

The Homeworld Project

An Astral Space Opera RPG

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To Build Worlds

Beneath and beyond the world of experience, is another place. Worlds spinning in a void whose expanse is that of humanity's hopes, fears, and dreams. And beyond lies something else, spaces as alien as any distant star. This is Astral Space, an inner realm as dangerous and wonderful as mankind dreams outer space to be. It is crafted from ideas, desires, and most importantly imagination.

In Astral Space to hope is to bring with you a grain of potential, and to strive is to seek to build that grain, layer by layer. Over the course of your journeys these grains grow like pearls, becoming a world crafted by your dreams and your fears. Until you've left your mark indelibly upon the face of Astral Space, perhaps finding a homeworld of your own.

Homeworld Project is a roleplaying game set in Astral Space, a place of adventure, terror, and mystery. In Homeworld Project most of you will take on the roles of the characters, the protagonists of the action, during the game. One of you, called the GM, will instead manage the reflection of the characters in the Astral Space, acting as antagonists and foils. But everyone playing the game will have the opportunity to take on other roles, called manifests, incarnations of the forces of Astral Space, whether from the characters or their reflections. Lastly, the characters can have or share one or more ships. Ships act much like characters, with their own personality and place within the action.

Ebb and Flow

Homeworld Project is a RPG that is built somewhat differently than most. It is a dynamic game where each piece of the game interacts with other pieces, cycles building on cycles. So it is especially helpful to understand how all the pieces fit together,

before delving into each one.

One of the starting places is the action. The action is where everything interesting occurs, a flow of events, people, ships, and plots. If you are in the action then you can be influenced by others in the action. And if you are not, you cannot do anything consequential. One of the important parts of the action are manifests. These are people, groups, ships, or events introduced by a player or the GM to help drive things. In addition to manifests, the action also has the characters and ships directly belonging to the players.

At any given point of the action there can be a bout, a contest between any two elements in the action. The outcome of a bout is determined by dice, as well as aspects of the characters, ships, and manifests involved. And the result of a bout is called a consequence. This gives some difficulty or after effect to the loser, as determined by the bout's winner. How much of these consequences someone or something can bear before being driven out of the action is based on their importance.

One way of affecting a bout is to spend the layers of a grain (if you are a player) or a reflection (if you are the GM). That can change the dice you compare to determine the winner of the bout. But if that changes a die to a 12 it will increase that grain or reflection, and if it changes a die to a 1 it will decrease that grain or reflection. In some ways this is the purpose of the bouts. While consequences are the immediate outcome, the longer term goals are to raise a grain to thirteen layers or to diminish it to zero layers.

What ties this together is the fact that grains and reflections are not independent. Indeed each grain has a reflection, which shares the same number of layers. Grains describe inner or personal aspects of a character or ship. On the other hand, reflections are the global scale counterparts. So your Quest for Vengeance can be mirrored in The Pirate

Fleet that slew your family.

Even as your grains and reflections change, each time a 1 or a 12 appears the game moves toward a partial climax, called a Turning Point. Turning Points occurs periodically, and reset the expended grains and reflections, as well as allowing the GM to describe a global change to the action. Everyone can be affected, and some will even be removed from the action. Then play continues once more, eventually building to a new Turning Point.

A Turning Point occurs because each time a 1 or a 12 appears two numbers are brought closer together. These numbers affect the dice as they are used. The higher of these numbers starts at 11, and any die showing that number or above will increase by one up to 12 on its next use. Likewise the lower number starts at 2, and causes dice to reduce. Grains can change this, to a point. A grain layer allows you to skip a use of your die, so if the low number was 4 and you rolled a 3, then you could skip the 3 and the 2, and go directly to 1.

But 1's and 12's cannot be skipped, and they roll randomly for their next use. Also, high rolls win bouts. So you can be stuck at a low number for several bouts, or spend layers to jump to 1 directly. But if you do, you will be weakening that grain or reflection. On the other hand, you can jump directly to a 12 to strengthen your grain or reflection, but that usually means giving up a few bouts of assuredly high rolls.

Thus choosing to succeed affects your grains, which in turn affect those grain's reflections. And like wise, the GM's choices can affect the reflections, in turn affecting the grains they mirror. In both cases that changes how the action will evolve, feeding back into the cycle.

Don't expect to control everything that happens in Homeworld Project. Instead, try to go with the flow, and see where it takes you. Heroics and villainy, cunning and brute force, they all have their place in the action. And if you are careful you will be able to find your homeworld.

Modes

Astral Space is a complex place, as rich with life, as humans can be with ideas. Each character and manifest has a place in the spinning universe of Astral Space. This niche is called a Mode. Three of the modes are inhuman: Natives - beings from Astral Space, Strangers - beings from outside, and Shadows - immigrants searching for a home. The other four are modes of humanities encounter with Astral Space: Dreamers - those whose time in As-

tral Space is a lucid dream or vice versa, Lunatics - those who arrived in the wake of madness, Guests - intentional visitors seeking something, and Lost - who have been taken bodily into Astral Space.

