Post-Self
A Tabletop Role Playing Game

Post-Self

A Tabletop Role Playing Ame

by Madison Scott-Clary, powered by The Apocalypse

Other works in the Post-Self universe

The Post-Self Cycle
Qoheleth
Toledot
Nevi'im
Mitzvot

Post-Self: A Tabletop Roleplaying Game Powered by the Apocalypse

For more information, including ways to use the setting for your own works, see *post-self.ink*

Clade: A Post-Self Anthology

This book uses the fonts Gentium Book Plus, Gotu, and Noto Serif.

About Post-Self

> *"All artists search. I search for stories, in this post-self age. What happens when you can no longer call yourself an individual, when you have split your sense of self among several instances? How do you react? Do you withdraw into yourself, become a hermit? Do you expand until you lose all sense of identity? Do you fragment? Do you go about it deliberately, or do you let nature and chance take their course?"*

- Given the chance to live forever in a world not built for death, what do you do?
- Given the inability to forget—all your joys and sorrows, all your foundational memories and traumas—how do you cope?
- Given the ability to create a full copy of yourself—down to every single one of those memories—to do as they will, to individuate and live out their own forever lives, or merge back down and meld their memories with your own, what paths do you take?

The Post-Self universe is an open setting for exploring the ramifications of being able to create copies of oneself, of what it means to undergo individuation, of what it means to let memories build up and up and up within oneself. This game comes as an extra funded by the *Mitzvot* Kickstarter backers.

About the TTRPG

The idea for the *Post-Self* setting began all the way back in 2016. "Plz upload me," I wrote. "Zero pressure. Seriously, how cool would that be! Multithreaded! Distributed! Infinitely useful!"

A wider discussion ensued with others contributing, raising questions such as:

- If a polyamorous person is uploaded and forked to have multiple monogamous relationships, are they still happy?
  - If you read the stories from your other selves daily, is compersion enough to sate whatever passes for 'innate polyamorous natures'?
  - Is there a condition that sates a monogamous fork of a polyamorous personality?
  - Is it kosher for a monogamous fork of a polyamorous personality to quit when a relationship ends?
- Is there a meaningful distinction between merging and rebasing?
- What if there are conflicts?
- Is it a pull request to be reviewed by the down-tree instance?
- Are forks their own individuals?

Over time, the system of the universe tightened and simplified to what it is today. One can only fork from the present instance. Merging became a matter of memories and experiences, and one could choose just how much to merge.Quitting is solely up to the instance; no sending cues to quit. Uploading to this System was a destructive, one-way process.

The influences of revision control — notably Git — were obvious from the beginning, an artifact from the tech leaning nature of those who took part in the conversation. Another heavy influence was that of postfurry, that unique intersection of postmodernism, transhumanism, and the furry subculture; though I'll rush to note that this isn't specifically a furry setting.

After a few weeks, this led to a few stories written by myself and a few others. Then an ARG, a convoluted story named "Qoheleth". Then a Twine game, "Gallery Exhibition: A Love Story".

In the end, another story I had been working on ("Getting Lost") was merged with a greatly expanded "Qoheleth" to form a longer work, also titled *Qoheleth*. A year down the line, and a few weeks off from work resulted in a sequel, *Toledot*, where I accidentally wrote myself into a third book, *Nevi'im*, and a dream I had while dealing with so many Odists led to a fourth and final book in that series, *Mitzvot*.

This last was funded by a (wildly successful) Kickstarter campaign. One of the stretch goals led right back to the roots of the universe: a system that could be adopted to roleplaying.

Powered by the Apocalypse is a tabletop role playing framework developed by Meguey and Vincent Baker, originally for the game *Apocalypse World* but later publicly released for anyone to use. This provides ample opportunities for anyone seeking to make their universes collaborative to do so with low overhead. It seemed like a perfect for a setting so focused on stories, given its low emphasis on mechanics and focus on the storytelling. *Post-Self* in particular uses the minimal hack *Simple World* which aims to reduce complexity even further.

A perfect combination.

