathering for students of monotheistic tribal,
 Afro-Caribbean, and Celtic pagan-Christian faiths.

Cult of Ecstasy

The Cult of Ecstasy is a Tradition of mages who pursue Enlightenment through altered states of consciousness, heightened sensation, and the manipulation of time. Their philosophy is centered on the idea of transcending linear thinking by embracing passion, empathy, and transformation. They believe that by experiencing the world in non-traditional ways, they can unlock the secrets of reality. Traditionally, the Cult is seen as the least structured of all the Traditions, but their deep effectiveness is undeniable.

Practices and Magical Foci

The Cult's magical practices are as varied as the human experience itself, and are all designed to alter perception and consciousness. Their rotes are often expressions of these altered states, with a focus on their primary spheres.

- Altered States: The Ecstatics use a wide variety of methods to enter altered states of consciousness. These can include ecstatic dance, sensory deprivation, prolonged musical performances, and in some cases, the use of drugs or shamanic rites. These practices are all designed to shatter the illusion of linear time and are central to their mastery of the Time Sphere.
- Passion and Emotion: The Cult believes that powerful emotions are a direct link to magic. By fully embracing a feeling, a mage can manifest it in the world. Tantric practices and other rituals focused on sensation and emotion are used to fuel their mastery of the Mind Sphere, allowing them to influence the perceptions of others and to create mental and emotional effects.
- Chaos Magic: Some members of the Cult are
 practitioners of chaos magic, an open-ended system
 that uses belief as a tool. By embracing contradictory
 beliefs and symbols, they are able to achieve effects
 that defy a single, rigid paradigm.

Beliefs and Philosophy

The Ecstatics' worldview is a rejection of the boundaries. They believe that true understanding can only be found outside of the confines of linear cause and effect. Their magic is a tool for exploration, used to delve into the depths of human emotion and perception. They see passion, joy, rage, and suffering not as obstacles, but as keys to unlocking a deeper reality. By embracing these extremes, they seek to find the hidden patterns of the universe, often granting them powerful insight into the future and a mastery over the flow of time.

The Code of Ananda: Despite their outwardly chaotic nature, the Cult of Ecstasy is guided by a philosophical anchor known as the Code of Ananda. This isn't a set of rigid laws, but a framework of principles that encourages members to pursue passion, avoid stasis, and embrace transformation. The code serves as a moral and ethical compass, ensuring that their pursuit of ecstasy leads to personal and spiritual growth rather than simple hedonism or self-destruction.

Role in the Traditions

The Cult of Ecstasy serves as a source of vision and often a necessary disruption to the Council of Nine. Their mastery of time and their willingness to explore the unusual allows them to provide valuable insights into potential futures and to identify unseen threats. However, their methods can also be seen as reckless and dangerous, and they are often a source of tension with more traditional or disciplined Traditions.

Organizational Structure & Internal Diversity

The Cult of Ecstasy is the least formally organized of all the Traditions. They rarely have a formal hierarchy or leadership, and their cabals are typically temporary, coming together for a specific purpose or experience before disbanding. The members are unified more by their shared philosophy than by any formal rules. This lack of structure, however, makes them incredibly adaptable and difficult for their enemies to track or control.

- Historical Sects: Ancient and ritualized factions that pre-date Sh'zar and the Code of Ananda. This group includes the Erzuli Jongo, a female Vodounista group who channel spirits and cleanse dreams; Fellowship of Pan, a faction formerly known as the Cult of Dionysus that finds ecstasy in unconsciousness, with sub-factions like the healing Kiss of Astarte and the violent Maenads; the K'an Lu, Taoist Ecstatics dedicated to self-perfection; and the Vratyas, a secluded and militant group of Nepalese mages who practice Tantric magic.
- **Dissidents:** A faction that finds paradoxes within the Code of Ananda, and while they are considered a necessary evil, they believe they have a better way to improve the Cult's future. This group includes the **Aghoris**, an old Shakti Cult that believes in self-destruction to shatter the illusion of self. It also includes the **Acharne**, an all-male sect that torments initiates with psychological and physical suffering, as well as the **Hagalaz**, Norse pagans who wage war on modernity and Christianity and have various sub-sects: the **Freyji**, who are patronized by the goddess Freya; the **Sons of Wotan**, necromantic berserkers who fight the Technocracy; and the **Sutr**, Loki priests who use traps and rune-carving to trick their enemies.
- Progressivists: Innovators who adapt old philosophies into new tools and subcultures. Though
 they represent the largest number of Ecstatics, many of them struggle with addiction. This group
 includes the Joybringers, who are the stereotypical Ecstatics that seek to teach others the simple
 pleasures of existence through sex, drugs, and simplified Tantra. Dissonance Society, who strives
 to overthrow society and start anew as anarchists, debaters, and even terrorists. The youngest
 sect, the Klubwerks, seeks to unite humanity through music, achieving a communal entity
 through the total abandon of self to a musical performance.
- Political Factions: Activists who prioritize cultural rebellion and oppose oppression. They hold to
 the Code of Ananda and include the Children's Crusade, which fights against child exploitation;
 the Cult of Acceptance, which advocates for social changes like the legalization of marijuana to
 improve the Ecstatics' image; and Silver Bridges, which works with religious groups to help them
 accept new forms of expression.
- Other Factions: Includes the The Fifth World Tribe: Los Sabios Locos, who blend Native
 American shamanism and anarchy; the Ka'a, a secret cult of bisexual Tibetan women who astrally
 project to drain life energy; Khlysty Flagellants, a sect of Russian Orthodox Ecstatics who
 practice ritual penance after indulging in forbidden pleasures; and Bongo's Rangers, a Discordian
 sect that uses high-tech overstimulation to undermine society.
- Miscellaneous Factions: This diverse collection includes the Dervish, Sufi mystics; Confrérie de Chango, a militant Vodoun sect that uses fire and lightning magic; and Roda do Jogo, another Vodoun faction that practices Brazilian martial arts. It also features the Los Sangradores, a cult of Mayan priests who offer their blood to the gods; the Studiosi or Zealous Ones, Italian and German flagellants who seek to destroy their prisons of flesh; and Umilyenye, a Russian Orthodox sect that finds religious ecstasy through holy symbols.

