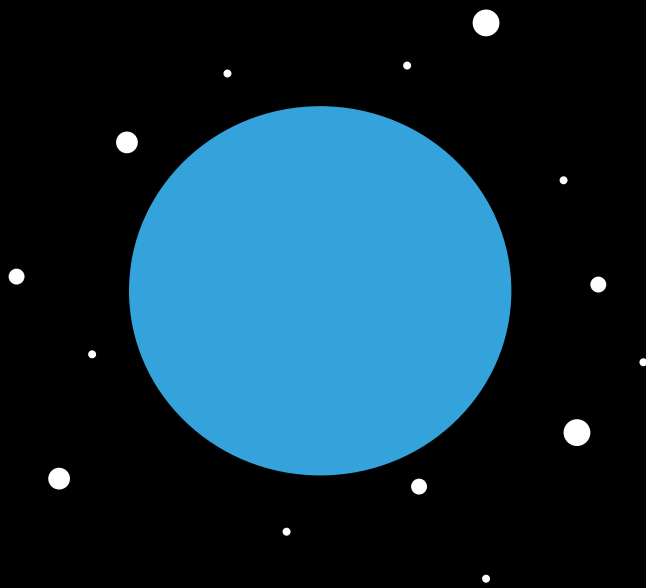


Hard Science



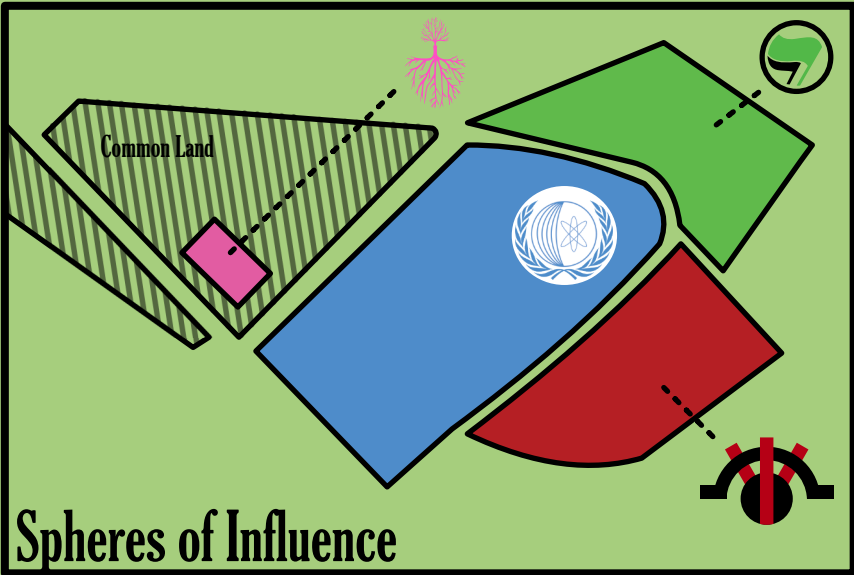
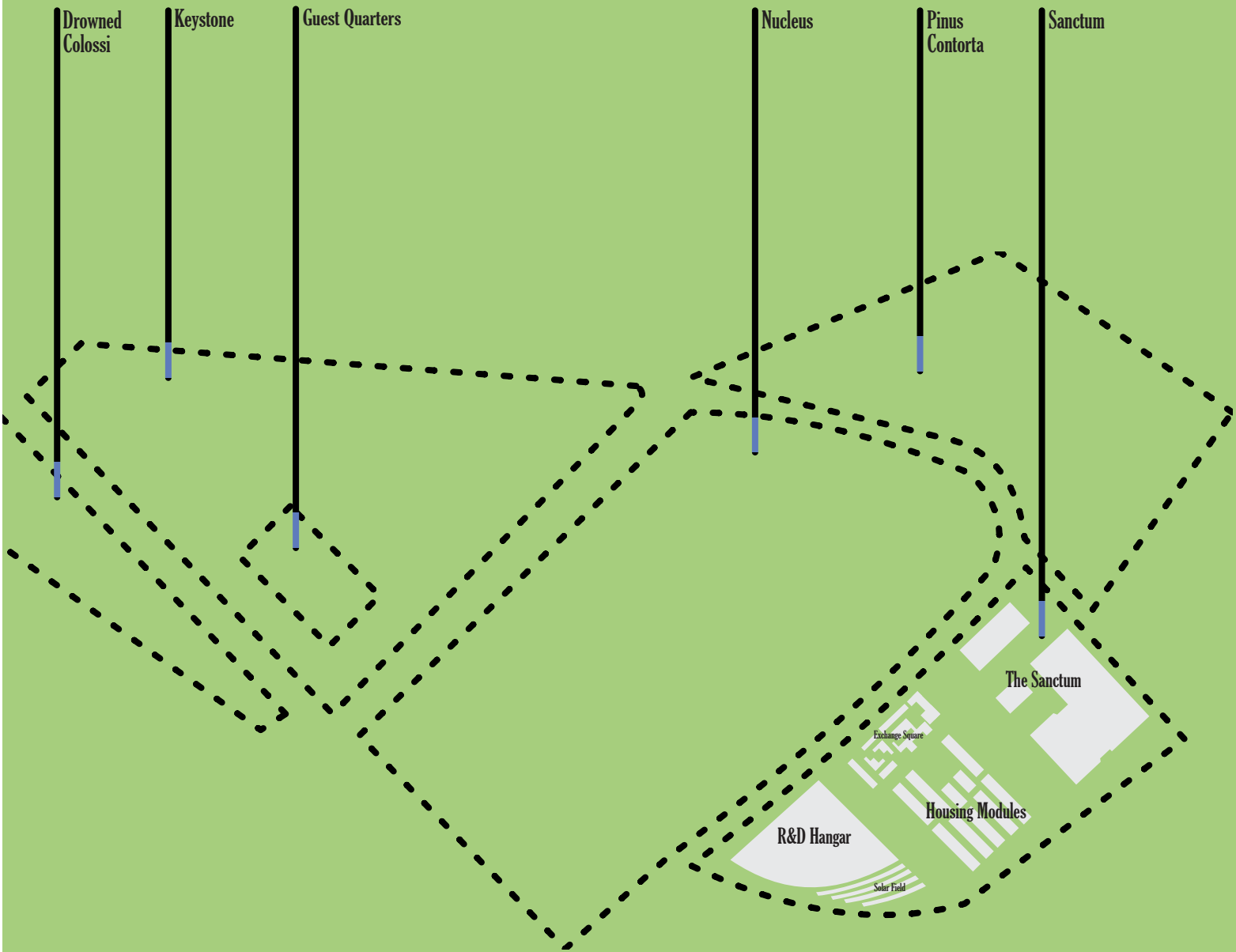
Für Opa Helmut

Note!

As you will soon be able to tell, this booklet is as of yet unfinished. I have however decided to put it up for exhibition anyways, as I believe it is in the spirit of the course to show what I came up with, flaws and all.

I will try to upload a finished version of this project somewhere down the line. I still hope you can tell what I'm going for just based on this mid-development version.


Table of Contents





Chapter 1

Critical Transitions



**'Here we stand then at the eternal crossroads, in limbo between
rot and progress. We choose our path as one,
for better or for worse.
Such is the nature of the situation. '**

- Jorn de Roos, first president of the Free State

Note on the Nature of Change

As is the way of the study of history, scholars debate how the shared narrative that can be found within our history books be constructed. Do we live in a world forged by larger-than-life characters, a shared reality traceable to grand events that have boldly bent the present out of shape until it started looking like the past? Or is change a more subtle process, like ink dripping onto the canvas of our lives until we need to change our interpretation of the forms revealing themselves to finally make sense of the new image? In the end, after long deliberation on part of the historians, both tends to be true. A new era seldom begins out of nowhere, its root causes lost along the winding road of time.