About the Post-Self universe

In this setting, your story takes place more than a hundred years in the future in a time where humanity has figured out how to upload consciousnesses to a digital world called at first simply the System (a holdover from its early days of secrecy, so vague a name as to keep discussions hard to trace) and later, after a launch of two smaller copies out of the Solar system, Lagrange, Castor, and Pollux.

Sensoria

Sims

Locations in the System are known as sims, an artifact from the pre-System 'net days. Sims may be public or private. Public sims are usually open to anyone and can be accessed by querying the perisystem architecture for their *tags* (e.g: Josephine's#aaca9bb9).

Private sims are generally owned by a single individual, clade, or family. These sims generally have much more restrictive *ACLs* (from 'access control lists', but now generally used to refer to fine-grained permissions) which can limit who may enter, whether or not the location is visible to others, who in the sim may create new objects, modify boundaries, and so on. The owners have full ACLs, including the ability to grant others owner status and rescind their own (though every sim must have at least one owner).

Forking and merging, individuation, and clades

Introduced almost by accident, the concept of forking allows one to create a new *instance* of oneself. This copy is completely identical, but as soon as they're created and their experiences begin to

differ, that instance starts to undergo the process of *individuation.* They form their own memories, and their experience of the world is colored by those memories.

An instance may *quit.* When they do so, their memories are provided to their *down-tree* instance to remember or not in a process called *merging.* A merge may be wholesale (sometimes described as *blithe*) or *cherrypicked*, wherein the down-tree instance is able to choose some of the memories but not others in a labor-intensive process. After the mid 2100s, instances which are quitting may attach a priority to the merge. A high priority will be felt by the down-tree instance as a greater pressure, perhaps with a kick of adrenaline, while a lower priority merge will be felt as optional. A merge with explicitly no priority will not be offered to the down-tree instance.

The greater the individuation between and up- and down-tree instance, the greater the chance for *conflicts.* These occur when memories don't line up—that is, the experiences may be of the same event, but the conclusions drawn from the event may be different. As time goes on, individuation will affect the entire personality of an individual, as personality is built in part atop memories. Cocladists who have diverged by decades or centuries may find such merges incredibly difficult.

There isn't really a visual indication of forking, Dear's just special.

Forking incurs a reputation cost. This is tied to available capacity on the System, and as capacity grows, the cost of forking decreases, to the point where, in the 2300s, it's negligible. This cost is incurred after five minutes of forking or as soon as that instance forks, whichever comes first. The new instance begins with repu-

tation equal to the cost of forking, though transferring reputation within a clade is possible. Several other things such as information production and exchange, sim creation, and some experiences can lead to reputation exchange.

The *root instance* of an individual will find it very difficult to quit as, to quote May Then My Name Die With Me of the Ode clade, "the System is not built for death". This applies to their *up-tree* instances as well; it is easier to quit the shorter one has been around or if a newer up-tree instance exists (for instance, if Jace Doe#Tracker forks into Jace Doe#1234abc, #Tracker may quit easily right away, though it will get steadily more difficult as #1234abc individuates; similarly, if #1234abc forks into Jace Doe#5678def and #5678def individuates long enough, #1234abc will find it difficult to quit).

Groups of instances forked from a single individual are known as *clades*. Although these are all highly unique, the oh-so-human need to bucketize the world into useful categories has led to three general strategies:

Taskers fork infrequently and only ever for short-lived tasks, choosing to remain primarily a clade of one. *Example:* Tycho Brahe (from *Nevi'im*) is a tasker who forks so rarely he has a lot of trouble even managing it. Merging back down to his #Core proves difficult.

Relying more heavily on forks to accomplish tasks, **trackers** may keep instances around for months or years, and sometimes more than one at a time. However, these instances tend to retain a strong sense of identity with their root instance and will almost always merge back down. *Example:* Ioan Bălan, as a tracker, forks quite often for eir work, but those forks tend to be associated with projects and, on completion, will merge back down into eir #Tracker instance (with a few notable exceptions: Codrin Bălan individuated enough to

become eir own person, and Sorina Bălan forced her own individuation to leave memories behind as best she could).