Dreamspeakers

The Dreamspeakers are less a formal Tradition and more a loose confederation of spirit-touched mages with roots in indigenous, shamanic, and animist traditions from across the globe. Their practices are intuitive and often passed down through oral tradition, focusing on a deep connection to the spirit world. They are not a monolith, as their members come from a wide array of lineages and cultural roots, all united by a profound respect for spirits and the natural world.

Practices and Magical Foci

Dreamspeaker magic is inherently intuitive and often personal to the individual's cultural and spiritual background. It is deeply connected to their primary Spheres of magic.

- Shamanic Journeying: Dreamspeakers often use trance, drums, and dance to enter a state of altered consciousness, allowing them to journey into the spirit world. This is their primary focus for Spirit magic, enabling them to communicate, negotiate with, and even command spirits.
- Animism and Totemism: Their paradigm is often animistic, believing that every object and living thing possesses a spirit. They can form bonds with animal spirits, plants, or places, and these relationships serve as a focus for their Life and Spirit magic.
- Ritual and Oral Tradition: Their magical knowledge is typically passed down through an oral tradition of stories, songs, and ritual practices. This intuitive approach allows them to adapt their magic to their unique circumstances and personal connections to the spirit world.

Beliefs and Philosophy

The core of the Dreamspeaker's paradigm is the belief that the material world and the spirit world - the Umbra - are deeply interconnected and interdependent. They see the spirits not as tools to be commanded, but as conscious entities to be respected, bargained with, and even befriended. Dreamspeakers believe that modern society's neglect of the spirit world is a primary cause of the world's sickness and the increasing divide between worlds, a process known as the Gauntlet. Their ultimate goal is to bridge this gap, restoring a state of balance and harmony between humanity and the spirits.

Role in the Traditions

Within the Council of Nine, the Dreamspeakers often serve as spiritual advisors, providing a unique perspective on the spirit world and the dangers of the Gauntlet. Their wisdom is invaluable for mages who seek to understand the mystical side of reality. They are often skeptical of the other Traditions' more technological or command-based approaches to magic, and their deep-seated respect for spirits can lead to conflict with those who view spirits as mere tools.

Organizational Structure & Internal Diversity

The Dreamspeakers are one of the least organized Traditions, with little to no central authority. Their Tradition is best described as a shared set of beliefs rather than a formal organization.