This is the dripping ink, the network of actions, ideas and consequences that together constitute a Zeitgeist, which makes up for what it lacks in clear beginnings or concrete endings with its depth and richness of possible explanations. At the same time, humans love stories. Our brains are hard-wired to perceive arcs, characters and narrative wherever we look. And so, ultimately, even the realities of history must contort themselves to fit this structure, stamped into shape by cognitive cookie cutters. People love stories and they live them too.

This is why the whole debate about history is non-sensical - both statements are actually true simultaneously. We live our lives according to the stories that we tell about ourselves and the people around us. But underneath the facade of narrative structure, we are influenced or perhaps even directed by events completely outside of our control and awareness.

The story is ours to tell, but the script is not ours to write.

- Qián Yutóng, Commune Archivist

With this in mind, let us have a look at what was before that which is.



Equation



Cracks



Cascade



Secession

1. Equation

Cassandra "Cass" Alberro was a surprise pick as the leader of a newly created workgroup on complex environmental modeling. A veteran of the Rome climate protests of '43, she needed to be convinced to even apply for the position by her long-time partner Eva Garnier. Surprisingly, after having turned her back on academia years ago, she agreed to lead a team of scientists in their mission to generate more accurate models of global-climate change. This team would later become known as 'workgroup omega'. Cass had a condition however: any and all data documented and modeled under her lead would be released to a public platform, free of charge - no exceptions. The administration agreed, starry-eyed, seeing a future in which the name of the university would be on everyone's lips. And somewhere a monkey's paw curled in on itself.

And so Cass got to work assembling her team, an amalgamation of 'scientist-practitioners' as she would call them with a smirk. Because practice in her sense of the word implied praxis, involvement in radical climate actions and protests. Assessment of prospective candidates included a thorough look at their credentials as researchers and, more subtly, their history of anti-capitalist, ecological and decolonial thought and action. The ideological criteria were not the most stringent: a general openness to these ideas was enough to become a part of the group, but still, the backroom discussions and social media screenings did their job in forming a workgroup with a climate different from those assembled before. A climate of potential action, like a bow with the string drawn and an arrow nocked.

This resulted in the workgroup making progress quickly on two fronts: the academic and the activist. Small but steady scientific advances started trickling out of the rooms the workgroup had been assigned. At the same time ground was won in the arena of climate change action with the help of Cass and her colleagues. A faction formed from different student organizations and NGOs not associated with the university directly, created and directed by Cass and her workgroup omega managed to get the university to officially denounce long-term business partners, mainly fossil-fuel companies and multinationals furthering neo-colonialist operations in the global south.

2. Cracks

3. Cascade

4. Secession

Chapter 2

After Ever After



'I like to think that we dwaddled too long, debated too much
about when the revolution should come and how.
In the end, Gaia simply started their own.'