Dispersionistas don't give a fuck. They fork at need and those forks may quit, may retain some sense of their identity, or may individuate and become their own individuals down the line. *Example:* Michelle Hadje founded the Ode clade, which nominally has 100 members, but they're not super strict about it and many have long-lived instances they don't really talk about.

Clades can form quasi-familial units or not even really talk to each other; it's really up to the individual. There's a mild taboo against relationships between *cocladists*, though the greater they have differentiated, the less that seems to be an issue. While one can rescind one's membership in a clade, this is similar to distancing oneself from one's family: your down-tree instance is still your down-tree instance.

Life beyond scarcity

Contrary to fears, by the end of the 2100s, System capacity had far outstripped its actual usage. As space grew and grew, the cost of forking and creating sims dropped further and further almost to the point of becoming negligible.

"Cost", though? Why would such a thing even exist in such a world?

Before this rapid expansion of technology, the trend was headed in the opposite direction, with usage increasing faster than capacity. In order to keep the System running smoothly after the advent of forking, a *reputation market* was set up. One gains reputation (denoted Ŕ) by a variety of means, from creating new objects, sims, or

content to interacting with others. One spends reputation on acquiring copies of such items or by forking.

These processes are largely transparent (as is the market itself; anyone can check anyone else's reputation via the perisystem architecture), with denizens largely acting on instinct. As with many sys-side activities, things such as forking and acquiring sims or objects are a matter of projecting one's intent to do so. Should one have enough reputation for that, that intent feels very real and forking or purchasing eminently feasible. However, without enough reputation, one would feel that such an intent just...wasn't possible.

As such, few think about the reputation market all that much after about 2220, with a massive wave of reforms to the reputation market hitting at the centennial Secession day in 2221 that essentially obviated it for most individuals.

Eternal memory

The perisystem architecture

The perisystem architecture is the conceptual foam of computer-stuff in which individuals reside and items such as sims, food, very nice fountain pens, and very fine paper exist. However, it also contains large amounts of information in the form of books, the reputation market, and various information feeds.

Some maintenance of the perisystem architecture is required, usually by engineers both sys-side and phys-side. In the instance of the two launch vehicles, for instance, PA engineers managed the DMZ later called Convergence

The shared dream

The System is not a purely digital haven. It's not a construct bound by our ideas of some virtual reality. They tried, at first, and some remnants remain from that — new creations or instances are still tagged with a unique hash in the form of eight hexadecimal digits and System denizens still speak of sims and avatars — but that's not how the System ended up working. When it was first created, those who remained *phys-side* couldn't conceptualize it in any other way. Those *sys-side*, however, knew better. Rather than an analogue to virtual reality, it was more like a consensual dream. What was possible on the System was limited to that which all minds could consensually dream.

This was, at first, pure chaos. That limit alone was not quite enough: what all were able to imagine did not guarantee that all sys-side actually experienced the same thing, and it wasn't until late 2110s that work was put in place to ensure that experiences were truly consensual.

The fact remains, however, that the world has more in common with dreams than with a dream of the physical world than the 'net.

Timeline

2115 — February ?? The first partially successful upload leads to a breakthrough and, shortly after, the foundation of the System.

2124 — January 1 Systime set at year zero, day zero in order to help manage the reputation market, the primary means by which expansion within the initially quite limited hardware of the System is controlled.

2125 — January 21 The System secedes from planetary governments on Earth, making the process of uploading one of emigration.

2170 — Throughout the decade Most planetary governments begin compensating the families of those who choose to upload for lost income.

2325 — January 21 On the 200th anniversary of Secession, the launch project concludes with the launch of the Castor and Pollux launch vehicles.

2346 — May 28 The Artemesians — four other uploaded races living on the same construct, an interstellar vehicle that passes near the Solar system, make contact with Castor. Many instances from Castor wind up joining Artemis as the fifth race, while many Artemisians remain behind on Castor, thus creating a second interstellar craft containing a mix of societies.

2408 — December 31 A series of events leads to an interruption in the functioning of Lagrange lasting thirteen months and ten days. Nearly 1% of instances within the System are irretrievably lost.

Playing the game

Post-Self is a tabletop role playing game powered by The Apocalypse, a lightweight framework for RPGs.