- Balamob: This Dreamspeaker faction is made up of the descendants of Mayan shape-shifting
 warrior-priests. They practice sacrifices, totemic magic, and blood-letting to contact Xibalba, the
 spirit world. Many of them learn to turn into jaguars, and those who have immigrated to the United
 States often remain in the jungles of Mexico and Guatemala, protecting their people or affiliating
 with Zapatista militants. They are also dedicated to studying the lost magic of the Aztecs, Mayans,
 and other Mesoamerican civilizations.
- **Baruti:** Originally from Africa, this sect consists of storytellers and performers who preserve and teach the oral traditions of hundreds of different cultures, including those believed to be lost. They maintain old ties with the Eshu Kith, and some have adapted their craft to modern mediums, writing science fiction, fantasy, comic books, or ethnographies. The focus of their magic revolves around the power of storytelling.
- **Contraries:** Once living among the Native Americans of the Great Plains and Southwest, these Dreamspeakers follow trickster spirits like Coyote and Raven. They embrace the Contrary Way as a lifestyle, doing everything backwards, such as dressing as the opposite sex or speaking the opposite of their intentions. They bring laughter and teach through their unconventional behavior, and while some Dreamspeakers admire their dedication, others view them as misguided.
- Four Winds: These Dreamspeakers are dedicated explorers of the spirit world. They do not value
 material possessions, instead trading secrets for secrets. They often eventually adopt a spiritual
 landscape to attune to and become a guardian spirit of, ultimately forgetting their mortal lives.
 Most of this sect disappeared after the Avatar Storm, which made their path increasingly
 dangerous.
- **Ghost Wheel Society:** These Dreamspeakers are urban techno-shamans who believe the old ways are dead and that they must adapt to the modern world. Born out of the Ghost Dance movement, they commune with elementals of plastic, glass, metal, and electricity. Many of them are Bohemians, entertainers, and con artists with ties to the criminal element. Their magic primarily involves negotiating with urban spirits, trading favors, and creating tech-based fetishes.
- Independent Factions: Mages who awakened without formal training, often taught by spirits. This faction, though prone to madness, includes the following: the Keepers of the Sacred Fire, who preserve cultural traditions; the Kopa Loei, native Hawaiian mages fighting for sovereignty; the Red Spear Society, ecoterrorist warriors reclaiming tribal lands; the Sheikha, Bedouin wise women who act as soothsayers and healers; Solitaries, hermits who become one with nature; Spirit Smiths, who craft powerful fetishes; and the Uzoma, Yoruba priests who have recently rejoined the Tradition.

Euthanatos

The Euthanatos are a Tradition of mages who see themselves as the judges and agents of cosmic justice. Known historically as the Chakravanti, they are deeply dedicated to upholding a universal balance. Their paradigm centers on the belief that death is not evil, but a sacred, and often necessary, part of the cycle of existence. They believe that ending a life before corruption spreads is a karmic duty, ensuring that a soul can be reborn cleansed rather than festering in decay.

Practices and Magical Foci

The magic of the Euthanatos is inextricably linked to their role as agents of finality. Their rotes are designed to bring about swift, and often merciful, ends.

- Death Rites: Their rituals often involve a deep connection to the act of death itself. They may use sacred rites, funerary practices, or even a simple, peaceful touch to release a soul. This focus is directly tied to their primary sphere of Entropy.
- Sacred Weapons: Euthanatos are known to use special weapons, such as ornate knives, sharpened sickles, or even firearms, as a focus for their rotes. These tools are often consecrated, turning them into instruments of karmic justice.
- Whispers of Fate: Euthanatos are masters
 of seeing a being's inevitable end. Their
 practices often involve meditation and
 divination to understand the karmic duty of
 a situation.

Beliefs and Philosophy

The Euthanatos view the universe through the lens of karma and entropy. They believe that every life and action creates ripples of karmic duty, and that all things must eventually return to dust. Their magic is often a means to restore balance, whether by enacting justice, culling corruption, or simply bringing about a painless release. This philosophy is often expressed through various paradigms:

The Wheel of Life and Death: Many Euthanatos believe in a literal cycle of rebirth, seeing their actions as a way to guide souls to a better reincarnation.

Classical Balance: Others follow a more philosophical path, seeing their role as maintaining a universal equilibrium between creation and destruction.

Kali: A smaller, more aggressive faction worships Kali, the Hindu goddess of time, change, and destruction, seeing her as the embodiment of sacred endings and the release from corruption.

Role in the Traditions

Within the Council of Nine, the Euthanatos often serve as judges and arbiters. Their mastery of Entropy and their willingness to make difficult choices are invaluable, but their methods often put them at odds with other Traditions, particularly those that prioritize life above all else. They are often viewed with suspicion and fear by the other mages, who may see their actions as little more than sanctioned murder.

Organizational Structure & Internal Diversity

The Euthanatos are a cloaked and often misunderstood Tradition. They typically operate in small, isolated cabals and are not known for their central organization.