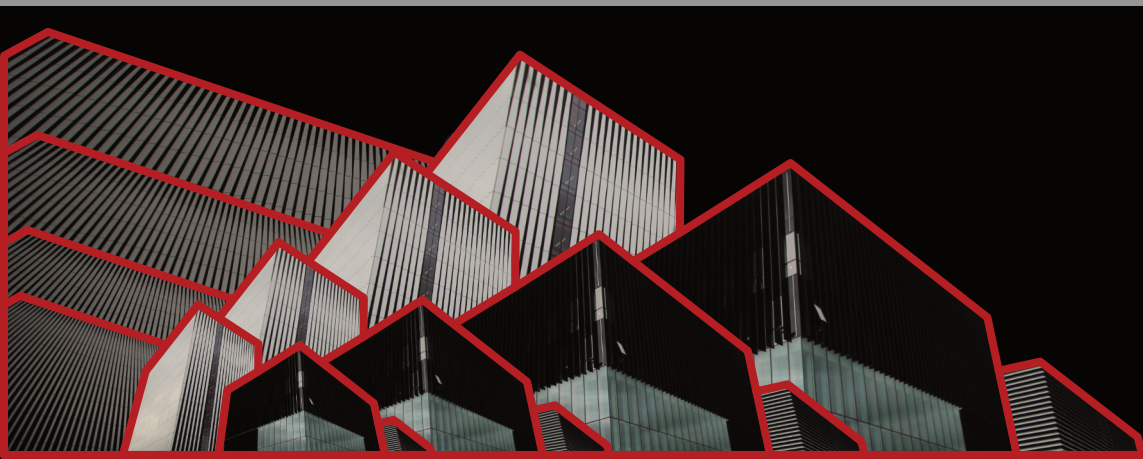
- Evi Jeong, Emissary of the New Earth

The Hand that Feeds

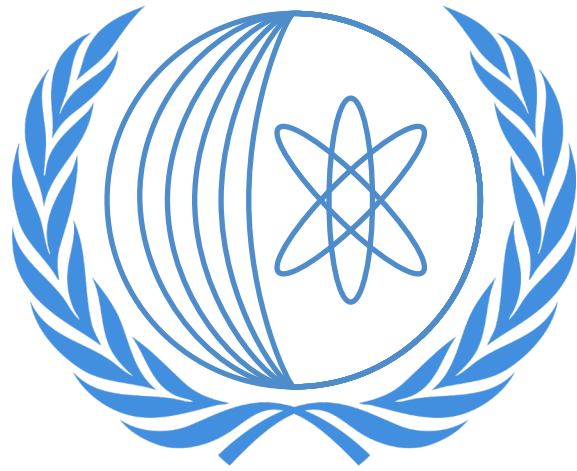




Nobody really knows what goes on in the big, blocky building with the glowing red lights that pierce night, fog and soul. This is the Sanctum, the home and shelter from the outside world where Workgroup Omega reigns supreme. Born out of the projectionist movement, a task force of scientists and activists that first raised the alarm about the coming cascade, this group is a mystery even to the most senior Free State officials and New Earth elders. But hey, they keep the lights on. Literally. It is the energy pouring from the Sanctum powering the greenhouses, pumping stations and medical centers that keeps the Free State functioning from day to day. And it is the potential lack of this energy the keeps the 'powers that were' in check. And so the members of the workgroup go about their daily business, isolating themselves more and more in their fortress on the periphery. For now, they ask when they need something done, but what happens when they start issuing orders? And what if their benevolence runs out?



Rebuild
Retain
Remember



The Free State

The Free State is a microstate on the grounds of the former Science Park, that seceded from the Kingdom of the Netherlands after the ecological collapse event known as the cascade. It is run by a democratically elected parliament and sees itself as the representation of the former administration, workers council and student body of Science Park. Generally, the Free State tries to strike a balance between the research into new technologies which it sees as the key to its long-term survival but necessitates the exploitation of the environment and the protection of said environment. The Free State also often fills the role of mediator, be it between the different other factions on Free State grounds or with the 'powers that were', the remainders of the Dutch government. It represents stability, security and tries its best to return to the way things used to be. For better or for worse.

Impressions from the Free State

'Of course we gotta go easy on the extraction, I get that. But what the greens don't get is that I got mouths to feed and people to house. The construction committee is breathing down my neck talking about 20 new habitats by next year. I'm telling you, we're gonna need that wood if we even want a shot at this whole conservation thing never mind just get through the next winter. Of course it's ironic, but that's what tends to happens when idealism meets reality, isn't it?'

Popular workers song within the free state, sung to the tune of "Die Gedanken Sind Frei":