MC and players

When playing, players are led along by a master of ceremonies, or MC, on an adventure. As they move through the story, they form relationships with one another and NPCs around them, specialize

in skills related to the System, and work to accomplish their goals using the tools built into the world that they inhabit.

Agendas and principles

Agendas are the three reasons you play the game. The first two are filled in for you, but the MC should fill in the third for themselves:

1. Make the players' characters' lives not boring.
2. Play to find out what happens.
3. ____

Principles are the things you should seek to do whenever you speak in the game. A list is offered here, just waiting to be customized. Use this customization as an opportunity to establish the way you plan to pace and run the game. The MC should cross off up to two of these *Principles* and write in up to two of their own:

- Sprinkle evocative details everywhere.
- Make the world seem real.
- Build a bigger world through play.
- Create interesting dilemmas, not interesting plots.
- Address yourself to the characters, not the players.
- Make your move, but misdirect.
- Make your move, but never speak its name.
- Look at your NPCs and ideas through crosshairs.
- Name everyone, make everyone human.
- Ask provocative questions and build on the answers.
- Respond with challenging circumstances and occasional rewards.
- Be a fan of the players' characters.

- Think offscreen, too.
- Sometimes, reflect a question back upon the players.
- ____
- ____

Virtues

Each player chooses three *Virtues* for their character. They pick two that the other characters know but one that they keep secret.

> *Note:* The MC may ask for the character's secret virtue confidentially, but doesn't have to!

These virtues are things that the character holds to be the most important thing to them, whether it helps them live a fulfilling life or is a goal they strive to achieve. Here are some examples:

- *Hope* — The character does everything they can to have a hopeful attitude. They try to see the positive in every situation, and trust that there's an outcome that will help everyone.
- *Faith* — The character does their best to have faith in those around them. They value their friendships above all else and believe that everyone has this faith, so they try to live up to the faith others have in them.
- *Life* — The character wants nothing more than to live. Continue living, sure, but they are fiercely protective of their independence and freedom.
- *Love* — The character is in love with love itself. They form strong relationships with others and take any slight to them as an affront to themselves. Romance, true friendship, paternal feelings, found family — all are important.

These are just some examples. Players shouldn't feel constrained by this list, but choose things that they feel work best with their character's approach to life.

Keep in mind that each virtue has a flip-side, though. Consider the virtues above and think of what might happen in each case if something goes against that virtue:

- *Hope* — Another character (player or non) is incredibly pessimistic and defeatist. They give up easily and discount the positive whenever they can. How badly does that rankle? Does it lead to fights?
- *Faith* — Another character with whom this character has a very close relationship does something that violates their trust. Does that crush them? Does hate start to build?
- *Life* — Another character firmly believes that something this character loves doing is wrong and must be stopped. How jealously do they guard their right to continue? How far will they go to fight that belief?
- *Love* — Another character finds love silly. Friendships? A waste of time; they come and go and everyone always leaves. How does this character react to such apathy? Do they try to win them over or distance themselves?

Virtues are used when rolling *Leverage*, so you'll learn more about that in the next section! Each player should write each of their character's virtues on a separate index card along with some examples when happens when an interaction aligns with that virtue or works against it. Their two open virtues should be placed upright so that others can see them when needed, but their secret virtue should be placed face down.

Examples:

Rareș Rareș decides that his character, Doru, has the virtues *fortitude*, *steadfastness*, and *family*. He decides to keep *family* secret.

These are the positive aspects of those virtues. They're what come up when another character's actions align with Doru's virtues:

- *Fortitude* — Doru holds up well under pressure. He can withstand interrogation, won't quit or run away from problems, and will power through unpleasant tasks. He expects others will do the same.
- *Steadfastness* — He's honest and holds to his ideals at whatever cost (whether or not they're these three virtues). He likes people who have goals and work to improve.
- *Family* — Doru lost his family prior to uploading, and so his goal has always been to find those who uploaded and, if he can't to build a new family. He likes those who treat him like a son, a father, or a brother.