Each of these modes has a verb, an action that is most essential to being part of that mode. During bouts with purpose following that verb, a character or manifest of that mode may inflict a consequence of two higher value, or if inflicted with a consequence may reduce its value by three, by spending one grain or reflection layer.

Natives (Preserve)

Born of human thoughts, natives are elemental beings of astral space. Native characters have ascended, in the image of their creators. Their form is often human-like, but with a little something else - hooves and furry bent legs, green skin and fiery eyes, a body of sand, or even just pitch black eyes. A native almost always originate from one of the many worlds of astral space - typically each will be peopled by one or maybe a handful of native types, each distinctive in their personality, culture, and appearance. A native people born from the concept of mathematical proofs would be a very different people than ones born of memories of war. Native do not seek change, they desire stability as a rule. Even if they strive for chaos it is a constant, familiar chaos they seek. As such, a native's verb is to Preserve.

Natives are part of the underlying fabric of astral space. Individuals may be destroyed, but the thoughts and beliefs that give rise to a native people do fade so easily. When destroyed, a native character becomes inherited. Some time later that character's player may choose to bring a spiritual or physical descendant of the destroyed character into the action. While the descriptions may change, the grains and their layers will remain the same.

Shadows (Build)

The shadows are outsiders, immigrants, and refugees. Coming from some other place, but unable to go home, the shadows seek to build a home in astral space. The shadows exist as a number of clans - each presumably from some long lost world, but one facet remains the same for all of them. Each shadow has facade which lets them relate to the more human denizens of astral space. Beneath is something darker and more alien. One such clan are the fae, human forms both beautiful and terrifying, made too perfect. Another are the

giants, beings whose unimaginably size is kept limited by their facade, merely tall they loom on the horizon when they show their true forms. A third clan are the ladies of secrets, and their consorts the whisperings, the former always veiled and the later always sheathed in shadow. The clans usually work together, although war is not unknown, seeking homeworlds for a new beginning. As such a shadow's verb is to Build.

Shadows are only partially beings of astral space, and their hold on it is tenuous. If destroyed they fade, disappearing forever. Perhaps they return to an ancient homeworld, or more likely with their last hope gone, they are forever trapped outside.

Strangers (Seek)

Beyond astral space are other universes, vast and alien. The beings who dwell in them occasionally arrive in astral space. Their forms, purposes, and beliefs are varied and bizarre. A stranger could be a seven winged, seven eyed angels, a demon of fire and darkness, a large-eyed gray humanoid, a knife limbed arachnid, or marriage of squid, ape, and clockwork. However, each is united by one fact. You do not come to a place like astral space without a reason, something to find. Each stranger may seek something different, but that purpose is what drives them. As such, a stranger s verb is to Seek.

Strangers are not tied to astral space, instead they have a faint tie with some other universe, an alien place that calls to them as home and sanctuary. When destroyed a stranger is banished, cast out of astral space for a time. They may return, but only if someone else opens the way.

Lunatics (Believe)

Astral space is a place of beliefs and ideas, a sanctuary for those for whom the human world is insufficiently malleable. Chief among these are the lunatics, those troubled by madness and insanity in the human world, but made into leaders and shapers of the astral space. Lunatics, generally take human form (though some have been known to exist as animals), typically a fixed and alluring form. They have regal bearing and have formed themselves into houses, based on their philosophies. They exude confidence and assurance, for everywhere they are in astral space, they are meant to be. The Lunatics champion causes, begin and end wars, and act as the aristocracy of the humans in astral space. As such the lunatic's verb is to Believe.

Lunatics are present in astral space my the gift of madness. If they are destroyed that blessed madness is ended, and they are healed for a time, or perhaps forever, perhaps able to participate once more in the human world. It is possible for a lunatic to return as another mode in that case, albeit somewhat rare. Dreamers are the most common route for a healed lunatics, but some can become guests or even lost.

Dreamers (Frolic)

The most chaotic of the denizens of astral space, the dreamers are tourists and thrill-seekers. Each time they appear they will differ subtly, whether in clothing and physical appearance. Some will change genders or even species over time. Dreamers are free to behave as they will, and are the most common type of human within astral space. In the human world, they merely have vivid dreams occasionally retaining a tidbit of their adventures. But in the astral, it is the human world which is the dream. And without those cares, the dreamer is free. As such, the dreamer's verb is to Frolic.

Dreamers exist in astral space as they sleep. And when they sleep in the astral they awake in the human world. Time is flexible, but there are dangers. A dreamer who sleeps too long may become a lost or a lunatic, disappearing from the human world mentally or physically. But one who is destroyed in astral space becomes awakened, to traumatized to sleep, an insomniac suffering until rest can be found. Sometimes the will return as dreamers, but more likely, an awakened dreamer will only return in another mode.

Guests (Master)

Astral space is a place few choose to enter, but those few are the guests, marked by their faintly luminous bodies and the almost invisible thread leading back in a direction outside of all the normal ones in astral space. Guests manifest as idealized, self-images. They have delved into secrets, mediation, or rely upon natural talents, but they, alone among the modes, knowingly live in two worlds, the astral and the human. They come to astral to seek something that is not possible in the human world, a discovery of their inner potential. And that comes from applying their will upon astral space. As such, the guest's verb is to Master.