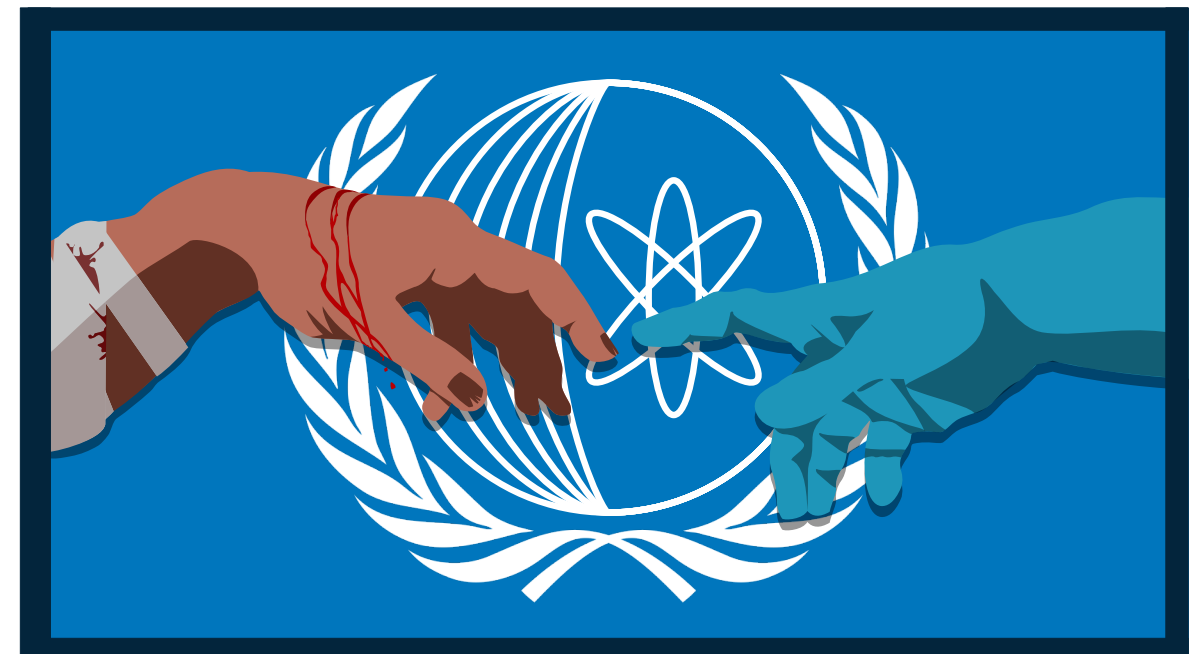
1. United we toil, exhausted but free, and progress is made, built by you and me

When sweat wets the soil and song moves the air, the world is transformed, potential laid bare

2. The waters have come with terrible swiftness, have crushed all that was, and carried it with it

It's us who remain to tend and reclaim, to make whole and free, through you and through me

'Sure they made a completely horizontal power structure work at Roeters, but there are some things you're notconsidering. At the end of the day they were safe; nice and cozy and protected by the powers that were. After those guys lost science park, losing another part of the intelligentsia just wasn't an option, so they kept the dreamers happy. But I'm telling you, as soon as the socials have to make it out here, out in the real world, things will start looking different. Their little project was nice while it lasted, but when you're out here in the swamp there's no time for general assemblies and mediating committees to come and kiss your boo-boos. Even managing elections out here is hard enough, imagine trying to institute all the other extra shit they got over there: no jails, work only when you feel like it and access to any stimulant they can get past the old government minders. It's about time they got a taste of reality if you ask me.'



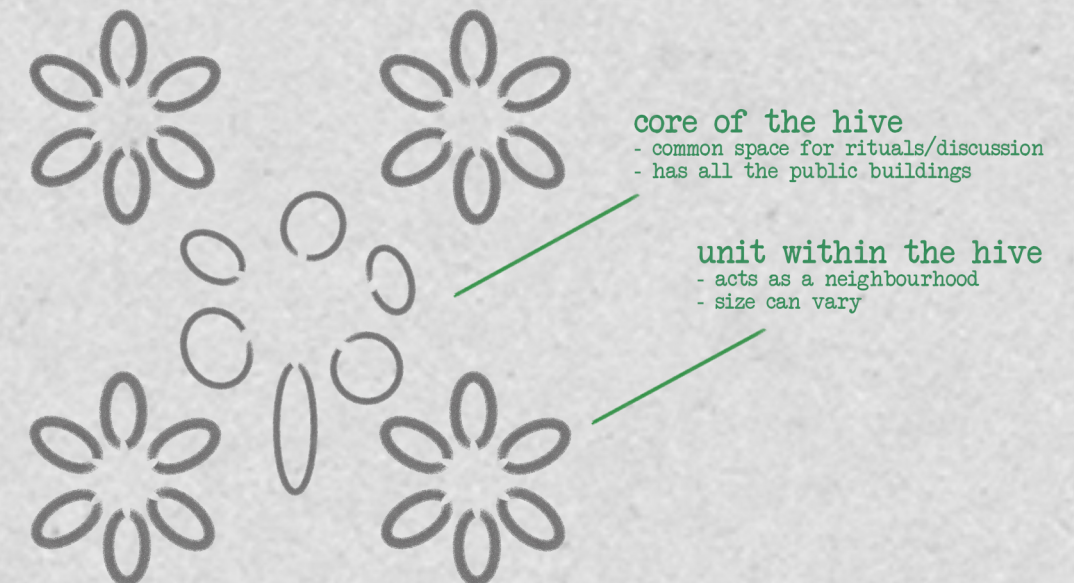
'At the FSMS you're in good hands!'
- poster meant to encourage use of the Free State Medical Services