Unfortunately, not every interaction will align with these virtues. These are some of the problems these virtues can cause:

- *Fortitude* — When someone quits easily, Doru has a hard time not looking down on them.
- *Steadfastness* — When someone is aimless, static, or even just happy as they are without changing as a thing, it grates on Doru's nerves.

- *Family* — When someone leaves Doru or those he considers family behind or neglects their part of a relationship, Doru has a hard time connecting with them.

Avery Avery values fairness, so they ensure that their character, JC, holds to that with the virtues *love*, *faith*, and *sharing*. They decide to keep *sharing* secret.

These are the positive aspects of those virtues. They're what come up when another character's actions align with JC's virtues:

- *Love* — JC knows that fairness has its roots in love, whether romantic or platonic, and ey feels the greatest connection with those who love their friends, families, and partners.
- *Faith* — Ey has faith that everyone feels (or can feel) this love. It strengthens eir faith in others when that love is on display, whether explicitly through actions or even just a smile.
- *Sharing* — At eir core, though, JC can't deny that this comes with sharing, whether things, knowledge, or even time. Ey gets along best with those who freely give, and ey will freely give in return.

Of course, not everyone treats fairness with the same respect, so problems can arise when others work against that:

- *Love* — When others treat relationships like a commodity, aiming for quantity over quality (even if that quantity is 0), JC is likely to lose eir respect for them.

- *Faith* — When others are cold, distant, or even just solitary, ey has a hard time connecting with them and will often not bother.
- *Sharing* — If you're not going to share with JC, ey isn't going to share with you! Ey guards eir possessions, knowledge, and time jealously from those who don't share.

Stats

There are six stats associated with characters describing how they move through the world

Calculating *Calculating* is the stat that deals with intellect and the mind. Think of these questions when it comes to your *Calculating* rolls:

- How do I know where to look?
- What can I glean from how someone is acting or what the subtext is of they're saying?
- How quickly do I think on my feet?

Whim *Whim* is the stat that deals with how weird and whimsical a character is. Think of these questions when it comes to your *Whim* rolls:

- How weird am I?
- How intuitive am I?
- How curious am I?

Canny *Canny* is the stat that deals with charm, cunning, and persuasion. Think of these questions when it comes to your *Canny* rolls:

- How well can I steer a conversation?
- How easy is it for me to get someone to do what I want?
- How charming can I be before I get annoying?

Aggressive *Aggressive* is the stat that deals with strength, yes, but it is also the stat that deals with determination and passion. Think of these questions when it comes to your *Aggressive* rolls:

- How badly do I want to reach my goals?
- How do I react when someone gets in my way?
- Does my passion ever get in the way of my interactions with others?

Savvy *Savvy* is the most peculiar of the five stats. It describes how well the character moves within the System. There are several parts of the System that require specialized interaction:

- Forking
- Sensorium messages
- ACL management
- Cones of silence
- The Perisystem Architecture
- The reputation market
- Sim navigation

Think of these questions when it comes to your *Savvy* rolls:

- How long does it take me to fork?
- How do I react when receiving a sensorium message, and how likely am I to send one?

- How used to the Perisystem Architecture am I?
- How well do I know how to lock down access to a sim or set permissions on a cone of silence?
- How easily do I use my intent to move around the System, create objects, and interact with the reputation market?

When creating a character, each player can assign the following modifiers: +2, +1, +1, 0, -1. These modifiers are added to a roll that uses that stat. Rolling for a stat involves rolling two six-sided dice, and the results determine what happens next:

- *1–6* — The MC makes a hard move against the character. They may still succeed at their task, but in a way that actually works against their goal, or something bad might happen when they fail.
- *7–9* — The roll succeeds, but the MC makes a regular move against the character. They may succeed at their goal, but it comes with a twist that may change future outcomes.
- *10–12* — The roll just plain succeeds, and the character does whatever they wished to do.

The set of steps for a test is as follows:

1. The player decides they want to make a move.
2. The MC tells them what stat to roll.
3. After the player rolls their dice, the MC describes what happens and asks the player, "What do you do?"
4. The player describes what their character does — this isn't yet the time for further rolls, so it's just the action they take.
5. If the roll leads to an MC move, the MC describes the result.

