

SPACEMASTER: DATANET™

Issue #3

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Introduction

Welcome to the third issue of *Spacemaster Datanet*. The purpose here is to expand and enhance your *Spacemaster* game, both by broadening the rules and by deepening the setting details, giving you a richer and more fulfilling game and game environment.

This time it's all about creating alien races. It's a big subject and one that can take a whole lot of consideration. From initial conception, from a storytelling point of view, we'll discuss all the biological and cultural considerations that are likely to affect your aliens. Finally, from a game stand point, we'll show you how to turn all that theory into hard point values.

Enjoy.

WARNING! All Items in this PDF should be considered optional and completely unofficial.

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1.0 RACES AND CULTURES

Aliens are by far one of the most difficult but rewarding subjects in a science fiction game. Aliens can be anything from humans who live on different Colony worlds to strange and magnificent species unlike anything found on Earth. This section will attempt to tackle the subject of designing these different species and cultures.

1.1 ALIENS

Although in the broad sense aliens refer to anything foreign, for the purposes of this article aliens are anything not of the same species as humans and not from Earth. Aliens come in many shapes and sizes, from the bumpy foreheaded aliens of space opera, to truly unfathomable aliens in some forms of hard science fiction.

1.1.1 THE NATURE OF ALIENS

What are aliens like?

There are two main schools of thought on alien races. The first is that the humanoid form and earth-like biology are optimal, and that any evolutionary path is going to follow a similar trend. Food will be compatible, psychologies similar (or at least recognizable), and forms familiar. For convenience, most science fiction falls into this category.

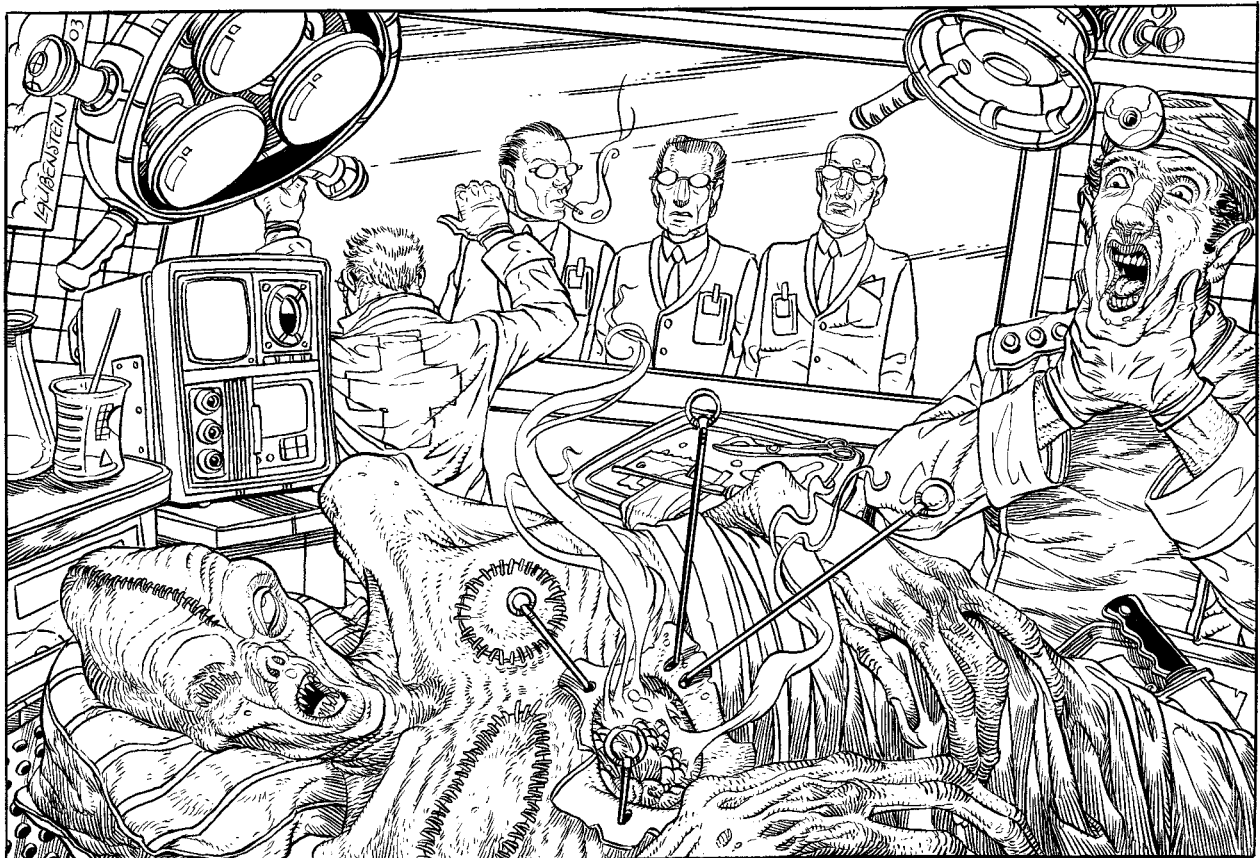
The second school of thought is that our form, our thoughts and our biology are one of a myriad of possibilities. If two alien races met, they'd have no common frame of reference. They'd have no idea where to look at the other creature, as neither would have any recognizable face. They'd have no way of communicating with each other as they'd have no recognizable language (they might not even have the same *concept* of language). They'd not be able to eat each other's food, because they'd not have similar biologies (if they even had biologies, as we know them). They'd probably require a lot of examination to even determine that the thing in front of them were intelligent, assuming that they could determine that the thing in front of them was even alive.

The *Privateers* universe was designed with this second camp firmly in mind. This is why all the Player Character (PC) races are artificial.

In all fairness, this is more of a spectrum of thought, with each camp on either end of two far extremes. Meanwhile, the majority of people fall somewhere in between.

Everyone would like to think that their view of the universe is the way it really is, but this is not the forum for that debate. The problem is that if the second camp has the hard science approach, then how do you approach writing a science fiction universe when you want to be scientifically accurate?

It's all fine and dandy to think you're on the scientific high ground and produce truly alien races, but the more alien a race is, the more unplayable they are. It's



not acceptable to put a race in the game, and then give them a psychology that requires a lunatic or a cutting edge psychological theorist to play.

- No aliens at all. Humanity is alone in the universe, or has yet to discover any other beings.
- Enemy aliens. Place one race of aliens in the games, and then pit them against humanity. Allow only the GM to run them. This does require the GM take the burden of getting inside their alien thoughts.
- Create an artifice. If playable aliens are contrived, create a contrivance. Create some artificial mechanism which forced all the races to be similar enough to play.
- Use a more relaxed model, where aliens just have to look strange, but can still think enough like humans to be fun to play.

Players seem to gravitate to play other races. This is not a solid rule, as some games have proven, but give players various races and they'll stretch themselves into the role.

Thus, in the *Privateers* universe, the Architects were born.

If you've invented a contrivance to make all races human-like, you can either make humans the cause of it all (via genetic engineering) or you can make humans themselves a blatantly artificial race.