The New Earth

The New Earth knows that the world the cascade has given is a miracle to be protected. Of course a version of the events without the death and destruction would have been preferable, but humanity reacted too late and now that Gaia has made their move it is the job of the New Earth to protect this new paradise. And so those that identify with this goal do the work that needs doing: They explore the area around the Free State, educate the new generations on a life in harmony within nature and act as the voice of Gaia in the Free States' ear. While the New Earth does not understand itself as a religious organization, it takes freely from the instruments of faith to make the environment a felt entity in everyday life. Among these techniques are the personification of nature into an entity they call Gaia and the use of rituals intended to help people stop and notice the world around them - and their part in it. The New Earth sees itself as the conscience of this young society. Is it overreaching? And does its past really allow such lofty aspirations?

Structure of a Hive



Close-up of a medium sized tent

Modular build

- Quickly erected and collapsed
- More modules can be added based on need

water collector

- collects dew and rainwater
- feeds into a canister in the kitchen

- solar module
- rotates to face sun
 - easily expandable

- entrance (with patio)
- directed towards communal space

- window
- well-insulated (just like rest of tent)

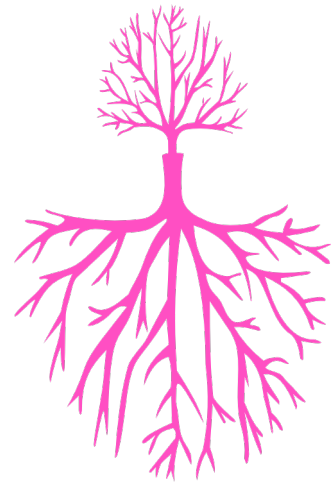
Impressions from the Free State

‘Who is Gaya? They are many and they are one. Put simply, we are of them and put even simpler, we are them. Consuming and constructing ourselves in harmony with the great dance of the biosphere. A song has ended, but our dance must not. Truly we are lucky to be able to experience it all consciously.’

‘No, I don't consider the rituals special. No more special than breathing fresh air, feeling the sun on my skin or the ever-present pull of gravity assuring me that I am home. The rituals are merely easier to perceive, faster to put meaning to, intuitively significant to our cluttered, human minds. They were created to let us embody Gaia consciously. They were molded to fit the boxes in our heads. In fact, the more one realizes that we are not meaningfully different from anything around us, that with every breath we embody Gaia more significantly than any grand ritual could ever permit us to, the less meaningful, the more arbitrary they become.’

(about Workgroup Omega) ‘They still print tasers behind frosted glass, ignoring the miracles happening beyond their concrete cubes. Their brains are filled with vision, but their eyes are blind to the sunrise.’

‘Opening yourself up to nature is its own reward. When we shut Gaia out, we are tiny, our capacity for experience, for emotion, put simply for being, is low. When we let ourselves dissolve into the universe, break the delusion of separation from our environment, our capacity increases million-fold. It is here that the transcendental is found. When we become the ocean as opposed to the grain of sand, pain, pleasure and contentment become deeper, they finally have a place to go.’