6. Play continues.

 Examples:

Rareş Doru seems like the more aggressive type, so Rareş assigns his +2 modifier to *Aggressive*. However, he doesn't really seem like the whimsical type, so he assigns his -1 modifier to *Whim*. Doru's stats look like the following:

- *Calculating:* +1
- *Whim:* -1
- *Canny:* 0
- *Aggressive:* +2
- *Savvy:* +1

Consider the following scenario:

> Doru has to convince Jonathan, an NPC, to come with the party. Rareş describes this as follows: "He looks the guy in the eye and says,"Look. I want to get to the top, you want to get to the top, and what better way than to work together? Come on, these guys are cool, I can vouch." " The MC asks Rareş to roll *Canny*, so he rolls 2d6+0 for a total of 6.
>
> "Oof, okay," the MC says. "Well, Jonathan holds Doru's gaze levelly for a very uncomfortable ten seconds, then laughs in his face."You've got to be kidding me," he says. "These guys? You're a musclebound trashdweller, and you've got the twit who looks like he couldn't lift a bottle unless it was full of milk and the lady who will, what, seduce me? Good

fucking luck." He looks up to the ceiling, clearly sending a sensorium message of some kind. What does Doru do?"

Rareş groans and nods. "Damn. Well, Doru grits his teeth and clenches his fists. He just stands stock still and looks up, clearly counting to so he doesn't blow up at the guy. Finally, he nods stiffly to Jonathan and walks away. He was very careful not to punch him in the nose."

"Alright," the MC says. "Jonathan's out of reach for you all, now, and so are all his friends. They'll laugh you out of town if you so much as look at them."

Avery JC's a canny friend who can at least encourage others to be fair, so Avery gives em that lovely +2. Aggressive? Not one bit. Ey gets the following stats:

- *Calculating:* +1
- *Whim:* +1
- *Canny:* +2
- *Aggressive:* -1
- *Savvy:* 0

Here's an example:

JC has struck up a conversation with the NPC who only gives their name as 'Q' in line at a coffee shop. Just, you know, about the merits of coffee over tea. The goal? No less than turning that conversation into a date. It promises to be *really* cute. "Ey smiles

super earnestly," Avery says. "Like, they've got the charm turned way up, now."Hey, thanks for letting me borrow some of your time. Mind if we continue it at a table, though? Even if it's just a fork, I mean..." " They roll 2d6+2 for *Canny* and get a 6 on the dice for an 8 total. The MC gets to make a regular move.

"Q blinks and looks confused," the MC says. ""I mean, I am happy to keep talking tea with you. You have to promise to give it a fair shot, though." They don't seem to have picked up on the 'date' part of this, but if you can stomach some tea..."

Avery laughs. "Fine, fine. JC winks and says,"Deal. Next time we try some coffee, though." "

The MC replies, "Oh, so you're going to try and sneak in another little hint? Okay. Q doesn't quite pick up on that in terms of a date, but does nod. They look very serious."I will try your coffee tomorrow, yes." You don't necessarily get the romantic date you were hoping for, but you do at least get another chance to meet with them."

The Leverage stat   *Leverage* is a unique stat that specifically deals with interacting with another character, player or non. Are you helping someone? Trying to stop them? These are the two main situations when you will roll *Leverage*. Every character has a different leverage score for every other player character and any NPCs added to the party, which are noted on the character sheet.

While the other stats are set at the beginning of the game and don't change, *Leverage* changes as your relationships with other characters change. Every time a player has their character interact with yours and do something that strongly aligns with their virtue, they may increase their *Leverage* for that character by 1 (max of +3). If that character does something in an interaction that really doesn't jive with a virtue, they may decrease their *Leverage* for that character by 1 (max of -3).

Leverage determines how characters can help or hinder others, whether the others are player characters or NPCs. For those other characters that one has a positive relationship with, helping or hindering them will be much more likely to be successful than not.

Note: Hindering need not be a negative thing! For instance, if your friend in game is about to do something *incredibly* stupid, you may want to maybe, you know...stop them. Friends don't let friends talk themselves into a fight.