Guests are aware of both worlds, as so when they are destroyed in astral space they are punished. Their thread pulls them back forcefully, leaving them spiritually wounded. In time they may

learn to undo the damage, but until then the astral space is bared to them, except perhaps as a dreamer. Sometimes guests are trapped in other ways. A guest who loses their cord is driven to madness in the human world, becoming a lunatic. Even more unfortunate a guest whose body is pulled into the astral by that cord becomes one of the lost.

Lost (Survive)

Ragged and uncertain, the lost are the only humans bodily present within astral space. And with that presence is the immediate understanding of how precarious a place that is to be. Perhaps the lost was once another mode, whose body followed where the mind dwelt. Strangers have been said to abduct some from the human world, for purposes unknown, stranding some in astral space. A lost is trapped, imprisoned within their own body, as such they are depressingly human for a creature in the astral, nothing special or luminous exudes from them, they do not change except to grow old or injured. They wear what they can scrounge from natives, and are on perpetual guard, all other modes have something to fall back upon, the lost do not. As such, the lost's verb is to Survive.

Lost often come from other modes, but rarely do they return if they can find that rare passage back to the human world. If a lost is destroyed, they are dead. There is no return or reprieve for the lost.

Panache

Each character also possesses two Panache, style of action that color what they do. Much like the verbs from Modes, Panache gives advantages when an action is in the spirit of that style. During bouts with purpose following that Panache, a character may inflict a consequence of two higher value, or if inflicted with a consequence may reduce its value by three, by spending one grain or reflection layer. This is cumulative between the two Panache, and a character's Modal verb. A starting character picks two Panache, but unlike Modes, Panache can change fairly easily.

- *Mystic* - Mystics are subtle and occult. They do things indirectly, often with careful plans or baroque rituals. Mystics are wise, knowing or finding secrets, remembering lore, and finding hidden patterns.
- *Noble* - Nobles are authority and elegance. They follow protocols and social conventions.

They use intermediaries and employ others to do their dirty work. They are cultured and refined, appreciating and practicing the arts.

- *Pilot* - Pilots are risk takers, going to new places, and relying upon their wits and honed skills to achieve their goals. They fly ships, chart unknown systems, and cut everything to the wire. The technology they use is familiar, like an old friend.
- *Rake* - Rakes are seducers and tricksters, the sharks of social situations. They rely on charm and personality to get their way. To win, a rake will be more outrageous, more daring, and do it all with a smile.
- *Rogue* - Rogues are the unseen, the underhanded manipulators, thieves, and assassins. They work behind the scenes, under the cover of darkness, or while others are distracted. Rogues will lie, cheat, steal, and betray whenever it suits their purposes.
- *Tech* - Techs are the logical thinkers and intuitive geniuses. They are the masters of new technology and outsmarting their foes. Techs are clever, creative, and prone to complexity, they rely on tools, theories, and sheer engineering brilliance.
- *Warrior* - Warriors are direct and physical, whether using a fist, a space ship, or an armada. A warrior will solve a problem through violence or force if at all possible. They rely only on tried and true technology, but to them the tools are less important than the hand that wields them.

Panache Votes

Once per chapter, each character and ship can use a Panache they don't currently have. This still requires spending a grain layer. Write down the Panache you used as a Panache vote. When you have five such votes, look to see if any Panache is more common than any other (three votes, while the rest have one or two, two votes while the rest are one, but not when two Panache have two votes each). If that happens, then replace one of your current Panache with the winner. In either case, erase the Panache votes, and next chapter you can start voting again.

Grains and Reflections

The ultimate purpose of Homeworld Project is to change yourself and to change the world in the process. Your character is built of grains, small aspects of the self that stir you to action and inspire growth. Just as a pearl forms, layers are formed on these grains, building that small aspect into something potent and pervasive. These layers represent the ability of that grain to affect the world, and the people in it. Each layer adds a new piece of description, so a new layer on the Swordsman grain could be Blooded or Open Stance or even My Sword Protects the Weak. These descriptions allow you to define and mold what is true about that grain. If they are lost, then that description is weakened or removed in turn.

But grains are not merely the growth within a character's life. They also affect Astral Space at large. Because each character's grain has a reflection, behaving much like a grain, but on a broader scale. A reflection is a force, cause, or group whose fortune is tied to its images, the grains of which it is a reflection. When any grain changes (gaining or losing a layer), the reflection changes as well. This works in reverse as well. As a reflection changes its images also change.

While a grain may have only one reflection, a reflection can have multiple images. For example, if one character has a grain of Family Honor, and another has a grain of Genius, these grains may both be images of the Zurmak Corporation (whether as an heir to a board seat or as a lead researcher). Thus both of these grains and this reflection are tied together. If Zurmak Corporation gains a layer, then so too will Family Honor and Genius. Likewise, if Family Honor loses a level, then so will the Zurmak Corporation, which in turn causes Genius to lose a level as well.

As you make your characters, the number of layers for a grain determine the number of layers in that grain's reflection. If two grains share the same reflection, they must start with the same number of layers. Thus, as a grain rises, so too will the reflection. This interaction can be exploited in a variety of ways.

A reflection can be antagonistic, something the character wants to destroy. By tying that reflection to an important grain, the player can ensure that the destruction of their foe is something that only happens with sacrifice. And it means that choosing to use that grain can materially hinder the reflection, by causing the player's grain to reduce. For example, you could choose to have your Swordsman grain reflected by the Dream Armada. This means

that while you may be encouraged to fight them with your sword, if you want to truly defeat the Dream Armada you must give up the way of the sword.

Requiem for a Reflection

When you reduce a grain or reflection to zero layers, then it is gone as well as its images or reflections. This causes a Requiem during the Turning Point. During the Requiem, each character and ship which lost a grain gains a free mark (see below), which may be spent with description of how the loss of this aspect of the world has changed things.

If you cause a Requiem on a grain or reflection with at least half of its descriptors filled (so has reached at least that many layers), then you also get an Aria until the end of the chapter.

Alternatively, a reflection can be a goal or ideal, something you want to grow at all costs. The GM will challenge you with it, but if you can grow your grain to the 13th layer, then you can remove it from your character sheet, as your reflection has become something that will exist independent of your goals and ideal. In many cases this is the ultimate goal of Homeworld Project, after all, only then could you have crafted a homeworld.

Aria of Achievement

When you raise a grain or reflection to thirteen layers, then it becomes a fixed and permanent part of the world. After this chapter, it can no longer be used, and it can no longer be reduced during this chapter. This also causes an Aria until the Turning Point. During the Aria, you may choose not to change the dice numbers when a 1 or 12 is progressed on a die, forstalling the end of the chapter to ensure the culmination of the reflection during the chapter. Once you let the chapter end, you gain a free mark.

While the players determine the descriptions for each grain layer, the GM determines these for the reflections, building these aspects of the world. The GM will continue to control these reflections, using them to produce manifests (see below) and progress the dice for those manifests (see Dramatic d12), just as players can do for their characters, ships, and manifests. Reflections are the GMs tools to influence the action and introduce challenges for the players.

The primary use of grain layers is to affect the action directly, they may also be used to create manifests, characters, ships, organizations, or even events which exist in the action by the dedication of some number of layers from a grain or a reflec-

tion. Manifests have dice and are controlled by the player who dedicated layers to them (or the GM if reflection layers were used). For as long as they exist in the action, the layers spent to introduce them are unavailable. Manifests should be related to the grain or reflection used, but may be obstacles or enemies, rather than being supportive.

Manifests also gain consequences, and they have an importance rating. Unlike characters, however, manifests may have variable importance. To introduce a manifest, you must dedicate twice as many layers as its importance, all from the same grain or reflection. All manifests will have a Mode. For each importance above one, the manifest can have a Panache as well. These Panache can be selected from the character list, the ship list, or be invented during play. These Panache must make sense for the role of that manifest.

For example, say the GM dedicates four layers of the Homeworld Quest reflection into a manifest Rage Storm, depicting a ravaging storm across this region of Astral Space. Then the one invented Panache for the storm could be Disaster, describing how the storm will tend to affect those who pass through it. If the storm instead made people angry, then the Rake Panache might be a better choice.

Dramatic d12

During the course of Homeworld Project, the player's characters will want to change the world around them. And the manifestations of their grains will want to change things as well, under the control of the GM. And often they will disagree on what should or will be done. These sorts of conflicts are the most basic part of Homeworld Project.

In a game of Homeworld Project, the players (including the GM) will craft an arc of events and dramatic conflicts, called the action. Astral Space is vast, literally holding all that can be imagined, but only the parts in the action matter to the journey the player's characters are taking. People, places, objects, and the like can all enter the action, or leave it. When they do so, they exist as manifestations of a grain - whether of a character, ship, or the GM's reflections.

The action does not need to occur in one place, or in a specific time frame. What matters is that nothing changes outside of the action, and being in the action allows you to affect anyone or anything also in the action. Player's characters are always considered in the action, they are the protagonists, the forces that drive the action and lead to new worlds and new discoveries.

The action is broken down into bouts, a give and take of description around a conflict between two things already in the action. A seductive wink, an exchange in a sword duel, or a ship's approach to a planet are all bouts. What matters is that a bout must have consequences and that it flows from the action so far. The players involved in a bout should decide which characters or manifests best represent the two sides, these are the most at risk in the face of consequences.

Who gets to start a bout?

If there is disagreement about who gets to initiate a bout, you resolve it this way:

- Characters
- Ships
- Character or Ship Manifests
- Reflection Manifests

If there is tie within a category then whoever initiated least recently gets precedence.

Then the players controlling the two characters or manifests describe how the bout is initiated. This should reasonably flow from the action so far. Trying to stab someone during a duel flows more easily than doing so to someone on another planet. However, Astral Space is flexible, so things like travel time, and set-up can be glossed over to make the bout that the participants want. This initial description is important, because it sets the stage of what is risked in the bout, and what costs have already been paid to attempt this change. Specifically, here is where a disabled, doomed, or destroyed character must describe their condition as part of the initial description.

Resolving a bout is the purpose of the dramatic d12. Each character or manifest in the action should be assigned a d12. Typically this is done for the first bout involving that character or manifest. Until then the d12 should be kept off the table, or in the case of a Turning Point taken off the table and kept off until used in a bout.

In an entity's first bout of the session (or after a turning point), the d12 is rolled by the player controlling the character or manifest. From this point on, the value showing on the d12 should not be changed unless it is progressed. In each following bout where that character or manifest is involved, you will progress that die.

Progression works the following way:

- If the die shows a 1 or a 12, roll the die.

- If the die shows a value below 12 and equal or above the high value, turn the die to the next highest value.
- If the die shows a value above 1 and equal or beneath the low value, turn the die to the next lowest value.
- If the die shows any other value (above the low value and beneath the high value), then roll the die.

The high value and low value are shown on a sheet in the middle of the table. They start at 11 and 2 respectively. Every time a die progresses to a 1, the high value decreases. Every time a die progresses to a 12, the low value increases by 1. When those values meet, a turning point occurs, under the control of the GM. Immediately after, the values return to 11 and 2, respectively.

In each bout, the character or manifest with the higher value showing is the winner. If there is a tie, nothing happens, and the bout is unresolved. The difference between the loser's die and the winner's die is the level of the consequence the winner apply in one of three ways: to harm the loser - who then records that consequences, to affect the action in general - in a manner in which the winner describes limited by the level of the consequence, or to remove an existing consequence. The consequence must be appropriate to the situation, and cannot remove a manifest or character from the action on their own.

Each bout is resolved in this way. Modes, Panache, and Grains can all affect a bout as well. If your Mode's verb or your Panache's area of expertise is involved in the bout, then if you win you may spend a grain or reflection level to add two to the consequence, up to a number of times as each matching Mode or Panache. This can also be done if you are removing a consequence as the result of the bout. If you lose, you may reduce the consequence inflicted on you by three, by spending a grain or reflection level, up to a number of times as each matching Mode or Panache.

A grain level can be expended (until the dramatic turn), to progress your own die, or the die of an ally (if that player permits it). This cannot progress the die if it shows a 1 or a 12, and if you expend a grain level to progress and the resulting value is a 1 or a 12, then you decrease by one or increase by one, respectively, that grain. This is the primary way in which grains grow or fade over time. Remember, when this happens also change the connected reflection and grains.

Consequences

Over the course of the action, different characters and manifests will incur consequences from losing bouts. Some consequences are minimal (1-2), some significant (3-6), and others severe (7 and above). Indeed the value of a single consequence inflicted by a character can go up to 17. Consequences indicate the trouble or changes that the character or manifest is now facing. However, consequences accumulate. All characters and manifests have three thresholds for total consequences - disabled, doomed, and destroyed.

These are based on the importance of a character or manifest, rated from 1 to 5. For example, a player's characters have an importance of 3. The threshold for disabled is always 5 times the importance. For doomed it is 5 more than the disabled threshold. And for destroyed the threshold is 5 more than the doomed threshold. Thus for a player's character the disabled threshold is 15, the doomed threshold is 20, and the destroyed threshold is 25.

- *Disabled* - in the initial description of a bout you must mention how your character or manifest is forced to work around some limitation or disability. When disabled, nothing is easy or commonplace, the typical approach to the bout may be unavailable requiring more effort or care to attempt what you want.
- *Doomed* - in the initial description of a bout you must mention how your character or manifest is making its own situation worse by the attempt. The doom is immediate and overwhelming, a sense that everything is going wrong and anything can go awry. Trying to achieve something more is like re-opening your wounds.
- *Destroyed* - in the initial description of a bout you must mention how your character or manifest is removed from the action by this attempt. Destruction may be death, banishment, or simply the inability to go on. What is destroyed is on the lip of oblivion, and the slightest push is all it takes.

When a consequence is used to cancel another consequence it can only cancel one, and must equal or exceed the value of the consequence to be removed. This can be described as healing, intervention, or more subtle ways of aiding yourself or another.

When consequences are applied, the overriding rule is that they must stem from the bout in

which they occurred. This is fair flexible. Wounds, lost footing or weapons, or even unquenchable rage can be consequences from a sword duel. Likewise, distraction, depression, or vicious gossip can be consequences from a more social bout. But some of these could also be caused by the outcome of a duel. And social outcomes can occasionally be more physical as well.

While consequences are inflicted by the winner in a bout, it is best done with some discussion. A good consequence is acceptable to the loser as well. If a pilot progresses to a 1 on an attempt to land on a planet, facing 11 from the planet, then a value 7 consequence will be inflicted by the GM (After Pilot reduces the consequence by three). But the GM shouldn't just strand the ship in a falling orbit unless the player involved is interested in dealing with that consequence. Making another suggestion, such as landing far off target, or a rough landing causing a concussion, gives the player some more options, and helps to make the action more interesting for all the participants.

Turning Points

When the high value and low value match the GM has the opportunity to describe a change in the action. Every manifest and character in the action is included and in the process the GM may increase or decrease a reflection by one once for each character and ship - this can never raise the layers above 12 or below 1. The GM describes how the affected grain is enhanced or inhibited by the effects of the turning point. In the process, the GM must meet the requirements of any consequence thresholds. Thus, even if a destroyed character or manifest avoids bouts it leaves the action during the turning point, unless it is rescued before then.

On the other hand, if a character or manifest spent a grain layer to progress to the final 1 or 12, in addition to the change in the grain from the last bout, the player also gains a free mark, which he or she can describe being added as plus or minus to any grain of the character or manifest, or to start a new grain. A manifest which gains new grain becomes a ship or character (as appropriate).

A new grain must be given a reflection, also by that player, and if this reflection already exists then the new grain matches the layers of the reflection, although the layer details should be filled in over time, as the new grain makes an appearance. Alternatively, a new reflection would start both the grain and the reflection at two layers. Truly new grains are often fragile, but they have the greatest

potential.

When the GM makes a character

In principle the GM can elevate a manifest to being a character or a ship. This changes some of the dynamics, but is a valid direction for the game group. This means that the GM becomes a part-time player, and one of the other players must take on part of the GM role too. The new character (or ship) has one grain. The one restriction is that this grain's reflection cannot be handled by anyone who has a character or ship with an image of that grain.

For a new grain this means giving the reflection to a willing player. For an existing reflection this means finding a player who is not currently involved in that reflection and handing it off to her or him. As new grains are gained, this restriction must continue to be checked.

During the Turning Point, each of the reflection holders may add their pieces to the twist in the action, affecting images of their reflections, up to once for each character and ship connected to their reflections in this way. These GMs can and should work together to make the game more interesting and exciting.

A turning point is a moment where fortune and the strange synchronicity of Astral Space reigns supreme. It can be an upheaval, a revelation, or a climax. Turning points punctuate the action, giving definition to the changes occurring within. The GM should watch carefully for how a turning point can arise as the high and low values approach. And players should be ready with suggestions, just like with consequences. The action should remain engaging and fun, and turning points should be one of the tools to do just that.

Making Your Character

Making characters in Homeworld Project should typically be done as a group, although minimally you must work with the GM to design your character.

The first thing to talk about as a group is the character niches, themes, and mood of the game. If one player wants to have a vicious space pirate, and the other wants to focus on planetary politics, there might be some difficulty letting them interact in the action. In the very least everyone should have some idea of what character they want to play, and let everyone know. That way difficulties can be worked around, rather than coming as a surprise.

Once you are done those two parts, you are

ready to flesh out the character:

1. Write down the character's name
2. Choose a Mode - this is how your character is in Astral Space, see the section below on Modes. Then write down the verb associated with that mode.
3. Circle two Panache - these are the Space Opera archetypes your character best fits. This can change over time.
4. Name Three Grains - these are important aspects of your character, with a history. Feel free to be creative here, your grains describe what you want to be and who you are so far. Things like: Honorable Combatant, Diplomat, Con Artist, Engineering Genius, and so on.
5. Work out with the GM what the Reflections of each of your grains will be - for example, Honorable Combat could be reflected by your Warrior Clan, Diplomat by the War of Nine Stars, Con Artist by the Guild of Thieves, and Engineering Genius by your employers, the Terakas Consortium. A reflection should have a tense relationship with the grain and be, generally, outside of the character's control. Ultimately, in Astral Space these are tied together, rising and falling as one. You can choose an existing reflection but this will require distributing your layers to set your grain equal to that reflection's current layers.
6. Distribute 12 layers among your grains - you can set up to four of these layers aside for contributing to ships, but you cannot have any grain at less than one layer, or any higher than eight. As you gain a layer fill in the circle and add a short description for that layer, expanding on the grain as a whole. Note, you may lose layers, but the descriptions remain, so if you regain that layer again, you regain that description.
7. The GM now sets the new reflections to the same number of layers, listing descriptions for each of those as well.

With that, your character is complete, and ready to play. Once everyone is ready, its time to start bringing characters into the action. Describe, with inputs from the GM and other players, how your character is set in motion. Look at your

grains for inspiration, as well. Once all the characters are in the action, its time to have manifests appear and bouts beginning, driving toward the first turning point.

Building Your Ship

Ships are built communally, by all the players contributing at least one grain layer to the ship. In addition to purchasing grains for the ship, those players also get to describe the ship's appearance and amenities, most especially picking the ship's Mode, and selecting two Panache. These work in exactly the same manner as for characters, giving advantages during bouts where the ship is acting in accordance with the Mode's verb or the Panache.

The owners of the ship (all the players who donated grain levels to it, either in character creation or using a free mark from a turning point) determine who will handle the ship. That player treats the ship much like a character, including describing bouts, spending grain layers, and keeping track of the ship's consequences. That player can change over time, as the owner's agree, often based on which characters are present on the ship.