- Aided: Celtic death mages and druids who hid within the Euthanatoi, believing everyone is bound
 by a mystical fate called the geasa. This practical faction includes the Chorriguinech (Death
 Cranes), assassins who serve the goddess Morrigan with poetic curses and combat, and the Filidh
 (Seers), practical wizards who protect communities with weather crafting and animal husbandry.
- Chakravanti: The oldest Euthanatoi faction, originating from Thanatoic cults in southern India who believe in karma. This group includes the **Devasu** (Holy Arrows), assassins who protect with martial arts and the power of Rudra; the **Lhaksmists**, a revolutionary sect who embrace randomness and technology in service of the goddess Lakshmi; and the conservative, predominantly female **Natatapas** (Holy Dancers), who preserve the oldest Thanatoic rites.
- Hierochthonoi: A disorganized Greek and Roman Chthonic cults that believe in Fate and natural
 order. This faction, which worships the gods of the earth, includes the Knights of Radamanthys,
 a cosmopolitan group of mercenaries who fight for just causes, and the Pomegranate Deme, a
 collection of pre-Christian cults focused on goddesses like Demeter and Hektate. Some among the
 Deme can become Cabiri, a form of mummy.
- Madzimbabwe: The Courts are an ancient Euthanatoi faction from Africa who protect their people
 by fighting evil spirits with the wisdom of the dead. The faction includes the N'anga, the orthodox
 members who work with Wraiths and Avatars, and the Ta Kiti, a subset who blend Santeria and
 Vodoun rituals to call upon their gods and ancestors.
- Vrati: Duty-specific groups within the Euthanatoi, with members hand-picked for their specialized roles. The faction includes the Albireo, who police internal threats; the Chakramundi, who track the reincarnation cycles of mages' Avatars and research Tradition history; and Golden Chalice, a group of assassins descended from ancient Byzantium who eliminate Nephandi and corrupt Sleepers. This last group is divided into Alphas (infiltration) and Omegas (hostage retrieval and executions).
- Other Factions: This collection features the Pallottino, loosely affiliated Etruscan death mages who
 preserve ancestral rites; Scholars of the Wheel, a small group of reincarnationalists who track
 souls and Avatars; Yggdrasil's Keepers (the Gallowsmen), mages patroned by Odin and Mimir
 who often work as combat medics; and Yum Cimil, a secretive faction patroned by Ah Puch, who
 are occasionally seen in Central America.

Order of Hermes

The Order of Hermes is a Tradition of mages who believe in a structured path to Ascension through knowledge, language, and precision. They are the quintessential ritualists and scholars of the Awakened world, meticulously studying the Ars Hermetica, a complex system of magic built on codified rules and symbolic correspondences. Their rituals are often verbose, symbolic, and hierarchical, reflecting their core belief that magic is a disciplined art that can be mastered through rigorous intellectual effort.

Practices and Magical Foci

Hermetic magic is a highly ritualized and precise discipline. Their rotes are often intricate and formal, requiring specific components and exact incantations to be effective.

- **Ritual Magic:** Their primary magical focus is on elaborate rituals that require careful planning and execution. A Hermetic mage's power comes not from improvisation, but from the mastery of an established magical procedure.
- Symbolic Language: The use of symbolic language, sigils, and an arcane vocabulary is central to their practice. They believe that words and symbols have power, and by correctly arranging them, they can command the forces of the universe.
- Working with Umbrood: The Hermetics have specific protocols, called Demonology and Celestography, among other spiritual protocols to work with spiritual Umbrood they summon. They have specific rules and methods that give them an edge over less experienced Traditions.

Beliefs and Philosophy

The Hermetic worldview is rooted in the pursuit of arcane knowledge and power. They believe that magic is a form of language, and that by mastering its grammar and vocabulary, a mage can impose their will on reality. This pursuit of power is not for chaos, but for order, as they believe that a structured and intellectual approach is the only safe and reliable way to wield true magical force. This leads them to a highly scholastic paradigm, where magical theory, ancient texts, and formal duels of will are of paramount importance.

Role in the Traditions

The Hermetics often serve as the scholarly backbone of the Council of Nine. Their expertise in ritual magic, their vast libraries of arcane knowledge, and their strict organizational structure make them a powerful and influential force. However, their rigid adherence to tradition and their hierarchical nature can put them at odds with more free-spirited or chaotic Traditions. They often act as advisors on matters of magical theory, history, and the politics of the Awakened world.

Organizational Structure & Internal Tensions

The Order of Hermes is the most structured of all the Traditions, with a clear and hierarchical organization.

- House Bonisagus: Founded by Master Bonisagus, this house is the center for hermetic research and
 arcane theory within the Order of Hermes. Its members study of Ascension, the Tenth Sphere, and ways
 to control or cancel Paradox. They operate from reclusive laboratories and secret hideouts, and
 Otherworlds.
- House Flambeau: Founded by Tempus Flambeau, this house focuses on War magic and battling the
 Technocracy. They are one of the Order's largest houses, despite losing many members to vampires
 during the Second Massassa War. After this conflict, they switched tactics to a slow revenge against their
 enemies
- **House Fortunae:** Founded by Hassam al-Jadidi ibnu Faradi to focus on numerology, this house has expanded into mathematics, quantum theory, and other related fields. They manipulate information to gain knowledge of the Tellurian, often putting them at odds with the Syndicate. They also occasionally butt heads with the Euthanatoi, who believe they represent the wrong side of Entropy.
- House Guernicus: Founded by Guernicus, this is a founding House of the Order of Hermes and has
 served as its legal pillar for centuries. They believe in the supremacy of law (Ma'at) and see the laws of
 physics, society, and magic as reflections of a divine order. They serve as judges and arbitrators for
 inter-traditional disputes and hold the power to decide who runs the Order.
- House Shaea: Founded by Fatima Baijani, this primarily female house is one of the oldest. Though
 other members of the Order dismiss them as scribes, they are crucial for maintaining the Order's
 archives and records. They were part of Ex Miscellanea but broke away from the Order completely in
 1982 before being invited back with full House status.
- House Solificati: Founded by members of the old Craft of Solificati to focus on Alchemy, this house
 believes their path is the only worthy one. They practice the true mysticism, seeking the Philosopher's
 Stone and creating various potions and elixirs. They are fond of using consciousness-altering substances
 as a focus for their magic. They have distanced themselves from the Craft and have no current leader,
 often using philosophy, biochemistry, and particle physics in their work.
- House Tytalus: Founded by Master Tytalus, this founding House of the Order of Hermes is known for
 dubious leadership in the past. They believe in constant vigilance and strategic thinking, promoting
 self-reliance and the exertion of maximum effect with minimal effort. This house was left leaderless by
 the Avatar Storm and is blamed for the Second Massassa War; they are now attempting democratic
 leadership.
- House Verditius: Founded by Lord Verditius, this house focuses on Enchantment. It was one of the
 original houses but fell out of favor in the 17th century. The Avatar Storm revitalized interest in this
 house, and they now focus on their new field of Information Technology, drawing in members from the
 former House Thig in 2002. They are renowned enchanters and wonder-makers who work with guns,
 computers, and vehicles