With the final possibility, however, things are little easier. Human-like aliens can be fun to play and will often pass the muster of 90 percent of the people out there. The main task is to know your audience and to tailor your aliens for their tastes.

This section will tackle the creation of aliens, or rather the *concepts* behind the aliens, from a general approach. This section can be used as a checklist of sorts, a series of things to consider when developing an alien race.

The Hook

The first thing to consider when creating anything is the hook. For something to be interesting, it needs to be different. This is all the more true when it comes to aliens. A good way to start creating an alien is to challenge some preconception of life or humanity. Some of the more common approaches are:

- What if the aliens have radically different biology than humans?
- What if the aliens have radically different emotions than humans?
- What if the aliens have a radically different culture than humans?
- What if the aliens perceive things radically different than humans?

Once you decide on a hook, start brainstorming on its different implications. If the aliens reproduce asexu-

ally, how does this affect their culture, their economy, the way they interact with one another or even their philosophies on life-and-death? You should always keep the hook in the forefront of your mind. You should examine each and every new detail of their race against this hook, to make certain that the alien is richly textured and deep.

Example: *Bill is looking to create a new alien race to serve as a foil for his story. He's not certain yet whether this race will be an enemy to humanity or an ally. He's decided to start by challenging one of the basic preconceptions of human life: eating. He's decided that these aliens do not need to consume food. They can exist completely on air, water, and light. Anxious to see how this affects their development, Bill moves on to the first steps.*

1.1.2 GENERAL BIOLOGY

The first thing to consider is the aliens' biology. Many behavioral and cultural elements emerge from biological imperatives. Think about humans for a moment—if we didn't need food and water, the entire agrarian economy would never have formed. Other biological imperatives, like reproduction, would probably have forced humans to gather together, but they would have gathered in completely different types of places where protection from predators was better than in the fertile crescents of the world.

Of course, this assumes the predators existed. If humans didn't need food and water, would animals? Probably not, since we emerged from the same biology. That means the very structure of how different human beings interacted with themselves with their environment would be completely different. Would there even have been the external forces necessary to make intelligence a survival trait?

So it's important to start by thinking about what this alien needs to exist, what biological drives it needs to satisfy, and how its general shape causes it to interact with the world around it.

Example: *Since Bill has decided that the aliens need no food, he starts by imagining what this would do to their general biology. If they survive off of water, air, and sunlight, then they're going to be radically different than human beings. Even trees require nutrients. The aliens' atmosphere and water supplies would have to be rich in the kind of base minerals and organic material the aliens need to survive. Because of the square cube law, the mass of a creature increases far greater than their surface area, when growing in size. This means that a human-sized alien would require far more efficiency in their ability to process air and sunlight than a smaller alien. Bill decides that these aliens are little more than a foot and half long. They have a broad, thick top, so as to present as much surface area to the sun as*

possible. He pictures them as sort of turtle-like, but instead of a head, they have a protrusion of sense organs sticking from one side. They're small enough that the brain needs to be kept in a central body if it is to have enough volume to carry intelligence. Since there are probably no predators on the world, he doesn't picture them as fast or strong. They can think quickly, but they don't need to move quickly. He decides their arms are thin, more tentacle-like, with splayed ends that act as opposable digits. He decides that ten little short legs would be more efficient than two large ones. Since they must have to take in a great deal of air, he decides that they speak verbally, and have large piercing voices to carry for great distances. As for external forces causing them to need intelligence to survive, he'll get to that in the next section.

1.1.2.1 FOOD AND COMPETITION

Aliens need competition to evolve. Without competition, there's no imperative to develop intellect as a survival tool. Most aliens will probably gain this competition from food gathering. They need food to survive, as does everything else in the food chain. Being intelligent creatures, they probably develop their intelligence as a way to fool predators and gather food.

What the aliens eat is therefore quite important. Are they herbivores? Are they carnivores? Can they choose like human beings? It is thought that humans were helped in their evolution by their leap to eating meat. If the aliens never made this leap, then what's different about their home and their ecology that allows them to support such complicated bodies and cultures off of plants?

What are the predators like on their planet? Do they fight for access to the plants, or do they eat herbivores like on Earth? On a world where the other races developed eating vegetables alone, perhaps the predators don't actually eat herbivores. Maybe the predators are herbivores just like the alien's, but they kill to protect their food supplies.

Maybe nothing like Earth plants exist on their world. Perhaps they have a food chain like Earth's, but the lowest members, instead of eating plants as we think of them, eat some sort of fungal or algae sludge. These aliens would find grasslands and trees most disconcerting. If all of their plant life is close to the ground, they might be extremely claustrophobic when they can't see the sky. These are just some of the things to consider when it comes to food.

Example: Food can't be a matter of competition for Bill's aliens. He decides, instead, the species on this alien planet compete for sunlight and water resources. He decides that because of this, the dead tend to fall into the water, giving up

their bodily nutrients to those who drink in the future. He decides that the world has less water than Earth, but that most of the life and the civilization is clustered along the shores and that the coastlines are much more broken up than Earth's, giving a larger area upon which to live. He decides that plants tend to grow very, very high, and often block out the sun. Whereas human technology started with fire, these aliens' technology is based around gathering light. Their earliest tools were used for climbing. He changes his mind about their form, eliminating the legs altogether and giving them a series of multi-use tentacles. Since these aliens' ancestors were obviously arboreal, he gives them vicious claws. Although they still don't need to be that strong, they need to be strong enough to hoist themselves along the tops of trees. Falling is an issue. Suddenly, Bill has a threat for the aliens to evolve around. He'd been wondering how he was going to keep their physical stats from being unplayable, but now he knows. Predators aren't the enemy of this race. Gravity is. Not only will their arms have to be strong enough to carry them up a tree, but their structures will have to be strong enough to handle falls from large heights. This gives them a higher strength and constitution than Bill initially pictured.

1.1.2.2 CURSORIAL HUNTERS

Something humans take for granted is human endurance. We tend to think of animals as having greater endurance than us, but that's not exactly the case. Humans are cursorial hunters. Very few other animals are (wolves are one example of a cursorial hunter). A cursorial hunter can chase its prey all day long if has to (and it's properly conditioned). Humans have gotten so lazy over the years that most don't even realize that this is possible, but in ancient times a fit hunter could literally chase a deer to death.

So a natural question is: are your aliens cursorial? If they are, they'll have skills much like humans, where endurance is concerned. If they aren't, then skills such as distance running will be restricted to them. If they aren't hunters at all, it's still possible for them to be cursorial—the GM will just have to think of a good excuse as to why.

Example: Bill's aliens don't hunt. He has no reason why they should be cursorial aside from that, so they aren't. He marks down the distance running skill as restricted to them. He doesn't alter their exhaustion points or constitution, because these two stats have more to do with short-term endurance than long.

1.1.2.3 THE HUMAN-BASED SKILL SYSTEM

The skill system in *Spacemaster* is based around human beings. It evolved from the *Rolemaster* skill system, and in *Rolemaster* even nonhuman races are so like humans so as to make little difference. With aliens, however, skill differences aren't solely based on culture. There are biological considerations as well. Being a cursorial hunter, as mentioned above, is just one of the considerations. If an alien's body isn't designed well for running, then the sprinting skill should be restricted for them. If their senses are poor, then various alertness skills are going to be restricted for them. If they aren't arboreal like humans, the skills like climbing and acrobatics may very well be restricted for them. Once a good image of the alien's overall body has been devised, then the GM should go through this skill list, looking for every skill the game and deciding whether not the aliens are well-suited to its use. If they aren't, that should be marked as restricted. If they are, then it should stay the same. If they are very well suited, then they should be given the everyman trait in that skill.

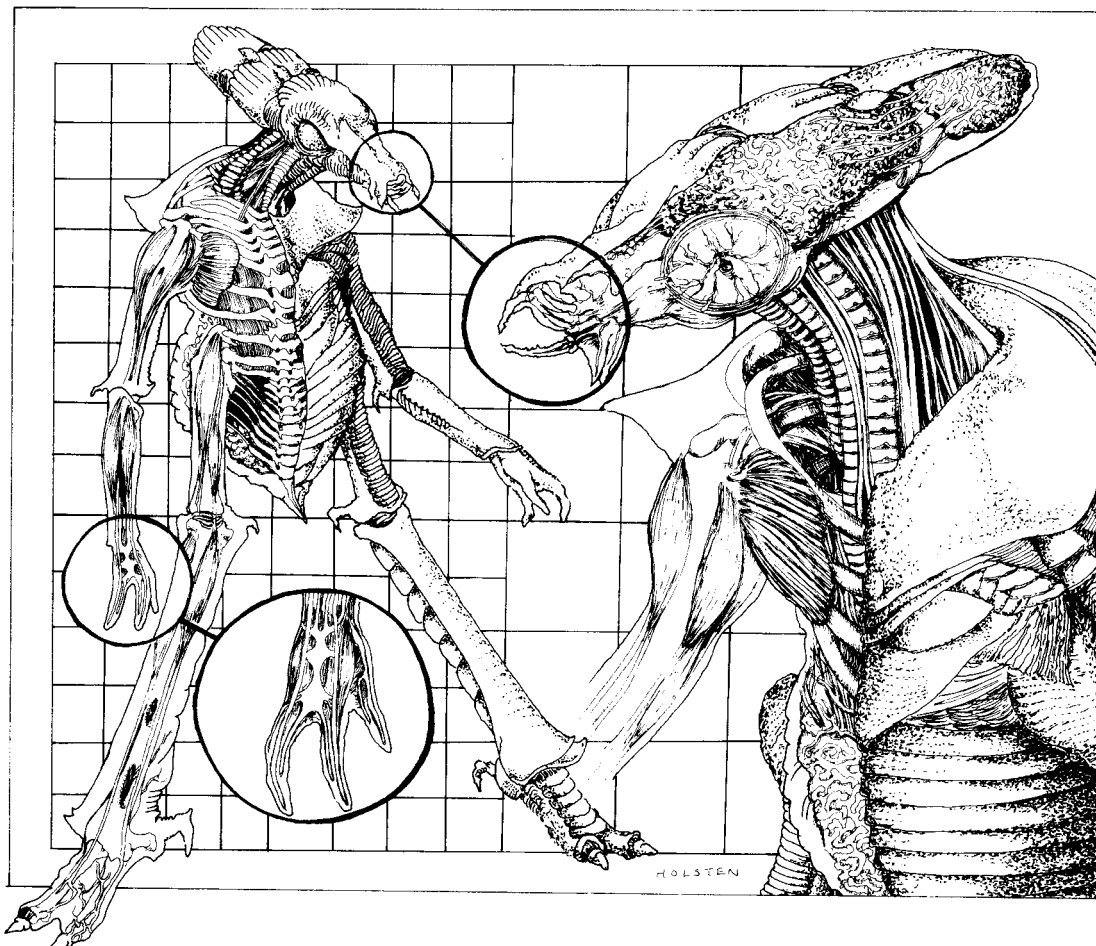
Example: *Bill's aliens are weak and they don't eat. They have much less energy than a human being. Bill decides to put the restricted trait immediately*

on speed-based skills, such as sprinting. He also makes them restricted when it comes to strength-based skills such as power lifting. He knows that they'll be good acrobatics, especially climbing. He makes them everyman at climbing. His initial ideas down, Bill goes through the skills one by one, comparing them to his vision of these aliens.

1.1.2.4 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Finally, look for other things to consider about the alien's biology. Are the aliens strong? Are they fast? Do they have special needs? It's time to start thinking about these things, even if it's not time to write down stats yet. At this stage, look for the aspects of their biology which make them unique. How does their hook affect how they live? How has this affected their evolution?

Example: *The first thing Bill thinks about when he thinks of these aliens is how much they depend upon the sun, air, and water. He decides they suffocate very, very quickly. Because of this he decides that they can float easily as a survival trait for when they fall into water. He determines that this will make swimming an everyman skill for them. He missed that in the last step, and decides to make new rules as to how quickly they would drown if held*



under the water. He also decides the sun is so important to their biologies that they don't just sleep at night, they hibernate. Also, because they receive the most sunlight at noon, their intelligence goes through an arc throughout the day. When they come out of hibernation at dawn, they're only about a quarter as smart as they are noon. They slowly build to their peak intelligence, then their intelligence wanes until they hit about a quarter of their full intellect at sunset. The same is true for dim environments (most indoor lighting qualifies as it's far dimmer than the sun). In the early parts of the evolution, they would nest in the high trees for protection, but would often climb down the trees to the water's edge for drinks. If they fell down into the trees, into the dark shade, they would quickly lose the ability to reason their way out of the situation. If they fell too deep into the darkness, their bodies would shut down, and they would slowly starve to death. Bill decides that this gives them another trait, one which will be beneficial. He decides that because their body has this shut down mechanism, they can use it voluntarily. Not only can they "play dead," allowing them to fool cursory medical examinations, but their bodies will also trigger this mechanism under extreme damage or dehydration. Whenever one of these aliens drops to negative hits or receives a death in X rounds critical, their body automatically goes into stasis. Rounds until death are multiplied by a factor of sixty. Bleeding slows by the same rate. Therefore, if one of these aliens is bleeding a hit a round, when they reach negative hits, they begin bleeding one every ten minutes. Bill's happy with this little trick of their biology, but decides to keep thinking about it in the back of his head, in case other ideas arise. Bill has one final thought. They don't just need any water, they need water rich in nutrients. Drinking distilled water does them about as much good as eating plain white rice does for a human, only their biology carries them down the road to malnutrition much faster.

1.1.3 PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Once the aliens' general biology is established, one can start to look at their psychology. There are many things that might affect their psychology, but as a starting place, try to look at the environment in which they live. If an alien lives in the deep forest, they might be agoraphobic. If they've never seen anything like a forest, that might be claustrophobic. If there certain types of predators on the planet, they might have fears and psychological problems attuned to certain traits of those predators.