- *Natives (Preserve)* - Natives tend to build ships that are simple, resilient and large. Spheres, domes, and towers are a common motif. Native ships always feel very much like a ground-side building, reflecting the homes of those who made them. Nearly all native ships contain a small biosphere, reminiscent to the homeworld of the natives that crafted it. Sometimes these small nature reserves are essential to the ships operation, other times their benefits are more ephemeral.
- *Shadows (Build)* - Shadow ships mirror their creators in the facade, whether beautiful and graceful or harsh and battle-pocked, surrounding an architecture of an almost organic nature. Strange pulsing energy runs through them, glowing in unreal hues. Whispers can be heard when alone, as though the ship was speaking just below the consciousness. However, shadow ships are built as places to live, not merely pass through, while not always fancy they have large quarters and simple amenities.
- *Strangers (Seek)* - Strangers do not build one type of ship, instead their ships are as varied as they are. Some are flying saucers,

with non-Euclidean nodules lying in their center, where the crew and pilots dwell. Others are built of millions of small interchangeable pieces, in constant flux, like a biomechanical organism. Still others appear as just glowing lights and shadow. Others are strange objects with doors in the wrong place and far too much space within.

- *Lunatics (Believe)* - Lunatic ships are crafted with care, lines and curves present a statement against the void these ships traverse. Within, these ships are epitome of man-made technology, the craft humans imagine traveling through the space beyond their world. The oldest ships may be constructed of stone and precious metals, but even these have a relentless modernity to them. The newest are positively futurist. But each is imbued with the ideal of humanity's progress toward the unknown.
- *Dreamers (Frolic)* - Dreamer ships are as eclectic as their creators. Often making little sense, dreamer ships do not appear intended for space travel. Whether a modified sailing ship, a shuttle bearing the unmistakable profile of a snow globe, or a skyscraper with rocket engines attached to the base, each has a piece of mundane humanity as part of it. These ships are often found derelict, as their architects leave them for other, more interesting diversions.
- *Guests (Master)* - Guest ships are particularly rare, and always exude a personal touch. Guest ships are homes, first and foremost. Created as sanctuaries, their outer design is often simple and functional, but their inner spaces are opulent and diverse. Some guest ships are memory mansions pulled from some world to travel the stars. Others are temples or monasteries thrust into space.
- *Lost (Survive)* - Lost ships are often more than they appear. On the outside they appear as collections of junk or small asteroids, but within is a paranoid's paradise of redundancy and safety. Pulled together from numerous pieces of debris and wreckage, the lost ship is joined together with an intense attention to detail. The chambers within lock securely, and often can act as small craft on their own.
- *Courier* - Couriers are fast and agile. They respond to situations by movement, whether

fleeing, closing, dodging, or outmaneuvering. A courier gets where its going as fast as it can, and avoids anything that might get in its way.

- *Defender* - Defenders are strong and resilient. They block aggression and hold the line against attackers. They absorb, shield, negate, and wear down their opposition. A defender is reactive, ready to halt others, to save, to protect.
- *Destroyer* - Destroyers are powerful and well-armed. They strike first, and keep up the pressure. They crush their foes with ferocity, filling the void with fire and death. A destroyer is proactive, ready to strike, to attack, to annihilate.
- *Explorer* - Explorers are enduring and vigilant. They travel farther and longer than other ships. They see things coming and plan for them, playing the long game. They persistent, clever, and prepared, going where ever is needed.
- *Transport* - Transports are workhorses and carriers. They act by what they transport, whether those be troops, cargo, or fighters. They release what they carry, and sometimes take what others have left behind. Transports capture, smuggle, support, and deploy.

Crafting the Journey

At first glance, being the GM in Homeworld Project seems difficult. Unlike many RPGs, you have specific restrictions on what you can do, namely the reflections. You can't just bring in a situation or a problem that doesn't link to them in some way. But in practice that restriction is more of a benefit. If a player asks for a reflection, then that is a clear sign that at least that player wants to see more about that reflection.

As the GM, it is your role to help provide that. If you want to see something in particular, suggest that to the players as they select reflections. If no one bites, then more than likely that idea won't work for this group as is. And there is always the chance of opening a new reflection from a player's free mark.

Instead, you should focus on the tools you have at hand. There are three ways to use reflections. First you can dedicate layers to introduce manifests. Do this to start with, but not to excess. You want to keep room for expending layers as well.

Also, remember you don't need to manifest a handful of thugs individually, they can just be one manifest.

The second use is to expend those layers. That gives you some flexibility, but you usually have less available than all of the players, so expend your layers where it counts. Either to place a particularly interesting consequence or to add some marks.

The last, and most easily forgotten, use is to raise or lower the reflections. You can do this as easily as the players, and it can be an important way to introduce conflict. If a player is trying to grow a reflection, make sure you reduce it somewhat occasionally, to keep things interesting. Likewise a reflection won't simply go quietly as a player attempts to reduce it to oblivion.

But remember, making things challenging should help make things fun. Remember, the players are taking on the role of the heroes. It's not a question of whether they will win. What is important is what happens along the way. This is Space Opera after all.

Beyond providing a challenge, you have two other duties. The first is to keep an eye on pacing. This generally a matter of making sure that players aren't uncertain about what to do next. If they are, then manifest something and make things interesting. Look at the reflections you haven't used as much recently.

The other duty is related to pacing. Its to make sure that players get a fair access to bouts. As GM you shouldn't be getting into bouts with yourself, just decide those outcomes. That means each bout that happens will have at least one player in it. You should make sure that a few players aren't taking most of those bouts, at least not without other players have the option for bouts of their own.

In many ways, you are not the only one who has these duties. Players can and often should participate in making things challenging, well paced, and fair. Encouraging that behavior will make things easier and more rewarding. After each person has a responsibility to help make the game fun for everyone else.

12	
11	
10	
9	
8	
7	
6	
5	
4	
3	
2	
1	

Ship Name:

Mode: Verb:

Panache: Courier Defender

 Destroyer Explorer Transport

Panache Votes:

Grain:

Reflection:

Plus Marks: Minus Marks:

	O	1	
	O	2	
	O	3	
	O	4	
	O	5	
	O	6	
	O	7	
	O	8	
	O	9	
	O	10	
	O	11	
	O	12	
-	O	13	_____

Grain:

Reflection:

Plus Marks: Minus Marks:

	O	1	
	O	2	
	O	3	
	O	4	
	O	5	
	O	6	
	O	7	
	O	8	
	O	9	
	O	10	
	O	11	
	O	12	
-	O	13	_____

Grain:

Reflection:

Plus Marks: Minus Marks:

	O	1	
	O	2	
	O	3	
	O	4	
	O	5	
	O	6	
	O	7	
	O	8	
	O	9	
	O	10	
	O	11	
	O	12	
-	O	13	_____

Grain:

Reflection:

Plus Marks: Minus Marks:

	O	1	
	O	2	
	O	3	
	O	4	
	O	5	
	O	6	
	O	7	
	O	8	
	O	9	
	O	10	
	O	11	
	O	12	
-	O	13	_____

Grain:

Reflection:

Plus Marks: Minus Marks:

	O	1	
	O	2	
	O	3	
	O	4	
	O	5	
	O	6	
	O	7	
	O	8	
	O	9	
	O	10	
	O	11	
	O	12	
-	O	13	_____

Consequence Total

Disabled - 15, Doomed - 20, Destroyed - 25

Consequence:	Value:
Total:	

Contributors:

Manifest Sheet

Manifest:
Reflection:
Importance:
Mode/Panache:

Consequence:	Value:
Total:	

Manifest:
Reflection:
Importance:
Mode/Panache:

Consequence:	Value:
Total:	

Manifest:
Reflection:
Importance:
Mode/Panache:

Consequence:	Value:
Total:	

Manifest:
Reflection:
Importance:
Mode/Panache:

Consequence:	Value:
Total:	

Manifest:
Reflection:
Importance:
Mode/Panache:

Consequence:	Value:
Total:	

Manifest:
Reflection:
Importance:
Mode/Panache:

Consequence:	Value:
Total:	

Manifest:
Reflection:
Importance:
Mode/Panache:

Consequence:	Value:
Total:	

Manifest:
Reflection:
Importance:
Mode/Panache:

Consequence:	Value:
Total:	

Appendix: Star Wars Variant

Perhaps the best known Space Opera, Star Wars has many parallels with the classic Homeworld Project game.

Factions

In the Star Wars Variant, Factions replace Modes, but the verbs remain the same.

Fringer - On the edge of galactic society, fringer are largely trying to get by. Their verb is *Frolic*. Their ships are quick and functional, held together by clever engineering and luck.

Corporate - Traders, merchants, and manipulators, value and worth is always important to them. Their verb is *Build*. Their ships are huge and filled with redundant systems, equipment, and the newest technology.

Criminal - The scum of the galaxy, smugglers, thieves, and troublemakers. Their verb is *Master*. Their ships are smaller, usually overgunned, with secret compartments or interdiction capabilities.

Imperial - The political faction struggling for order and safety, best described by the Empire. Their verb is *Preserve*. Sharp edged and often massive, their ships suggest control and power.

Republican - The political faction struggling for freedom and openness, best described by the Republics. Their verb is *Believe*. Smoother and smaller than Imperial ships, their ships tend to be more flexible with hidden potential.

Outsider - Lost worlders, people who have no ties to the greater galactic world, with they stay neutral or take a side? Their verb is *Seek*. Their ships are often barely space worthy, but also innovative, since they were built without the benefit or the limitations of galactic society.

Legacy - Remnants of lost civilizations and past glories, they are all that remain of their hopes. Their verb is *Survive*. Archaic and strange, their ships evoke mystical shapes and are wholly unpredictable.

Aliens

While there are many aliens in the Star Wars universe their alien-ness is generally an important part of them as they tend to be representative of their species. Hence alien characters can be of any of the factions, but they should have a grain which is their species, and likely a reflection of that species as well.