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The Whole Package III by D. T. Butchino

Fantasy and science fiction worlds are commonly populated with a plethora of species that range from human variations to the strange and unique. Though it's commonly not visualized as such, many races from science fiction or fantasy could easily be used to spice up any campaign. By taking a species from one genre and using it another, GMs have a way to add new aliens and change the genre conventions a bit.

Below is a quartet of species packages. Each has some notes on using them in either fantasy or science fiction… but please, don't let that limit them to just those campaigns. The species below could easily be incorporated in a *Champions*, *Dark Champions* and even a *Ninja Hero* campaign with a bit of minor tweaking.

Centaurians

Commonly called "Grays" among popular, modern fiction, the Centaurians are roughly human-sized and humanoid in shape. With bulbous, bald heads and large pools of darkness for eyes, these odd beings can appear both frightening and fascinating at the same time. Akin to humanity, Centaurians have some variation among them, though the variation is mild. Most have a grayish colored skin, though the hue may be slightly different than others. They also have multi-jointed digits, usually numbering four (including the thumb) but there are deviations there as well.

Fantasy: Though commonly seen in science fiction settings, Centaurians would make a great alternative to the stereotypical elves that appear in common fantasy games. An elder race, perhaps these strange visitors are native to the world and it's humanity that is alien… or better yet, perhaps they're the next evolutionary jump for humanity (or elves for that matter).

Because of the physical frailties, Centaurians are rarely warriors, opting for more cerebral professions instead. If sciences exist in your fantasy world, it's very possible that a Centaurian is involved in them, whether it is alchemy or more fringe science for the time.

Science Fiction: Natural to the science fiction genre, the Centaurians have studied Earth for quite some time, waiting for its inhabitants'
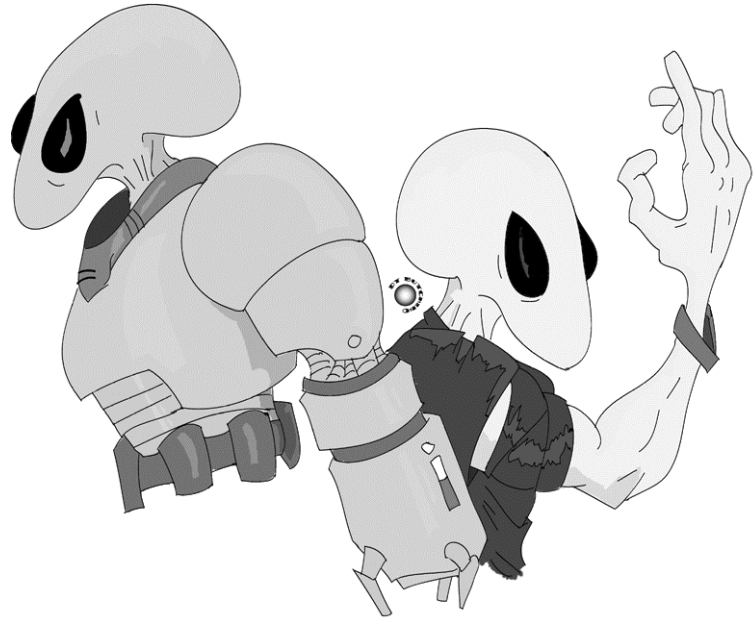
eventual maturity. In an odd twist, like the fantasy example above, perhaps they could prove to be the progenitors to humans that were once the fabled Atlanteans.

Unlike in fantasy, in science fiction there are few boundaries the Centaurians can't defeat. With their intelligence and the technology available, these frail beings could easily be scientists or fighter pilots… doctors or armor-clad mercenaries. The possibilities are endless.

CENTAURIAN PACKAGE DEAL	
Cost	Ability
-2	-2 STR
-4	-2 CON
5	+5 INT
6	+3 EGO
11	Telepathic: Telepathy 4d6; No Range (-½), Communication Only (-¼)
16	**Total**
	Options
37	*Psi-Sniffer:* Detect Psionics 11- (Unusual Group), Discriminatory, Increased Arc of Perception (360°), Range, Sense, Targeting, Tracking
12	*Telekinetic:* Telekinesis (10 STR), Fine Manipulation; Concentration (½ DCV Throughout, -½), Gestures (Throughout, -½)

artwork by D. T. Butchino

THE *ANALYZE* SKILL IN PRACTICE

Obviously, the *Analyze* Skill as shown here is not used by all sensor operators, since it doesn't appear in the Package Deals for United Earth Navy Science and Sensors (*Alien Wars*, page 94), Imperial Navy Science and Sensors (*Terran Empire*, page 116), or other professions for which it might be appropriate. This is because those books were written quite some time before this article made its usefulness apparent.

Even if this rule becomes official, the Skill will probably not be included in those Package Deals. Those Packages show the minimum that a sensor operator could have; only individuals with career intentions would have the *Analyze* Skill. New recruits and those just "passing the time" through their tour of duty wouldn't have the Skill; nor would those whose fields of specialty keep them in the laboratory more than at the sensor console.

Sensors? Which Sensors? by Bob Greenwade

In HERO Games' science-fiction settings (*Terran Empire* and *Alien Wars*), starship sensors are represented using a Variable Power Pool. As mentioned in *The Ultimate Vehicle* (page 159) and *Star Hero* (pages 200-202), this is the most practical way of building the systems in many science fiction settings; otherwise the builder would have to think of every possible sensor for his ship, then build – and buy – each sensor separately.

For those intimately familiar with the *HERO System* – especially the *Enhanced Senses* suite of Powers – this isn't too much of a challenge. Whenever something needs to be detected, an appropriate Detect can be built on the fly, complete with any necessary Modifiers.

However, not all *HERO System* players are so fortunate as to have such a familiarity with the system. Some are new to the system; some just aren't quite so good at quickly building things with game mechanics; others may be able but understandably unwilling to go to the trouble. For such players, this list of common possibilities should help.

But first, a couple of minor rules expansions should make the listings more usable (and in some cases more intelligible).

Operating the Sensor Pool

Changing (or "reconfiguring") the sensors in a Sensor Pool works just as with any other VPP, taking between 1 Turn and 1 Minute in a noncombat situation with no requirement for a Skill Roll (as described on pages 209-210 of the *HERO System 5th Edition*).

To change the Sensor Pool in combat, the GM may allow characters to take a new Skill, *Combat Sensor Operations* (essentially a form of the *Power* Skill, though it may be treated as a Skill in its own right).

COMBAT SENSOR OPERATIONS

This Intellect Skill works specifically to operate the Sensor Pool under combat conditions. With a successful Combat Sensor Operations Roll, the character can change the Powers in the Sensor Pool as a Full Phase action, in accordance with the rules for such actions on pages 209-210 of the *HERO System 5th Edition*.

At the GM's option, Combat Sensor Operations may be "broken down" into categories in a manner similar to Systems Operation (*Star Hero*, page 47). The only corresponding 2-point categories would be Communication Systems and Sensor Systems – Medical Sensors would go into the latter category. In the Hero Universe systems are also broken up by civilization (such as Terran

Communication Systems or Mon'dabi Sensor Systems) so there would still be plenty of opportunities for expansion.

OTHER POSSIBLE USES OF COMBAT SENSOR OPERATIONS

The GM may also allow a character with this Skill to overcome certain penalties for sensor use in combat, obtain a sensor lock, or perform certain other tasks in combat.

According to the *HERO System 5th Edition* (page 229), the GM may apply certain Skill Roll Modifiers (on page 28 of the same book) to PER Rolls, including a penalty of -1 to -3 for combat conditions. With a successful Combat Sensor Operations roll, the character can overcome some or all of this penalty. Combat Sensor Operations can be handled just like a complementary Skill, but only to overcome penalties for using sensors in combat – it should never be easier to use equipment in combat than out. The GM may also apply this bonus in similar fashion to other penalties.

The existing rules for obtaining a sensor lock (see *Star Hero*, page 216) only require that the character be able to make a normal PER Roll using a ship's sensor equipment. A character with this Skill may use it instead. The GM may decide to require that Combat Sensor Operations be used instead of a normal PER Roll, but this isn't required; the Skill still has the advantage of having Skill Levels and sometimes even Combat Skill Levels available, options not available with a straight PER Roll.

The GM may also find other useful applications for Combat Sensor Operations. For example, it may be a complementary Skill for Systems Operation when trying to use the sensors in combat conditions (again, only to overcome penalties for using them in combat), for Find Weakness, or for certain combat applications of Analyze.

Existing Skills

Besides Combat Sensor Operations, a few existing Skills can serve a sensor operator well.

ANALYZE

Though most of the sensors here have the *Analyze* Adder, they also have the option of being activated without it. An operator with the right form of the *Analyze* Skill can examine the raw information himself, overcoming this lack, treating any sensor with Discriminatory but not Analyze as though it does have Analyze.

The most common form of the Skill for sensor operators is *Analyze Sensor Data*. This allows the character to analyze any type of