But psychology doesn't have to be bad. A planet with a low instance of predation might not have evolved an aggressive sapient race. This type of world might create a

very peaceful race, that doesn't understand the concept of war. Maybe they do understand the concept of war, but they've developed such good diplomatic skills for working out their own problems that they produce master diplomats and arbitrators.

Some of the psychological traits might be pure artifice. Maybe the goal of the race is to have a group that is either extremely warlike or extremely peaceful. In that case, the GM might start with an end goal and then try to work back from there, filling in the details and background which makes that trait seem reasonable. Not everything has to evolve *from* the starting hook. It's more than okay to start with an end goal in mind and work backward from there.

Example: *Bill has some ideas of what his alien race is like already. He knows that they aren't afraid of the night, because that's just when they hibernate and they are really aware of it, but a deep dark place, especially one that you can fall into, is pretty terrifying to them.*

They're almost certainly not afraid of water either, but the desert would be something else. Bill decides that because of their never-ending battle for resources, they're not unfamiliar with the concept of war. They do not, however, have any fear of predators. Horror films mean very little to them, because the idea of being hunted just seems kind of silly.

Bill's happy with his starting place. Like all things to do with this alien race, he decides to leave the rest of the back of his mind for his subconscious to deal with. He is sure he'll have several more ideas and thoughts on the implications in the days to come.

1.1.4 PERCEPTION CONSIDERATIONS

Another important thing to consider is how the aliens perceive the world around them. Do they see in the visual spectrum? Do they see in a different spectrum entirely? Do they even see? How about hearing? Touch? Taste? Smell? Maybe they have a sense that we don't even know about. These are important considerations, because much of psychology is centered around perception.

For the most part, it's probably best to leave perception alone. It's a tough subject to tackle, since it's so ingrained in human psychology. If a GM feels up to the task, they can play around with the perception of their aliens. If the game's more on the fantastic side, then they can give the aliens more fantastic perceptions, such as x-ray vision. Otherwise, it's probably best to just leave it be.

Example: *Bill decides that his aliens see things much the same way as humans. They have the five basic senses, but they have no night vision to speak of. Their eyes are not used to ever operating in the dark, so if they come up with some way, through technology, of staying awake at night, there won't be able to see anything all.*

1.1.5 CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

By this time, the aliens should be shaping up nicely. It's now time to think about their culture. We know how they evolved. We have a general idea of their biological needs. Now it's time to start thinking about their society. How do their needs develop into their cultural makeup? For instance, if they're asexual, they won't have many of the cultural stigmas that humans do, since marriage and reproduction are such a driving force in human civilization. At this point, it's time to start getting creative. It's a long road from the aliens' bodies to their society.

If nothing immediately comes to mind, start with human culture. Think about the different societies of earth, how they interacted with one another and their neighbors. Then look at the hook. How does the hook change society? Does it make certain aspects of the culture more prominent? Does it push some to the background? A decent culture is one that changes certain aspects of human society to make something new and original. An outstanding culture challenges the basic preconceptions of what a society is.

Culture is, perhaps, the single most important thing about an alien race. The physical abilities of an alien are by far less important to how that alien interacts with the races in the universe around it. Do they seek constant war? Are they seclusionist? Do they not see any barriers in society at all, simply merging with whoever they come into contact with? Can they *perceive* other societies, or do they think that humans are just highly intelligent animals? These will form a large number of adventure hooks in a game, and so it needs to be well detailed and thought out.

Example: *Bill thinks long and hard on the subject of his aliens' culture. He knows that he's going to delve into their culture in-depth later on, but he wants to start with a firm foundation. First he thinks about the biology of his creatures. They suffer no predation, so they don't need to gather together for protection. They do, however, reproduce sexually, so at some point they have to get together to find mates. There's a high level of competition for the resources of their world, and so groups might fend better than individuals. They obviously do everything during the daytime, and probably only the plant life thrives at night on their world.*

Bill decides that their culture is based more on the family group than of the clan or tribe. They build diffuse cultural structures much like rural humanity. Each family stakes out their own territory, with a central gathering place somewhere in the middle. They return to the gathering place frequently, to find mates and to work out the issues of the society as a whole. They don't have the strong alpha-led pack concept that humans do. The group is only around because it serves the resource needs of the individual. While different groups of these aliens will attack other groups, this only happens during a

resource crisis. Crowds frighten these creatures. They don't like to be confined in a room with a lot of other sapient beings.

Bill's happy with where he is with the aliens' culture. He knows he'll get to it in more depth in later steps.

1.1.6 RELIGIOUS CONSIDERATIONS

Now that the rough culture has been outlined, it's time to start thinking about religion. As with most of these cultural steps, religion will be dealt with more specifically later, but at this point try to get a general idea of what religion is like. Do these aliens believe in a higher power? Do they personify the higher power into a form like themselves? Do they believe they were created by the higher power? Do they believe in a code of conduct? How does their biology change their concepts of their creator? These are some of the questions to begin asking.

There's a lot of room to be creative in this subject. The most basic premises, whether or not there is a creator and if so what is his/her form is *might* have very little to do with their biological construction. This is the time to lay down the foundations for religion. For instance, when creating a human culture, there are some preconceptions. Most human religions revolve around a single god or pantheon of gods.



Almost all of them involve creation myth. Often, human religion revolves around the alpha-led pack mentality, with a single charismatic leader and a flock of followers. From there, when creating an alien culture, start by defining the details.

With aliens, we're starting from scratch. If their society doesn't have the concept of a single charismatic leader, then their religions won't either. If they don't cluster in groups, they might not even have a true pantheon of gods, but more a group of local gods. If they have a much different form of reproduction, their concepts on creation and how that relates to the higher power may be radically different.

So this point, the goal is not to create a specific religion, but to outline the assumptions upon which all religions of this alien race evolve.

Example: *Bill sits down to think about the religion of his aliens. He doesn't want to just say they have no religion, he feels that would be a cop out. At this point, he's trying to outline the common trends in his aliens' belief systems. He starts with what he knows about their culture.*

They have no concept of a single charismatic leader. He decides that this means that they will not have a single creator god in their religions. They have no centralized authority, or least not much of one, so decides against a strong central pantheon as well. They do reproduce sexually, so concept of a creative force is not completely out of the question.

Bill decides that the predominant theme in their religion consists of thousands of local spirit gods. The god of certain waters, the god of a certain tree, the god of a pond is a general structure their religions tend to take. He decides that because it's not in their psychology to follow a central charismatic force, they don't perceive these gods as intelligent. From their point of view, the individual is the most intelligent creature the universe. Higher forces are merely that, forces. They don't think or reason, they're more like animals, serving the individual, than directors from on high.

He decides that he will weave a creation mythology into this. He decides that a common theme, maybe even the common theme of the religion is that these forces are creative elements, they just aren't aware of the fact. Whenever these spirit gods clash with each other for territory, they produce, as a byproduct, something living on the world. He decides to help tie this into their culture later, maybe even their sexuality. He likes where it's going. Two forces clashed, creating a lower life form. This, in turn needs a spirit god to serve it. This clashes with something else, creating a

higher life form. This requires a higher spirit god to serve it. Eventually, this rises to the creation of the aliens, and their own personal gods. He decides that the idea of personal gods almost takes the place of souls within their culture, but he intends to think about that more before he settles on the details. All in all, he has a good start, and is ready to move on to the next step.

1.1.7 MATING CONSIDERATIONS

At some point, the aliens' mating rituals need to be well defined. Do they mate? How do they reproduce? Does how they reproduce affect how they mate? At this point, the answers to these questions should be fairly self-evident. Think about what you know, think about what you don't know and fill in all the remaining details.

Example: *Bill knows that his aliens reproduce more or less like humans. He's also decides that sex and combat are not too terribly different for them. Both are the encounters of two individuals whose concepts of cooperation and not as highly evolved as humans. He decides that while violent, true reproduction between members of this species appears almost like an act of aggression to outsiders. However, he decides that since most sex crimes have more to do with power than with sexuality, this race has no such concept. The individual is the individual. Since they don't allow themselves to be led, they don't really think about exerting their power on others, either. While this is a rather mature subject, Bill decides to put it on his back burners and see if his gaming group looks like they could deal with it.*

1.1.8 LIFESPAN CONSIDERATIONS

The final subject is how long an alien lives. This will have a great deal of effect on how they view culture, religion, and science. Most of all, it determines how they relate to other races. If an alien lives much, much longer than the species with which it interacts, then they will view the shorter lived race much differently than if the shorter lived race lived longer than them. Aliens probably perceive time in relation to their own life span. If they can watch another race go through six of seven generations in the time it takes them to reach maturity, they aren't going to build deep emotional attachments to members of that race. Meanwhile, members of that race might form incredibly intense attachments to them. All this will affect how they interact with one another.

Example: *for game play considerations, Bill wants his aliens to live about the same amount of time as a human. Since nothing so far has indicated that shouldn't be the case, he decides to make it so and move on.*

1.1.9 CULTURES

Now that you have the general concept of the race, it's time to talk about individual cultures of a race. One of the biggest fallacies perpetuated in science fiction is the concept of single-world cultures (and often single-world weather and climate). In this fallacy, a single world has only one culture when the realities of evolution only allow that for extremely old civilizations. Communication is required to begin to smooth over cultural differences that inevitably arise from the early separations caused by the migrations of a race. Quick and affordable travel and many generations are required to finish this process.

In the early steps, you defined the general trends of the aliens' culture. Now it's times to attack the intricacies of individual cultures. A society with a single, pervading culture isn't particularly interesting.

There are, of course, exceptions. A multi-racial culture might only need a single predominant culture per race, to make things interesting. A race with a hive-mind might not have multiple cultures, due to the nature of their existence.

1.1.9.1 BUILDING CULTURES

The important question is how many cultures are necessary. The answer depends on the nature of the setting. If as a general rule, every major power should have at least two separate cultures. Three to five are probably better. More than that might be too much, at least for practical handling. There could be hundreds of cultures that don't come into the game.

What constitutes a major society depends on the scope of the setting. If the setting involves only a few warring worlds, then each world will probably be a major power. If the setting is one world, then each country or land mass will probably be its own power. If the setting is a large, interstellar space with multiple nations, then each of these nations would be a major power.

So once you've come to an idea of how many cultures the setting needs for the proper amount of internal strife, then all the steps, below for each of the cultures.

Example: *Bill decides that in his setting the aliens will only exist on one world. He therefore decides that there will be five major cultures on this planet with different views on how they relate to humanity. This will cause plenty of strife and internal conflict during the game, leading to a great many plot hooks.*

1.1.9.1.1 PHYSICAL RESOURCES

What are the required resources of the aliens? How do they use land? What do they need to survive? Are there any special resources needed for

their biology? What does their technology require (more on technology later)?

Example: *Bill's aliens have two major needs: their special water supply and sunlight. This means that their most valuable resources are water and high ground near water. Because of the heavy plant growth on their planet, this means trees near standing water. They can't collect water from rainfall because they need it to be rich in the nutrients they need for survival. This forces the heaviest population to these narrow bands of coast and isolated pools on their world. As technology increases, they can spread out farther and farther inland, but these are the resources that are most important for their survival.*

The first culture Bill designs is located on the largest continent on the planet. They are rich when it comes to water and sunlight, and even the basic building blocks of technology like fossils fuels and common minerals. They are poorest in the more exotic minerals necessary to sustain advanced technology, most notably uranium. This has caused tensions with the nearby culture, as they used to allow independent interests to mine for these resources. Lately they've closed their borders.

1.1.9.1.2 SUBSISTENCE PATTERNS

For most races, at least most that would make it into a roleplaying game, subsistence patterns will look much like those of humans. Only for the more alien of the alien races will there be a radical departure from the norms of subsistence.

What do the aliens eat? How does what they eat affect their subsistence patterns? Does this lead to unusual means of gathering food? If so, do they use these means? How do they affect the culture?

Example: *Bill's aliens have a slightly different means of nourishing themselves than most races. They need air, which is readily available, light, which is readily available as well, and water from stagnant pools. The amount of life that a single body of water can support is determined by how much a single alien drinks in a day and the amount of rainfall that falls onto the watershed of that body of water in an average day.*

Since their consumption involves simple drinking, then their subsistence pattern is a "mixed economy" where they gather water from natural sources and also export it to drier regions. They also have several "artificial" water sources, reservoirs they've built and then piled dead things inside (a habit that will probably thoroughly disgust humans) to enrich with vital nutrients.

1.1.9.1.3 VALUES AND KINSHIP

It's important to know what unique values the culture has. Many of the values will be similar in subject (though they might be completely opposed) to human values. Things like lines of succession and the rule of law will probably be important to many races. The GM should try to flesh out the aliens' value system as fully as possible.

What are their philosophies on war? What do they think about slavery and discrimination? What are their thoughts on property? Lineage? Murder? What constitutes personal rights? Lying? Sexual acts? These topics should be explored as thoroughly as possible.

Example: *Bill is ready to think about the culture's values now. He already knows they value the individual above everything else, so most of their laws protect the individual, although very few are actually needed (since they only gather in family units, which self-regulate). They tend to commit atrocities on a much larger scale than simple theft or murder. They are too self-centered, as a race, to be*

discriminatory: each individual places himself above all others, and they don't care if someone who isn't them has different generic traits as well. They steal, but other people don't typically matter enough to kill. If they did, however, it would be wrong. They write wills, but they only slightly value their descendants more than others, so they inheritance could go to anyone, but a mate has a slight advantage in this area. They value the rights of the individual above everything else, and since their culture is fairly diffuse, they rarely have to write laws about violating the rights of others. They don't particularly care about lying or deceiving, unless property theft is involved. Sex is a selfish matter, but it never gets out of hand. All in all, they have as little to do with others as possible, and they won't understand the tribal philosophies of humans when they meet them.

1.1.9.1.4 LANGUAGE

The first thing to do is determine *how* the aliens communicate. Is it verbal or though other, more exotic means like visual, somatic or chemical cues? Maybe they even use telepathy. Once that's determined, then explore the implications of storing information in this medium.

Example: *Bill's aliens speak like humans, though their languages are radically different. He decides that they have a high rate of literacy. He takes some time and maps out the language tree for their race.*

1.1.9.1.5 RELIGION, MYTHS AND HISTORY

You've already defined their basic philosophies on religion. On subsequent passes for other cultures pay attentions to how the different religions would interact, and how their beliefs might cause conflict.

Example: *Bill's first culture follows a fairly straightforward interpretation of their base beliefs. Each family has their own shrines to their own local spirit gods, and appeases them daily. They bury their dead in water, to nourish the future generations. Families that have their own private water source usually dispose of their dead there, so that their flesh will nourish the family. The practices of this religion are fairly straightforward, based on personal spiritualism. Their only elaborate ceremony is for the dead, because they find the loss of an individual the greatest tragedy.*



1.1.9.1.6 TECHNOLOGY

Determine the technology levels of the culture. Use *Tech Law* for a breakdown by tech level and category. Rate the culture on each category.

Example: *Bill decides on tech level 17 for a baseline on his culture. He rates them slightly high (18) on communication and slightly lower (16) on engineering and arms and armor.*

1.1.9.1.7 CLASS SPECIALIZATION

Determine how this culture handles classes. Do they have any classes at all? If they do, is class based on birth? Merit? Money? Age? Some combination thereof?

Example: *Bill decides that the aliens are a purely capitalistic society. All class is based on personal wealth, not that there is much thought of class. Corporations exist, but telecommuting is popular, so as to not have to spend a lot of time in crowded buildings. Businesses where telecommuting isn't possible, such as in manufacturing, tend to take up a lot more space than a human business, to give the workers room to be more or less in peace. The structure is much like the Great Step Forward the Chinese attempted; only this one works.*

1.1.9.1.8 ART, ARCHITECTURE AND SYMBOLISM

This section takes some thought. You know quite a bit about the culture, now it's time to decide how they build and express themselves.

Example: *Bill decides that his culture builds in the tops of trees, and their architecture still reflects this. They build high even when starting on the ground, and often build on stilts or piers because they prefer single-story structures. Lighting is vitally important, of course, and skylights are popular even in an age of full-spectrum artificial lighting. They build with wood (or rather, their planet's equivalent), when possible. The nature of these building materials makes them very aromatic, which the aliens find pleasant but humans find nauseating.*

He then sets about sketching out some basic architectural designs and, being an art major, some art styles as well. Finally he sketches out some of the animals on the world, assigning them symbolic cultural meanings (like weasels, foxes and serpents on Earth).

1.1.9.1.9 POLITICS AND WELFARE

Next decide on the politics of the aliens. This can be a big subject. Feel free to think outside the box. If your aliens diverge radically from the norm politically, this will only make them more interesting.

Example: *Bill's aliens believe in small government. Their government could best be described as a meritocracy, where the most talented statesmen are elected by their peers. Since these aliens have no desire to rule one another, egos rarely get involved. Often, members try to talk down their abilities so that they don't have to do the job.*

Otherwise, their culture is purely capitalistic. They care little for the poor, but create a bare minimum of laws to make certain that everyone who needs medical care can't be turned down, even if this means going into debt for the rest of their lives. They care little about homelessness (they aren't that put out by being homeless) and anyone that can get to a faucet needs no more food than that, so the concept of welfare is foreign to them.

1.1.10 GENERATING THE RACE

Next, generate the actual race. See below.



2.0 RACE GENERATION

A science fiction universe can be populated by an infinite variety of races. It would be impossible for anyone to catalog every conceivable race that a player might wish to choose for his character. Rather than limit the available choices in *Spacemaster*, this section along with the material in *Future Law* allows a Gamemaster to design any race of which he can conceive. A GM may spend points on the racial categories and purchase unique features for the race.

The most important part of creating a new race is to have a firm idea of what the race is like before you start purchasing characteristics. If you can see how members the race interact with each other, with other races, even to nature, then you will have a firmer grasp on what talents and flaws to purchase.

Once the race is created, you should compare it to the other races in your world. Make certain that the new race balances well with the other races. Finally, write as detailed a description about your new race as you can. This will help to clarify the race in the minds of your players.

Example: *Bill decides that it's time to create the aliens he designed in section 1.0. He decides to call them the Par.*

RACE GENERATION PROCEDURE

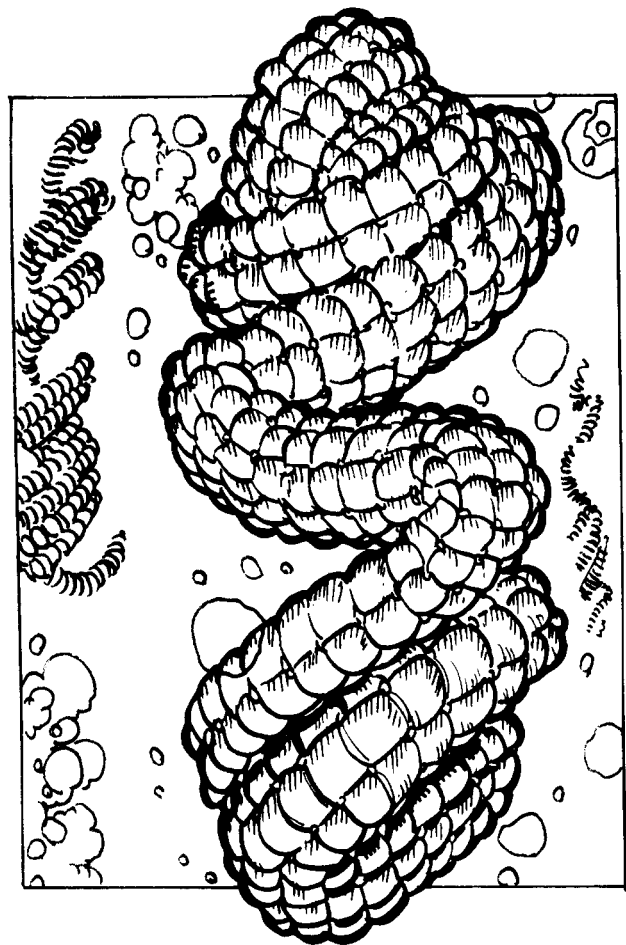
The following are the steps necessary to create your own race.

- 1) Choose the skill progression for the race's Body Development skill.
- 2) Choose the skill progression for the race's Mind Points.
- 3) Select a lifespan for the race.
- 4) Apply modifiers to the race's Resistance Rolls that you feel are appropriate.
- 5) Determine the period of time that must pass before the soul departs the body.
- 6) Choose the number of languages members of the race knows. Choose starting languages and the written and spoken ranks.
- 7) Determine the stat bonuses, if any, the race possesses.
- 8) Decide on the number of hours the race needs to sleep to become refreshed.
- 9) Decide if the race has any endurance bonuses and if so, what kind (bonus exhaustion points, multiple days without sleep, or both).
- 10) Decide if the race will be unusually large or small.
- 11) Select the recovery multiplier for the race.
- 12) Choose the race type for the race. The race type determines how fast the race's mental stats deteriorate after death.

- 13) Decide on the total number of skill ranks the race receives during its adolescent development. This includes hobby ranks. Distribute the skill ranks across their appropriate skills and skill categories.
- 14) Decide if the race has any Everyman skills and what they are.
- 15) Decide if the race has any Restricted skills and what they are.
- 16) Select the available hobby skills for the race
- 17) Decide if the race has any natural talents or flaws and purchase them.
- 18) Total up the point cost and determine the races available talent points.

2.1 STATISTICAL MODIFIERS

The following statistical modifiers apply all of the game mechanics to your developed race. Most of the modifiers have a median value that costs zero points. If you want your race to be stronger than the norm in a category, it will cost you points. If you want your race to be weaker than the norm, this will give you points.



BODY DEVELOPMENT

Some races are harder than others. This is reflected by the number of hits each rank of Body Development gives you. You may choose the skill progression level for your particular race.

Skill Progression	Point Cost
0 • 6 • 2 • 2 • 1	-17
0 • 6 • 3 • 1 • 1	-15
0 • 6 • 3 • 2 • 1	-10
0 • 6 • 4 • 2 • 1	0
0 • 7 • 3 • 2 • 1	5
0 • 6 • 5 • 2 • 1	10
0 • 7 • 4 • 2 • 1	13

Example: Because the Par are slightly weaker than the average race, Bill decides to purchase a Body Development skill progression at 0 • 6 • 2 • 2 • 1 for a cost of -17 points.

MIND POINTS

Some races are naturally more psychically inclined than others. You may choose what your Mind Point progression is.

Skill Progression	Point Cost
0 • 2 • 1 • 1 • 1	-25
0 • 3 • 2 • 1 • 1	-20
0 • 4 • 3 • 2 • 1	-10
0 • 5 • 3 • 2 • 2	0
0 • 6 • 4 • 3 • 2	5
0 • 6 • 5 • 4 • 3	10
0 • 6 • 6 • 4 • 3	13
0 • 7 • 6 • 5 • 4	15

Example: The Par are more psychically inclined than some of the other races. Bill chooses the 0 • 7 • 6 • 5 • 4 Mind Point progression for a cost of 15 points.

LIFESPAN

Some races are known for their longevity, others are known for their brevity of life. You may choose how long your natural lifespan is.

Approximate Lifespan (in Years)	Point Cost
40-80	-5
81-100	0
101-300	3
301-500	5
501-800	7
801-1200	9
1201-1700	11
1701-2300	13
Immortal	15

Example: The Par live a typical lifetime, between 95 and 100 years on average. This costs no points.

RESISTANCE ROLLS

Certain races are more resistant or susceptible to the various hazards they encounter. You may choose a bonus or penalty to apply to your Resistance Rolls. You may choose one per RR category. Available categories are Psychic Power, Disease, Poison, and Fear.

RR Bonus	Point Cost
-5 extra	-10 (each)
-10	-10
-5	-5
+0	0
+5	3
+10	5
+15	7
+20	10
+30	13
+40	16
+50	20
+60	25
+70	35
+80	50
+90	70
+100	95

Example: The Par are slightly less susceptible to psionics than normal. They receive a +10 modifier to their Resistance Rolls. This costs Bill a total of 5 points.



SOUL DEPARTURE

When a person receives enough damage to kill them, their soul does not depart their body for a certain amount of time. Different races' souls leave the body at different times. You may choose the amount of time the soul remains in the body after receiving a mortal blow.

Rounds Until Soul Departure	Point Cost
1	-25
2	-20
3	-15
4	-11
5	-9
6	-7
7	-5
8	-4
9	-3
10	-2
11	-1
12	0
13	2
14	4
15	6
17	8
18	10
19	15
+1 round	+5 (each)

Example: It takes around 2 minutes for the soul of a Par to leave its body. You have chosen 12 rounds for the soul to depart. There is no cost for this.

STARTING LANGUAGES

Contact with other races and cultures often results in exposure to languages other than your native one. Some races interact with many different races and cultures and consequently they speak many languages. You may choose how many initial languages you speak.

Number of Languages	Point Cost
1	-5
2	0
3	5
4	7
5	10

You start with 8 spoken ranks and 4 written ranks in your native language. Any additional languages you speak will begin at five spoken and zero written. You may increase your spoken or written ranks by paying 1 point for each additional rank. You may receive 1 point for each rank you reduce spoken or written.

Example: The Par must speak many languages to interact with their disparate society. They start with 4 languages. This costs 7 points. Bill must also choose which languages the Par speak and at what level. He decides that they speak their native language at a rank of S8/W7, which costs 3

points. They also speak another language from their world at S8/W5, which costs 8 points (for the 3 spoken ranks over 5 and the five written ranks), another at S5/W5, which costs 5 points, and the fourth at S5/W5, again for 5 points. The total cost for Bill's starting languages is 28 points.

STAT BONUSES

A bonus may be applied to any of your stats. These bonuses represent a race's advantages or disadvantages compared to other races. You may also select a stat bonus to represent an individual who is stronger, smarter, or more agile for his race. A character can have no more than two stat bonuses applied to a single stat (one for the race and one for the character).

Bonus	Point Cost
-10	-45
-9	-35
-8	-30
-7	-25
-6	-20
-5	-13
-4	-10
-3	-7
-2	-5
-1	-3
0	0
+1	3
+2	5
+3	7
+4	10
+5	25
+6	45
+7	55
+8	65
+9	73
+10	80

Every point bonus above ten costs an additional ten points. Every negative point penalty below negative ten grants an additional ten points.

Example: The Par are quick and agile, stemming from their arboreal ancestry. They are good thinkers and can figure out problems quite quickly. They are not very imposing creatures but are fairly undisciplined. Bill decides their stat bonuses will look like this:

Ag	+4	10 points
Con	-2	-5 points
Re	+2	5 points
SD	+2	5 points
In	+2	5 points
Pr	-2	-5 points
Qu	+2	5 points
St	-8	-30 points

The total cost for the stat bonuses is -10 points.



REQUIRED SLEEP

This determines the number of hours you must sleep to be fully rested. This also determines the amount of time it takes to recover any spent Mind Points. You may choose to either sleep or go into a deep meditation for the specified number of hours to become refreshed.

Hours Required	Point Cost
12	-15
10	-10
8	-5
6	0
4	5
2	10
1	20

Example: *The Par require an average of 12 hours sleep each night to be fully rested in the morning (and their dead unconscious at the time), which costs -15 points.*

ENDURANCE

There are races that can drive themselves on longer than others. They may have more Exhaustion Points, or they may not need to sleep quite as often. You may choose if your race receives additional Exhaustion Points or if they may go more than one day without sleeping.

Additional Exhaustion Point	Point Cost
+0 Exhaustion Points	0
+10 Exhaustion Points	3
+20 Exhaustion Points	7
+30 Exhaustion Points	12

Number of Days Without Sleep	Point Cost
May go 1 day without sleep	0
May go 2 days without sleep	5
May go 3 days without sleep	10

Example: *Climbing is difficult work. It can really tire you out, since that would be the Par's primary mode of transportation, they need some extra Exhaustion Points. Bill feels that 20 extra Exhaustion Points is the right amount. This costs 7 points. Bill knows they need to sleep every night, though.*

SIZE

The various races of the world come in many different sizes. When creating a race, it is assumed that the average male of the race will fall between 3'6" and 7'6". If you wish your race to either be larger or smaller than this, you must purchase either Giantism (see *Future Law*) or Dwarfism (see *Future Law*).

Height	Point Cost
Smaller than 3'6"	5, 10, or 15
3'6" - 7'6"	0
Taller than 7'6"	10, 15, or 25

Example: *The Par are small. The average male of the race is a foot and a half tall. He gives then Dwarfism (Minor), effecting their stats even more. This costs 10.*

RECOVERY MULTIPLIER

Different races heal at different rates. Hardier races will recover from a wound faster than a weaker race. The recovery multiplier is a measure of how much faster or slower wounds take to heal (i.e., a multiplier on Recovery Times).

Multiplier	Point Cost
3 times normal	-45
2 times normal	-25
1.5 times normal	-10
Normal recovery	0
.9 times normal	3
.75 times normal	5
.5 times normal	10

Example: *The Par are a tad fragile compared to humans. Consequently, it takes them longer to heal from their wounds due to the lack of as many recuperative systems as other races have. It takes 1.5 times longer for a Par to heal a wound than it would for someone of a race with a normal wound recovery rate. This stat multiplier has a cost of -10 points.*

RACE TYPE

Your race type determines how quickly your mental stats deteriorate after death. A race with a lower race type will typically retain more of its mental faculties if that member is some how revived

Race Type	Point Cost
1	10
2	5
3	0
4	-5
5	-10

Example: *There is nothing atypical about the Par after death so Bill chooses a race type of 3, which costs no points.*

ADOLESCENT SKILL RANKS

What is work to one race may be a hobby to another. There may be skills everyone from one race learns as they grow up, but another race would find the same skills totally useless. Racially common skills are represented by adolescent skill ranks. You may choose how many total skill ranks your race receives during the adolescence part of character creation. You must then break down the total number of skill ranks into the applicable skill categories, depending on what your race values the most. You will also wish to reserve some ranks to be used as hobbies. The Gamemaster may change your distribution of adolescence ranks if he feels they do not reflect the desires and needs of your race. The point cost is based on the number of ranks you need.

Number of Ranks	Point Cost
Up to 55	5 (total)
56-65	1 point per additional rank
66-80	2 points per additional rank
81-100	3 points per additional rank
+1 rank	5 points per additional rank

Example: *Bill feels that the Par have developed a widely diverse culture, one that embraces many skills. Having grown up in this culture, a Par would have developed many different skills. Bill feels that a total of 80 ranks is necessary for a Par's adolescence. The total cost for those 80 ranks would be 45 points. This is broken down like this; the first 55 ranks cost 5 points total. Ranks 56-65 cost 1 point each for a total of 10 points. Ranks 66-80 cost 2 points each for a total of 30 points, resulting in a grand total of 5+10+30=45 points. Bill then looks through the various skills and skill categories in the Adolescence Rank Table and spreads the 80 skill ranks among the different skills and skill categories. He decides to leave 15 of the 80 ranks as Hobby ranks to reflect a par's diverse hobbies.*

EVERYMAN SKILLS

These are skills that are common to your race or culture, but might be uncommon to other races and cultures. Virtually every member of your society would be skilled in these areas. You start off with no Everyman skills, but you may purchase up to thirty skills that count as Everyman skills for your race. You may choose no more than one OB skill as Everyman and you may choose no more than one DB skill as Everyman.

Number of Everyman Skills	Point Cost
1-10 skills	1 point per skill
11-20 skills	2 points per skill
21-30 skills	3 points per skill

Example: *Virtually every Par knows climbing. This Everyman skill costs one point.*



RESTRICTED SKILLS

There are some skills that a particular race or culture would not need and therefore not normally develop. These skills are considered Restricted skills. Very few of your race or culture would know how to perform this skill. You start out with no Restricted skills.

Number of Restricted Skills	Point Cost
1-5 skills	-2 points per skill
6-10 skills	-1 point per skill
11+ skills	0 points per skill

Example: The Par are poor distance runners. Distance running is a Restricted skill for a cost of -2 points.

HOBBIES

Your race or culture would view many different skills as hobbies. These are skills that are not necessary to the survival of your society, but make life more enjoyable and dynamic. You can choose what your race considers to be a hobby. There is a suggested range of between 25 and 40 hobby skills. It is strongly recommended that a race has no more than one OB skill, one DB skill, or one Spell list as a hobby. The GM may add or remove some of your skill choices as he sees fit. There is no cost for selecting skills as hobby skills.

Example: Bill looks through the various skill lists and selects 30 different skills that the Par can choose as their hobby skills, of course, at no cost.

TALENTS AND FLAWS

The last step is to determine any racial talents or flaws that are common to all members of the race. See *Future Law* for a complete listing of talents and flaws and their associated point costs. These may be physical talents, such as Natural Weapon, or mental ones such as Delusion. Remember this is a talent or flaw that the entire race possesses.

Example: Next, Bill looks over all of the talents and flaws to pick out any of them that fit particularly well with his conception of the Par. Natural Weapon (claws) (15 points) and the hibernation ability (where it comes to damage) are most appropriate. The later is one he made up himself and he gives it a cost of 10.

TOTALING THE POINTS

The final step in creating a race is totaling all of the points that have been spent. This total will determine how many talent points a par character has to spend on various talents and flaws.

Total Points	Available Talent Points
Below -76	65
-75-25	60
26-75	55
76- 100	50
101- 125	45
126-150	40
151- 175	35
176-200	30
201 -225	25
226-250	20
251 -275	15
276-300	10
301 -325	5
26 or more	0

Example: Finally, Bill totals up all of the point costs—some categories in which 0 points are allocated are not listed. This determines how many talent points Bill has to purchase stat modifiers, talents, flaws, status, items, and wealth for Par characters.

Body Development0 • 6 • 2 • 2 • 1 -17 points

Mind Points 0 • 7 • 6 • 5 • 4 15 points

Resistance Rolls:

Psychic Powers +10 5 points

Languages 28 Points

Ag +4 10 points

Con -2 -5 points

Re +2 5 points

SD +2 5 points

In +2 5 points

Pr -2 -5 points

Qu +2 5 points

St -8 -30 points

Required Sleep 12 hours -15 points

Endurance +20 Exhaustion 7 points

Dwarfism (Minor) 10 points

Recovery multiplier 1.5 times -10 points

Adolescence Skills 80 ranks 45 points

Everyman skills climbing 1 point

Restricted skills distance running -2 points

Natural Weapon 15 points

Hibernation when damaged 10 points

Total Cost for the Par: 82 points

This would mean that each Par character would have 50 points to spend on talents.