Society of Ether

The Society of Ether are scientific anarchists who believe that reality is defined not by a rigid, consensus-driven science, but by inspiration and imagination. They broke away from the Technocracy, believing that a more open-ended and revolutionary approach to science holds the key to true Ascension. Their magic is driven by mad theories and radical experimentation, which they use to build strange and wondrous devices.

Practices and Magical Foci

Etherite magic is a hands-on, practical discipline. Their rotes are manifested through their inventions, which serve as their primary magical foci.

- **Imaginative Science:** The core of their practice is the creation of wondrous and often bizarre devices. These inventions, from ray guns to flying machines, are not just props; they are the physical manifestation of the Etherite's magical will. Their primary spheres, Matter and Forces, are used to shape the physical world and manipulate energy to a degree that defies mundane science.
- Mad Theories: Etherites operate on radical, often heretical scientific theories. These theories, whether on the existence of a Hollow Earth or the properties of an imaginary element, are the philosophical framework of their magic. By proving their theories through magical experimentation, they reinforce their paradigm.
- Radical Experimentation: Their magic is a constant process of trial and error. They are tinkerers and inventors, unafraid to push the boundaries of what is possible, even if it leads to unpredictable or dangerous results.

Beliefs and Philosophy

The Society of Ether's worldview is a direct rejection of the mundane, materialistic worldview of the Technocracy. They believe that the universe is a place of boundless possibility, a living tapestry that can be manipulated by a brilliant mind. Their magic is an expression of their theories, which often include concepts like Etheric energy, aetheric currents, and other forgotten or discarded scientific principles. They see themselves as the true inheritors of the scientific tradition, pushing its boundaries beyond the limits of what a sterile, Consensus-driven world would allow.

Role in the Traditions

The Society of Ether are the inventors and innovators of the Council of Nine. Their wild theories and dangerous inventions provide the Traditions with unique technological advantages, and their rebellious nature serves as a constant check against magical stagnation. They are often allied with the Virtual Adepts due to a shared love of technological innovation, but their madcap experiments can cause friction with more cautious Traditions.

Organizational Structure & Internal Diversity

The Society of Ether are a loose-knit group, united more by their shared philosophy than by a rigid hierarchy. The Society of Ether have an organizational hierarchy that mirrors a scientific institution. The entry-level is the Initiate/Disciple, a prospective member who must earn their degree in Etheric Science. Next is the Researcher, a newly accredited Etherite who conducts their own mad science and assists others. They can then advance to Professor, a role for those who have made breakthroughs and are responsible for teaching and mentoring new members. Above them are Chairs, tenured and highly specialized experts who hold their positions for life. The highest rank is Emeriti, a universally respected master of Science! with undisputed authority to pursue outlandish and groundbreaking projects.

- Adventurers: These Etherites are field researchers and explorers, much like Indiana Jones or Batman. They apply their knowledge and theories through hands-on adventures, preferring to conduct their studies outside of a traditional laboratory setting.
- **Cybernauts:** The Cybernauts are explorers who specialize in the Digital Web. Their adventures take place in cyberspace, where they navigate and explore the intricate digital world. They often collaborate closely with the Virtual Adepts, sharing a passion for the digital frontier.
- **Ethernauts:** Ethernauts are the deep-space explorers of the Society of Ether. They construct and pilot advanced Etherships to venture into the Void, or deep space, in search of new worlds and to confront unseen dangers beyond the Earth's atmosphere.
- Mad Scientists: This group represents the stereotypical Society of Ether odd genius scientists
 who are constantly tinkering with bizarre theories and unconventional devices. Most Etherites, to
 some degree, embody the spirit of the Mad Scientist in their work.
- Progressivists: The Progressivists are a politically active faction of Etherites dedicated to
 modernizing the Society of Ether. The majority of this group is female, and one of their main goals
 is to push for greater equality within the meritocracy; their big win was challenging the
 male-dominated Sons title.
- **Utopians:** Utopians are focused on using their technology and science to improve not just their own lives, but the entire world. They believe that their gadgets and inventions can lead to a better life for everyone, driven by a philosophy of universal betterment.

Verbena

The Verbena are a Tradition of mages who channel the primal cycles of birth, growth, and death. Rooted in ancient pagan and animist traditions, their magic is bloody, sensual, and deeply tied to nature and legacy. They believe that by aligning themselves with the cycles of the earth and the heavens, they can tap into the fundamental life force of reality. Their practices often center on community, working in small, close-knit groups known as covens.

Practices and Magical Foci

The magic of the Verbena is visceral and deeply connected to the body and the natural world. Their rotes are often expressions of primal life forces and are inextricably linked to their primary spheres.

- Blood and Sacrifice: The Verbena use blood, which they
 consider the essence of life itself, as a powerful magical focus.
 Their rituals can involve blood offerings, symbolic sacrifices,
 or other acts that bind the power of life to their will. This is a
 primary focus for their mastery of the Life sphere.
- Herbalism and Alchemy: The Verbena are masters of natural lore. They use herbs, stones, and other components of the natural world to create potions, charms, and other magical effects. This focus on the raw materials of the earth is central to their command of the Matter sphere.
- Coven and Community: The Verbena often practice in covens, which are small, close-knit groups of mages. These communal practices, often timed with the cycles of the moon or the seasons, generate a powerful magical resonance that enhances their abilities.

Beliefs and Philosophy

The Verbena's worldview is a profoundly animistic one, centered on the sanctity of life and its inevitable cycle of decay and renewal. They believe that magic is an innate part of the world, a force that flows through living things, the earth, and the seasons. Their path to Ascension is not about control, but about harmony, acting as caretakers of the earth and its cycles. This leads them to a fierce protection of the natural world and a deep respect for their lineage, viewing themselves as a link in a long chain of magical heritage.

Role in the Traditions

Within the Council of Nine, the Verbena often serve as the conscience of the Traditions, advocating for the protection of the natural world and reminding their peers of the sacred cycles of life and death. Their focus on communal magic and their deep connection to the earth can make them powerful allies, but their often-bloody rituals and their reverence for primal, untamed forces can cause tension with more intellectual or cautious Traditions.

Organizational Structure & Internal Tensions

The Verbena are organized primarily at the local level into covens, with little to no central authority beyond the New Horizon Council. While united by a shared reverence for nature, the Verbena are not a monolith. Different covens may adhere to different pagan traditions, from Celtic and Norse beliefs to indigenous shamanic practices. A notable modern faction is the Queerbena, a movement that views queer identity, community, and experiences as a powerful and sacred part of the cycle of life, love, and transformation.

- **Gardeners of the Tree:** The Gardeners are the traditionalist core of the Verbena, often attracting mages with Pattern Avatars. They believe that magical power and prestige should be passed down through genetic family lines, and they are resistant to mixing different cultural paths of magic.
- **Lifeweavers:** Composed mostly of mages with Dynamic Avatars, the Wanderers are hermits and loners who remain separate from other Verbena sects and even from one another. Their focus is on living in the moment, constantly reinventing themselves, and gaining a deep understanding of life and the world through their solitary experiences.
- Moon-Seekers: Typically composed of pagans with Questing Avatars, this organization welcomes
 new ideas and different groups in order to help the Tradition as a whole grow and evolve. They are
 open-minded and actively seek out new experiences and perspectives to strengthen their magical
 practices.
- **Twisters of Fate:** The Wildlings are isolated individuals who usually possess Primordial Avatars. They strongly resent the influence of the Gardeners, whom they see as too orthodox and rigid. Their focus is on living a simple life and making a tangible difference in the world through their actions.

Virtual Adepts

The Virtual Adepts are masters of data, illusion, and unreality who believe that Ascension is digital freedom. They left the Technocracy to pursue a more open and imaginative approach to technology, viewing reality itself as a form of code that can be rewritten. Their magic is driven by the conviction that information is power and that by manipulating data and perception, they can unlock the universe's ultimate secrets.

Practices and Magical Foci

Virtual Adept magic is a modern, high-tech discipline that relies on code, networks, and data. Their rotes often manifest as digital effects that bleed into the physical world.

- Programming and Hacking: Adepts use programming languages, hacking techniques, and other digital skills as their primary magical foci. Their mastery of Correspondence and Mind allows them to manipulate networks of information, both digital and metaphysical.
- **Data and Encryption:** The Adepts' magic revolves around data. They can weaponize paradox by creating logical inconsistencies in a system, and they use their skills to break and create encryption that is both mundane and magical.
- Virtual Reality: Many Adepts use virtual reality and other simulated environments as a sandbox for their magic. They see these spaces not as fake, but as a different layer of reality, and they use them to experiment with their theories of information and perception.

Beliefs and Philosophy

The Adepts' worldview is built on a hacker's ethos: information wants to be free. They see the physical world as a slow, clumsy, and often corrupt version of a more elegant, digital reality. Their magic is the ultimate form of programming, allowing them to bend perception, break encryption, and weaponize paradox through simulated meaning. They believe that true freedom lies in transcending physical limitations and achieving a state of pure, unrestricted information.

Role in the Traditions

The Virtual Adepts are the digital pioneers of the Council of Nine. They provide the Traditions with invaluable information and a modern perspective on the nature of reality. They are often allied with the Sons of Ether due to a shared love of rebellious science and innovation. However, their focus on technology can cause friction with more mystical or nature-based Traditions, who may see their methods as cold or soulless.

Organizational Structure & Internal Tensions

The Virtual Adepts are a loosely organized network of hackers and programmers. They have very little formal hierarchy, preferring to operate in small, fluid groups based on shared interests or projects.

- Chaoticians: Also known as Probability Engineers or Grey Men, the Chaoticians are a faction of
 Virtual Adepts who study chaos theory. They believe the universe has flaws or errant bits of code
 that they can calculate to predict how the universe will compensate. Initially, they believed in a
 total universe reformat, but after that failed to materialize around 2000, they shifted their focus.
 Much like Sherlock Holmes, they are masters of calculation who collect minute details and piece
 them together to understand complex patterns.
- **Cyberpunks:** The Cyberpunks are a faction of anarchists, collectivists, and social reconstructionists who fight the Technocracy with extreme hacking, cybernetics, and ideological war. They started as a stoic and cynical group within the Union and were re-invigorated by the Anarchist Movement. During the Adept Revolt, Cyberpunks volunteered as a rear guard, allowing others to escape safely before crashing an Artificially Sentient Mainframe. They lost much of their leadership during the Avatar Storm but remain one of the largest factions.
- **Cypherpunks:** Also called Cryptogramics or Thought Police, the Cypherpunks are a faction that focuses on information security. Their history began after a massive data breach exposed a gap in the Adepts' defenses. This group of mathematicians and hackers formed to encrypt and hide Adept data streams and acts as a clean-up crew. In the 1990s, they discovered information about the MK-Ultra project and collaborated with the Chaoticians to create a cure for the T-Virus, a Technocratic mind-control project. Now, they are the frontline against the New World Order.
- **Nexplorers:** Also known as Cybernauts or Runners, these Virtual Adepts explore the Digital Web and seek to escape the physical world for a better one they call Reality 2.0. The Avatar Storm and the undoing of the T-Virus caused them to rethink their priorities, and they now believe that both physical reality and the Digital Web must be improved together. A small sub-sect of Nexplorers, the Cyber-Hougans, serve beings in the Digital Web known as the Electric Loas, whom other Adepts consider questionable due to their Voudoun-like magic.
- **Reality Coders:** Also known as Reality Hackers, these Virtual Adepts work to transform physical reality into Reality 2.0. They were formed in the 1800s but didn't become active until the creation of the computer. After temporarily dissolving due to the T-Virus, they reformed with the cure and used available technology to invade dreams, rewrite life, hack minds, and resurrect the dead.

The Mage's Circle

The fundamental unit of play in a Traditions game is the Circle or Fellowship. A Circle is a small, cohesive group of mages who have banded together for mutual support, safety, and shared goals. Since there is little overarching structure in the Traditions, the Circle is the primary source of community and trust for a mage.

- Formation and Purpose: Circles are typically formed voluntarily around a common interest, a
 shared master, or a specific magical goal. They are where a mage learns to trust and work with
 others, often from different Traditions. The Circle's purpose might be to operate a chantry,
 investigate a supernatural threat, or simply provide a safe place to live and practice magic.
- Dynamic and Roles: A Circle is often a microcosm of the larger Traditions, with members from different philosophies. The roles within a Circle are rarely formal but often emerge naturally based on a member's skills and personality. The dynamic between members - whether cooperative, competitive, or a mix of both - is a key element of the game.

Utilizing the New Horizon Council

The New Horizon Council is a powerful tool for a Storyteller who is willing to work with the Mage Coordinator. Use it to provide goals, create internal tension, and introduce new characters. The Council is a living body, and its political ideals can be influenced by the actions of players.

- **Council Missions:** The Council can assign players missions that require them to work with mages from different Traditions. This forces them to confront their philosophical differences and find common ground.
- Political Drama: The Council's internal feuds and rivalries offer excellent plot hooks. Use the
 representatives' biographies to craft stories where player characters must navigate these political
 waters
- Changing a Counselor's Ideals: Players can petition to change a Counselor's political ideal on a specific topic. To do this, they must collect a petition of <u>20 signatures</u> from other player characters.
 - A signature from a Character of the Counselor's own Tradition counts as two toward the goal.
 - A signature from a Character <u>not</u> of the <u>Counselor's Tradition</u> counts as <u>one</u> toward the goal.
 - A minimum of <u>five</u> signatures must be <u>from the Counselor's Tradition</u>, most of which must be **Player Characters**.
 - Once a successful petition is submitted, the Counselor's political ideal on that specific topic will be altered to reflect the platform advocated by the players.

The Nature of the Traditions

To run an engaging Traditions game, you must focus on the core conflicts and philosophies that define them. Mages are not a unified front; they are a fragile alliance of convenience. The central tension comes from their diverse beliefs and methods.

- Philosophical Conflict: The most compelling stories often arise from the ideological clashes between Traditions. For example, a Verbena's reverence for a sacred grove might clash with a Virtual Adept's plan to build a digital nexus there. These conflicts make the world feel alive and the stakes personal.
- The Paradigm is the Magic: Emphasize that a mage's magic is an extension of their belief system. A Hermetic's verbose ritual is just as valid as a Euthanatos's quiet meditation. The most powerful magic should feel earned through a character's consistent adherence to their paradigm.
- Not the Good Guys: While the Traditions often fight the Nephandi, they aren't necessarily heroes.
 They can be selfish, arrogant, and even cruel. The Order of Hermes's political feuds, the
 Euthanatos's controversial methods, and the Cult of Ecstasy's recklessness can all be sources of
 internal conflict and rich storytelling.

RACIST AND ANTISEMITIC LANGUAGE IN THE LOTZE

To ensure an inclusive and respectful game environment, the Mage Office recommends replacing the following real-world, problematic history. These changes are made to preserve the integrity of the game's concepts without perpetuating harmful stereotypes.

- **Phylactery:** This is a Greek/Christian term for tefillin or prayer boxes, which are sacred objects in Judaism. In the game, the term was used for Nephandic soul-traps or to hold quintessence. Instead, please use the term Soul Vessel.
- **Cabal:** This term has a history of being used as an antisemitic slur for a group of Jewish people. It was used in the game to refer to a group of mages. Instead, please use the terms Fellowship or, as established in this packet, Circle.
- Harmful Ideologies and Factions: While the lore of <u>Mage: Laws of Ascension</u> touches on a variety of historical and
 political themes, including those with problematic historical ties, characters espousing harmful real-world ideologies such as
 Nazism or Neo-Nazism are not appropriate for play.
 - In-Game Consequences: Engaging in such activities is considered an act of profound spiritual corruption. A mage
 who espouses these beliefs is considered Barrabi, meaning they are behaving in a manner that will lead them to
 become a Nephandus a soul-corrupted enemy of all life. The likely result will be a swift Tribunal that brands the
 character as a Nephandus.
 - Alternative Concepts: Within factions that may have historical ties to these ideologies, there are always
 numerous alternative concepts that are free of such hateful associations. We strongly encourage players to
 explore these options and create characters that do not promote real-world hate.
 - Player and Storyteller Safety: These ideologies are known to be deeply offensive and can cause significant
 distress to other players. For this reason, creating a character with such a background is highly discouraged. A
 Storyteller is within their rights to declare such a character unplayable. This policy is in place to ensure a respectful
 and safe environment for all players.
- Playing with Respect: Many of the problematic themes in <u>Mage: Laws of Ascension</u> are rooted in concepts and tropes, rather than specific words. To ensure a respectful and safe game for everyone, Storytellers and Players should work together to build characters and stories that are mindful of real-world cultures and avoid harmful stereotypes. This includes being aware of tropes such as white saviorism, which can appear in the game's lore. The goal is to explore the deep themes of the game without perpetuating a mindset that can cause real-world offense or discomfort.

Your Path Has Been Chosen

This is the end of the beginning. You now hold the key to a world of endless possibility, where reality is a canvas and your will is the brush. The knowledge within this packet is just the first step on a journey of self-discovery and power. What you do next is up to you. Will you be a guardian of the arcane, a master of paradox, or a weaver of new realities? The Traditions are waiting. The rest of your story is yet to be written.

Sources

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- Laws of Ascension, Revised
- Laws of Ascension Companion
- Mage: The Ascension, Revised Edition (Core Rulebook)
- Tradition Book: Akashic Brotherhood
- Tradition Book: Celestial Chorus
- Tradition Book: Cult of Ecstasy
- Tradition Book: Dreamspeakers
- <u>Tradition Book: Euthanatos</u>
- Tradition Book: Order of Hermes
- Tradition Book: Sons of Ether
- Tradition Book: Verbena
- Tradition Book: Virtual Adepts