The Commune

What is commonly known as the Commune is officially called the Advanced Social Science Faction Under Collective Kinship. A name just as ironic as everything the Commune does. But something is changing. The only part of the UvA that is still in the hands of the 'powers that were', this collection of intellectuals and idealists has never gotten a real taste of the post-cascade world. It is cradled and closely monitored by a national government that does not want to go through the embarrassment of losing another part of this once prestigious institution to secession. But not closely monitored enough apparently, because a delegation of representatives of the Commune is on its way to the Free State. And what looks like a harmless mission to secure more trade between the former faculties is actually a move by the Commune to talk revolution. It wants to clean up its act and break free from the shackles that tie it to the 'powers that were'. Will the factions be able to overcome prejudice, ideological differences and ridiculous acronyms?

Internal Security Briefing

History - Iconography

Universiteit van Amsterdam

Roeterseiland Center for Advanced Studies

fig. 22

- inspired by pre-cascade look of central building at roeterseiland campus
- Pre takeover of 'rebellious elements' at RCAS

↓

Roeterseiland Commune

Advanced Social Studies Faction Under Collectivist Kinship

fig. 23

- New icon after takeover
- shows their severe lack of respect for institutions in general
- names were changed every couple of months; other examples include: 'Advanced Social Studies Haven Of Leftist Egalitarians' and 'Advanced Social Studies Punkhouse for Ecology, Non-conformity, Intersectionality and Satan'

↓

fig. 24

- seeming change in relationship with iconography => why??
- meaning unclear, possibly ecological/complex systems undertones?
- Choice and timing of icon might signal attempt to impress FS/New Earth?

--Confidential--



Chapter 3

Friction Fire

‘It is our mission to rebuild, retain and remember. To rebuild is to preserve and reconstruct the material. To retain is to hold on to the customs and knowledge we can, rationally judging, separating wheat from chaff. To remember is to allow the heat of emotion to enter that same process, to use its energy to mold history into a proper form.

Now repeat after me:

Rebuild, Retain, Remember!’

- Johannes Neubauer, Equation Augur

Conflicts

Of course the relationships between the different factions are not static. Conflicts can and do arise over all kinds of questions, from the trivial to the consequential. This next section will outline some of these, leaving their resolutions open. This is done to signify that the world is dynamic. If and how problems are resolved depends on the choices of the people confronted with them. Further, the situations described here can be plugged into any adventure set in the world of ‘Hard Science’, should it be used as a setting for a table-top role-playing game. They are meant to reinforce the themes of the world and characterize the factions and people in it.

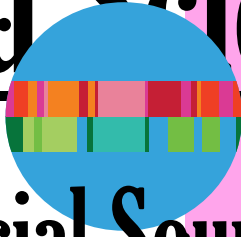
The Wailing

A rogue element within the Free State has implanted a chip (possibly stolen from the Sanctum?) in the brain of a wild boar to get it to attack the settlement of the New Earth. This element despises the New Earth for their constant talk of mindfulness and deceleration of extraction, since this slows down some of the most pressing Free State projects. By getting ‘nature’, in the form of a wild boar, to attack them, the rogue element seeks to destabilize the ranks of the New Earth and lower its popularity within the Free State. However, the communicaiton between member of the rogue element has been intercepted by a spy/supporter of the New Earth (chatlog shown below), and through some circumstance it becomes the task of the characters to get this information to the New Earth.

Will the character(s) live up to their promise or warn the Free State or event work with the rogue cell? What trap could the rogue cell set for them on their way to the New-Earth ritual site, where the message must be delivered to? And are there more future uses of the chip techonology? Was the whole boar stunt perhaps just a test for something even bigger?



Hard Science



Unofficial Soundtrack

No Government - Nicolette

Rainforest - Noname

I'm So Tired - Fugazi

Avril 14th - Aphex Twin

Savanne - Vieux Farka Touré

Daylight - Aesop Rock

Nightlight - Aesop Rock

Planet B - King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard

Polygondwanaland - King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard

The Great Commandment - Camouflage

If Not Now, Then When? - King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard

Work This Time - King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard

Children of the Omnisiah - Guillaume David

Das Boot ist voll - Faber

Magenta Mountain - King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard