

## CHAPTER ELEVEN THE MINDSCAPE

*"Lyra Da Luz switched to virtuality, and the sentinel materialised before her. All around, the intricate diaphanous lattices of the Mindscape drifted and sparkled with crystalline tracery, beating to an unheard pulse of communication, thought, life. The sentinel was a standard model — unintelligent but with passable emulation routines — like a crystal dragonfly with an info tether reaching towards her."*

The Mindscape is a communications medium, a vast data store, and a collection of virtual spaces. It permeates the Commonality, connecting citizens, conveying thanograms and thoughtcasts, and enabling technopsi. There are Mindscape satellites, vaults, and networks throughout Commonality Space.

Characters can use the Mindscape in many ways, including:

- Exploiting Mindscape data to reinforce the use of a skill (for example, using **exomemory** to find obscure information).
- Using the Mindscape medium to take actions affecting the actual world (for example, using mindburn or technopsi domination to overwhelm actual-world targets).
- Taking actions within the Mindscape virtual environment (for example, using the Mindscape Engineer stunt to create virtual environments, or the Hacker stunt to attack Mindscape sentinels).

### THE HALO

The **halo** is an extension of a Mindscape-connected individual **into** the Mindscape. It's the aggregation of all your abilities which rely on Mindscape connectivity to function, including skill chips, the Mindscape implant, appropriate enhancements, and *content* like thoughtcasts and exomemories. It's exposed to the Mindscape, subject to Intrusion and Hacker attempts. Abilities within

your halo can be used as long as you're connected to the Mindscape, and become temporarily unusable whenever you're not.

Mindscape-connected individuals perceive one another's haloes; it's how implants connect when **handshaking**, routinely exchanging public personal information. You can choose what personal information you make public in your halo; most people reveal their names, Mindscape ID, and often trivia like occupation, interests, and homeworld. You can find this information easily, usually without a dice roll.

Your halo also contains private encrypted content; information about skills, stunts, and aspects which depend on the Mindscape, including skill chips; and anything else you've marked down as a **halo ability** (page XX). You can discover and read encrypted halo content using technopsi, even disrupting, damaging, or disabling halo abilities, and in extreme cases even **stealing** them.

### Hacking Someone's Halo

Use the Hacker (Intrusion) stunt, Mindscape Engineer (Technical) stunt, or other appropriate ability to forcibly read the private contents of someone's halo. This is a create an advantage action, identifying one crucial Mindscape ability or content item possessed by the target. Discuss this information with your GM; it shouldn't be trivial or irrelevant, but directly useful, like the **existence** of an enhancement, skill chip, or exomemory. If you succeed with style, you may read the information in detail, discover two items, or create two advantages.





Hacking attempts usually face Fair (+2) passive opposition, unless the target has a specific stunt or special ops chip, in which case they use Will or even Intrusion as active opposition.

### ***Disrupting Halo Abilities***

Use stunts like Mindburn, Probe, Hacker, and Mindscape Engineer in technopsi attacks to damage a target's halo abilities. You can use your mental stress boxes or consequences to absorb attacks on your own halo; otherwise, a successful attack disables one of your halo abilities (or two on a success with style), placing a consequence on that ability equal to the shifts of the attack. You must make an appropriate recovery action, possibly using Hacker, Redaction, or Mindscape Engineer, to regain use of the ability.

For disruption attacks using Mindburn and Probe, the target may choose which halo ability is affected; for Hacker and Mindscape Engineer attacks, the attacker chooses.

### ***Stealing Halo Abilities***

The Hacker and Mindscape Engineer stunts, and to a lesser extent Probe, can **steal** a halo ability instead of (or as well as) disrupting it, as long as that ability has no physical or genurgic component. This usually means Mindscape con-

tent like thoughtcasts and exomemories, but includes skill chips and virtual enhancements.

The attacker must target a **specific** halo ability with a create an advantage action, giving the attacker an aspect representing the stolen ability. You may use milestone advancements to "cement" such stolen halo abilities as your own.

## **DOING THINGS WITH THE MINDSCAPE**

You may use the Mindscape to take actions in the actual world, either using the Mindscape directly or drawing on its content to enhance your knowledge or skills. This phenomenon is known as technopsi.

### ***Thoughtcasts***

**Thoughtcasting**, also known as **techno-telepathy**, is one of the two principle uses of the Mindscape (the other being **exomemory** — see below). Thoughtcasting allows one Mindscape-connected individual to communicate with another, either in real-time or delayed exchange. A user vocalises a message in his mind (ie in words), then uses the Mindscape implant to transmit that message across



the Mindscape to a recipient, who hears those words in his mind. Entire conversations may be held this way, while to an outside observer it looks like nothing is happening.

Thoughtcasts are usually private between participants (of whom there may be many), but may be hacked using the Hacker stunt, a Fair (+2) passive opposition unless opposed by Hacker or Will if the target has a special ops or black chip.

To thoughtcast to someone you must know his **Mindscape ID**. The recipient may be anywhere in the Commonality, although interstellar thoughtcasts only travel at the speed of Mindscape updates (page XX), and not in real-time. If a Mindscape user is within visual range, you may usually perceive his halo automatically and invite him to communicate via thoughtcast, a process known as **handshaking**. A Mindscape user may decline a handshake, or may use his **privacy field** to render his halo opaque, or even a monitor band cloak (page XX). Characters with Hacker or special ops chips may roll to communicate with a character against his will, often a precursor to a technopsi attack (page XX).

Searching for a Mindscape-connected user in a crowd of Mindscape-connected individuals requires sensorview (page XX) and a dice roll. At ranges beyond line-of-sight you need a Mindscape tracer (page XX).

## Exomemory

The Mindscape is also a vast store of data, including **exomemory** memory engrams. You may thoughtcast your memories to the Mindscape, where they may be accessed and “re-remembered” by you and even other people. It’s voluntary, like taking photographs or videos today; people do it at important moments, to “re-live” the experience later. Exomemories may be **public**, **private**, or **restricted**.

### Exomemories and Personality Change

*Memplexes aren't the only way of changing personality; normal exomemories have the same capability. If any exomemory roll allows you to succeed at a cost (page XX), you may take that cost as a consequence representing a temporary personality change related to the exomemory. This is a mental consequence which may be treated with Redaction (Empathy).*

**Public exomemories** are accessible on any Knowledge, Science, or Technical roll, perhaps to create an advantage.

A **private exomemory** has a Fair (+2) passive opposition before it can be accessed with a Hacker roll; anyone may designate one of their exomemories as private. A **restricted exomemory** may only be created by someone with a special ops or black chip, usually using the Technical skill, and is treated as restricted content (page XX).

Exomemories can also be accessed when **invoking the Mindscape** (page XX).

## MEMOPLEXES

The personalities of humans and other sentient beings are directly related to their memories; how they remember their experiences and actions, and how they interpret the universe around them. A change in a character’s memories, whether through experience, mental damage, or exomemory, can change a character’s personality.

The Commonality exploits this phenomenon by creating **memplexes**, also known as **servitor gestalts**. A memplex is a specially designed array of exomemories which provides individuals sharing it with a common set of abilities, vicarious experiences, and knowledge. Joining a memplex alters a member’s personality in specific ways — perhaps making members of a military memplex more violent or tactically-minded; or members of a political or instrumentality memplex more loyal or bestowing shared attitudes and beliefs. Memplexes are used when joining sensitive organisations to ensure loyalty.

In game terms, a memplex is an **extra**. It may provide skills and stunts, but by definition provides one or more propagandistic aspects which direct a member’s personality down a clearly defined path. This could be as simple and unsubtle as *Loyal Servitor of the 3-Space Instrumentality* or as devious as *When You Have a Hammer Everything Starts to Look Like a Nail*. Memplexes aren’t common for general members of organisations, but for secret elite forces within them.

*Sarah has decided that Jackson Stark's new Custodian Avatar Paradox high concept represents a secret memplex maintained by a mysterious organisation. She provides it with a Memetic Engineer stunt and a Knowledge Specialisation (Rim Sector Custodian Affairs) stunt, and Great (+4) Knowledge, Good (+3) Intrusion, and Fair (+2) Deceive skills. Jackson doesn't receive any of these skills and stunts for free, but memplex membership gives him a permission (page XX) to acquire any of them using advancements.*

## THANOGRAMS

A **thanogram thoughtcast** uploads a **thanogram** — a personality and memory “snapshot” of an individual at the

moment of their death. Invasive once begun, the process can be damaging, and people usually wait until they know they're dying before initiating one. Treat a thanogram thoughtcast as a Superb (+5) Mindburn conflict lasting 5 exchanges; once started it can't be stopped. Some technopsi specialists can force targets to initiate thanogram thoughtcasts involuntarily.

Countless thanograms are stored in the Mindscape, in varying degrees of completeness, and may be examined. Usually this involves simply searching exomemories; however, in extreme cases thanograms may be instantiated in eidolon rigs (page XX) as personality simulations and interrogated. Ethically dubious, this isn't available to normal Commonality citizens.

Thanograms are the basis for eidolon personalities (page XX). Usually eidolons are derived as much as possible from a single thanogram, for greater coherence and stability. However, some may comprise elements from two or more thanogram sources, providing unique memory and personality traits at the risk of instability and unpredictable flaws.

## Sensorview

Sensorview is an additional sense possessed by Mindscape-linked characters, allowing them to use the Mindscape and linked equipment like hand scanners, PSAs, and starship active and passive sensors to perceive targets in unique ways. It's mostly used like any other sense — you can use the Mindscape to perceive things, use your Investigate and Notice skills to "see" infrared or other energies with your PSA, and so on. A target must be perceived in sensorview to be the target of technopsi attacks.

## Remote Control

Use technopsi to control equipment. Depending on the discretionary interface (page XX), you may even use the device's senses via sensorview, as with an avatar. Using remote control on a device you have as an extra is automatic; use your own skills or the extra's as appropriate. You may also use remote control on devices which don't belong to you — including those belonging to other people.

Taking remote control of an item is a create an advantage action, giving you an aspect representing that item. Devices designed to be used this way provide passive opposition no greater than Fair (+2) to appropriate skills like Drive, Pilot, Investigate, Notice, etc. Most devices which may be remote controlled are **not** open access like this, and must be hacked with Hacker (Intrusion) or an appropriate Technical skill or stunt against Fair (+2) opposition or higher.

Use Hacker (Intrusion) or an appropriate Technical or Will roll to seize remote control of items controlled by others,

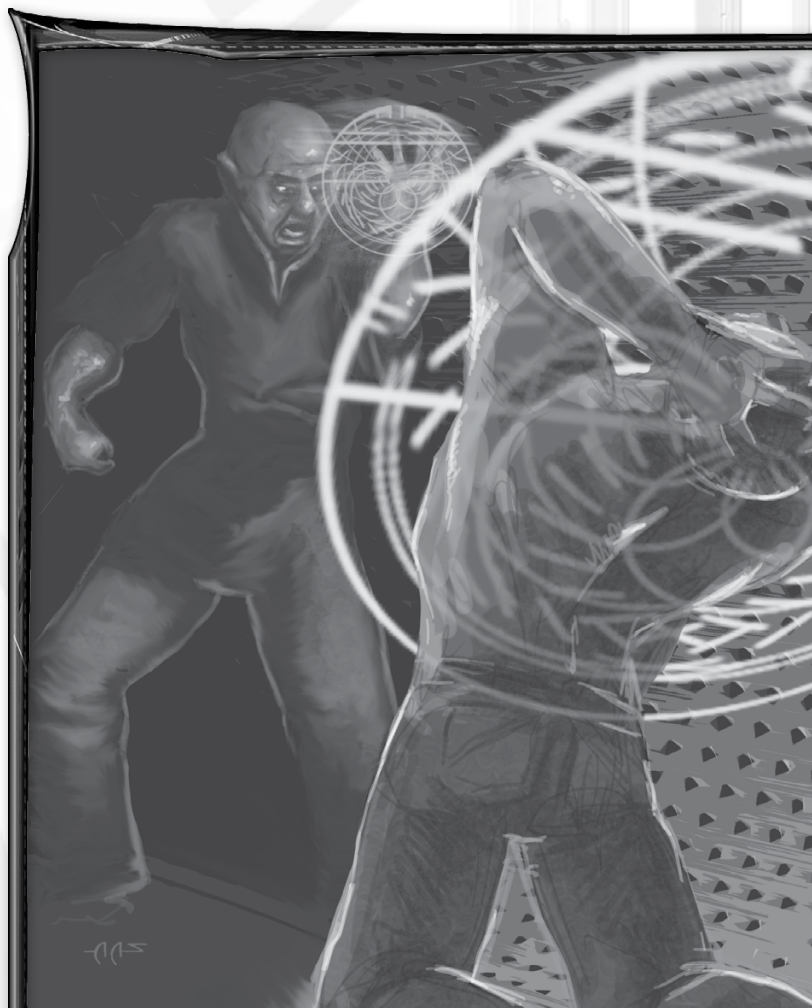
actively opposed by an appropriate skill. This usually requires a special ops or black chip; it's a create an advantage action, giving you an aspect representing control of the device.

## Mindburn

Characters with special ops or black chips may make **mindburn** mental attacks on Mindscape-connected targets. You may do this immediately on targets you're already in com-

### Detecting the Monitor Band

Detecting an uncloaked monitor band signal is automatic in the same zone, but may require an Average (+1) sensorview or Passive Sensing (page XX) roll beyond that, +1 per zone after the first. Succeeding with style on an Active Sensing or sensorview roll on a specific zone may detect the presence of a cloaked monitor band signal, but hacking (page XX) is required to get any further.





munication with; otherwise you must use sensorview or Mindscape trace to locate and identify the target (page XX).

Mindburn isn't directly affected by range. The attacker must concentrate throughout the attack, which precludes attacks over interstellar distances, but if an attacker in orbit, say, can locate a target on a planet (or vice versa), then a mindburn attack is possible.

## Direct Perception Feeds

Direct perception feeds enable **ubiquitous perception** (page XX). They're a way to invoke the Mindscape on skill rolls like Notice, Investigate, Knowledge, or other sensorview — including targeting for technopsi attacks. DP feeds are usually limited to public spaces; instrumentality, corporacy, or Pansectorate personnel, criminals, and other individuals concerned with secrecy or privacy don't thoughtcast DP feeds. That doesn't mean an unconnected individual might not be accidentally providing a DP feed which might be useful, or that you can't insinuate stealth or sensor drones into a zone to provide one.

## Restricting Mindscape Access

A Mindscape **dirigeant** (page XX), or exceptionally a Mindscape engineer or hacker, may prevent an individual from accessing the Mindscape. For a normal target the dirigeant must simply know the target's Mindscape ID and locate him using sensorview or Mindscape trace whenever he uses the Mindscape. A target may hide from a dirigeant using a monitor band cloak or other form of Mindscape stealth.

For a target with a special ops or black chip, a contest is required, usually of the dirigeant's Bureaucracy against the target's Hacker, Mindscape Engineer, Stealth, etc. The target may even defend using technopsi like mindburn if he can identify his attacker.

## Gestalt Communication

**Gestalt language** is the next stage in the evolution of language, used by trans- and post-human hyper-intelligences, enhanced by emotional markers, Mindscape acceleration routines, and hyperlinguistic shortcuts — the so-called **gestalts**. Levels of gestalt language convey concepts with exponentially increasing speed and sophistication. Some are usable by non-augmented humans; others require enhancement, or even for the individual to have "gone post" (page XX). The lowest level gestalt language is standard Commonality speech, technically referred to as **zero-gestalt**.

## GESTALT LANGUAGE ENHANCEMENTS

While human beings are *affected* by gestalt language, you need **gestalt language enhancements** to actively *use* it. A combination skill chip and neural accelerator, they may be taken as genurgic mods or mechanical enhancements. Lower level gestalt language enhancements are for human and other similar beings; higher enhancements are for posthumans like planetary and installation sentiences, or for organics with post-human occupations like Gestalt Linguists (page XX).

### ★ Stage I Gestalt Communication

*Requires Mindscape Implant*

Higher intelligences aggregate entire conversations into discrete utterances called **gestalts**, a form of hyperword. You may use gestalt communication via technopsi with this enhancement; it may or may not have a verbal element, but always has a substantial thoughtcast component. You gain a +2 bonus to overcome actions to persuade, intimidate, provoke, or elicit emotional responses, or to convey a great deal of information rapidly. Stage I Gestalt Communication is non-creative; you work within a pre-defined hyperlinguistic milieu of ready-made gestalts.

### ★ Gestalt Controller

*Requires Stage I Gestalt Communication*

Gestalt controllers define the gestalts used in Stage I Gestalt Communication. They're extremely powerful, and gain a +2 bonus to create advantage actions to guide any conversation to a predetermined conclusion or create and control context.

### ★ Gestalt Combat

*Requires Stage I Gestalt Communication*

You specialise in gestalt utterances used to dominate and cow opposition; gain a +2 bonus to attack and defend actions in mental conflicts. The target need not be connected to the Mindscape to be affected. Consequences may modify the target's behaviour and personality.

### ★ Gestalt Propagation

*Requires Stage I Gestalt Communication*

When you succeed at a gestalt language attack action, spend a fate point to force a consequence, or to affect an entire zone.

### ★ Stage II Gestalt Communication

*Requires Stage I Gestalt Communication, post-human occupation permission*

Used by advanced corpuses and similar sentiences. You may create your own gestalts dynamically, on the fly, making your use of language immensely powerful. Gain a +4 bonus on all gestalt language actions. Stage II gestalts are effectively **memoplexes** (page XX).