Testing *Leverage* is similar to testing any other stat:

1. The player decides they want to make a move to help or hinder another character.
2. They roll 2d6+*Leverage*. If they're helping or hindering another player character, they also subtract 2.
3. After the player rolls their dice and calculates the result, the MC describes what happens and asks the player, "What do you do?"
4. After the player finishes describing their action, the MC describes the result. As above, 10–12 is a success; on a 7–9, the MC makes a move against the player; and on a 1–6, the MC makes a hard move against the character.

Examples

Rareş TODO
Avery TODO

Dissolution strategies

Tasker ((-1 to savvy when forking))
Tracker ((0 to savvy when forking))
Dispersionista ((+2 to savvy when forking))

Character sheets

Preparing to play

Your story

Creating characters

Hand each player a character sheet. It should have the stat names listed, including the relationship stat. It should have a description of how the relationship stat goes up and down over the course of the game.

Place the character concepts in the middle of the table. Talk about what they might mean and why they might be cool. Have everyone pick one and fasten it to their character sheet (in the concept box) using a paper clip.

Tell them to assign the following numbers to their 5 basic stats: +2, +1, +1, 0, -1. If you only have 4 stats, instead assign: +2, +1, 0, -1.

The maximum that a stat can ever reach in the game is +3, and the minimum is -1. This includes relationship stats. Player moves cannot advance a stat beyond +3 (though player moves can temporarily or circumstantially increase it beyond +3).

Each PC has a relationship stat with each other PC. Tell the players to do this: whichever PC they know the best, write +2 next to that character's name. Whichever PC they know the least, write -1 next to that character's name. For each other PC, write +1. Tell them to write "NPCs" and assign that relationship a 0.

Every character has a harm clock, with six sections. When characters take harm in the game, they mark a number of sections equal to whatever amount of harm the MC tells them they take. Point out the harm clock, and explain that when it's filled all the way up, the characters are taken out of the action (in a genre-appropriate way).

The next stage of creating characters is to pick 3 moves. When a player picks a move, they pick an option from the list below, give the move a title, and fill in the blanks. Each move gets recorded on their character sheet.

Zero session

Gameplay

MC

MC Moves   The MC moves are the specific things you say in any moment. There are two different cases where you use the MC Moves, and you use them differently in each of those cases. When the players look at you expectantly, you make a regular MC Move. When a player fails a die roll (getting 6 or lower), you make a hard MC Move. John Harper best described how to handle those two cases, so I'll quote him:

When you make a regular MC move, all three:

1. It follows logically from the fiction.

2. It gives the player an opportunity to react.
3. It sets you up for a future harder move.

Say what happens but stop before the effect, then ask "What do you do?"

When you make a hard MC move, both:

1. It follows logically from the fiction.
2. It's irrevocable.

Say what happens, including the effect, then ask "What do you do?"

A list of MC Moves is already written for you, waiting to be customized. Cross off up to three moves, and add up to three of your own to the list:

- Separate them.
- Put them together.
- Put someone in a high-stakes situation.
- Trade harm for harm (as established).
- Deal harm (as established).
- Announce off-screen badness.
- Announce future badness.
- Take away one of their Things.
- Demonstrate one of their Things' bad sides.
- Give them a difficult decision to make.
- Tell them the possible consequences and ask.
- Turn their move back on them.
- Make a move from one of your Dangers or Bigger Pictures
- ___

- ___
- ___

PCs and NPCs

Dangers and the bigger picture

Players

Player moves

- When you do something relating to [specialty], add +1.
- You have the ability to [do some sort of active special power]. It counts as a basic move using [stat].
- You have [some passive special power that has a constant effect].
- You have a [thing]. When applicable, it adds +1 to [stat] and [stat].
- When you do [specialty], mark XP.
- Add +1 to [stat].

Forking and quitting An integral part of life on the System is forking, where individuals may create a copy of themselves, whether for a task or to live out on their own. Optionally, that fork may *quit* and *merge* back down, wherein the initial individual (known as the *downtree instance*) receives all of their memories.

Given the importance of being able to fork, this can play a large role in gameplay, and some players, depending on their *dissolution strategy*, may fork quite often.

After the early 2200s, forking on the System is essentially free, incurring only a small *reputation* cost. However, the dissolution strategy plays a role in one's ability to fork and merge.

- *Dispersionistas* fork and merge easily and frequently. There's no in-game mechanics cost to them forking, as long as the time period in which the game is set is after the early 2200s, meaning that the number of dispersionistas on the System rapidly increased after that date. Their root instance is usually tagged *#Root*. *Not* forking often goes against the character's principles, but is occasionally required for the situation at hand. Dispersionistas can wind up quite batty given the incredible build-up of memory that their down-tree instances can wind up with.
- *Trackers* fork to track specific tasks, relationships, or trains of thought. These forks may be long-lived, but they merge down-tree with some frequency so that their down-tree instance (usually the *root instance*) can keep track of all of the different threads that their tracking. Their root instance is usually tagged *#Tracker*. Given that the idea of letting a long-lived instance individuate beyond a certain point and lose their shared identity, letting a fork linger too long goes against their strengths, as can not forking at all. While this memory does build up within trackers, it plays far less of a role in affecting stability as it does in dispersionistas.
- The most conservative of strategies, *taskers* fork rarely (if at all), and then usually to accomplish only one or two tasks. Their root instance is usually tagged *#Core*. Having to fork more often than that is incredibly uncomfortable and would

work counter to the character's way of life. That said, taskers maintain the strongest sense of self and, with so little divergent memory, remain some of the sanest on the System.

((Stating that one is forking))

((Reputation cost))

((Continue with the root instance))

((Merging and playing out the fork's experiences to justify the root instance's actions))

((Sanity cost))

((Other players' influence, helping with sanity, reacting to forking and merging, etc))

((MC moves, high sanity = positive modifier, low sanity = negative modifier))

The Perisystem Architecture

Overflowing with memory

The shared dream

Sensorium messages

Tracking resources

- Sanity
- Reputation

Dealing and taking harm

Taken out of action

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Carrying forward

Tracking experience and *Leverage*

Story ideas

Battle royale with politics.

- PVP or PVAI in a combat focused setting
- Fairly lethal, but it's revealed to be a game of sorts: as soon as you're "out", you wind up in a war room of sorts, doing some political maneuvering

  - Sending resources to other players
  - convincing players to act in a certain way
  - working with NPCs

- Someone 'wins', whether it's one player or the team of players vs the AI

Questions for the MC:

- First decide if it's PVP or PVAI - the AI doesn't need to be complicated, just enough for some simple combat. Just ensure that the PCs can be taken out
- Do the players go into this knowing that it's a two layer structure?
- How do alliances form between players? With the leverage stat, how does that play out between characters?
- Can players form alliances with NPCs?
- What are the win conditions? What is the motivation for the players?

Finding a lost self

- Work for a sort of PI agency
- Hired by a root instance to find a lost up-tree instance

  - Last they heard, they'd headed off to go walking sims, but then just disappeared, not responding to messages, appear to be bouncing
  - Generally a fan of letting up-tree instances do their own thing, but the lack of contact has them more curious than anything

- Head out talking to various friends to find various clues
- Find the missing instance and get to make some decisions about how to interact, what they want to do, etc.

Questions for the MC:

- Does the up-tree instance wish to be found?
- How does the root instance feel about this
- Did they leave amicably? If not, do they forgive the root instance?
- Was this maybe just a setup by an old clade to make life interesting?
- Do the PCs pick up any NPCs along the way? Does the root instance come with?

You

Post-Self, as an open universe, invites the creation of your own story and explorations of the subtler implications of the mechanics. The

world is what it is by virtue of what we, as participants in its creation, make of it.

As such, I freely invite you to share! If your story takes off, feel free to post about it, share actual plays, write up your plots into stories and modules! Hell, even if you don't want to share it far and wide, I would love to hear what you come up with; feel free to drop me a line. If you're particularly proud of what you've done and are open to others experiencing it, I'm plenty happy to post your contributions as part of the 'canon', such as it is. Modules and RPG plots will be posted on rpg.post-self.ink and stories on the Extra Stories section of post-self.ink.