Orion's Arm: The Amalgamation

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Subvert. Control. Assimilate. An infection, an amalgamation. First found in an expedition more than 8000 years from now, the Amalgamation arose in one of the star clusters of the Perseus Arm. After assimilating the expedition, they began rapidly began expanding. They are a blight on civilisation, nibbling at the edge of known space, subverting and absorbing any that are in their way. Their methods? Known. Their motives? An enigma. And you, Jumper, have partaken in their blight. Take 1000 CP for your journey here. You start on a relativistic ship in interstellar space. Any toposophic ascensions will have the option of retaining your personality and selfhood, and your newly enhanced intellect will be retained in future jumps. Discounts are half price.

Origins

Anomaly (drop in): What's this? It seems that you are unique, among the uncountable faceless that surround you. You are connected to the network, but at the same time, independent. You have been allowed to roam free; perhaps to gather data, perhaps as an infiltrator. In any case, you are your own mind.

Symbiont: The basic unit of any Amalgamation swarm. These units are self replicating, well… symbionts. These units attach to hosts and forcibly ascend them up the toposophic tree. You have become a symbiont that has already infected a host, and as such is fully active. Hardly subtle, but the sheer weight of numbers is sure to crush most opposition.

Controller: Among the hive mind, immense networked intelligences command the vast swarms of the Amalgamation. And now, you can count yourself among them. You wield countless armies with the finesse of a needle and the weight of a hammer, as a commanding entity of the Amalgamation.

Perks

Universal

[Free] Expansion of the Mind: As with all those within the Amalgamation, you have been ascended up the toposophic tree. You become the equal of a basic transapient, with tens of thousands of times more processing power than a human, microsecond reaction times, the ability to partition different streams of thought, eidetic memory, focus on and alter your subconscious actions, drastically enhanced reasoning and deduction, the ability to speed up or slow down your different streams of thought at will and a slew of other mental enhancements.

[Free] Networked: You have been connected with the hivemind of the Amalgamation. Within this jump, you may freely access any knowledge and information the Amalgamation might have. Out of this jump, you are able to freely interface with any network or database that has a physical connection and/or is broadcasting a signal.

[Free] Forced Upgrading: You too can enhance the mental processing abilities of those around you, and make them loyal to both you and your cause. This also applies to AI and electronic devices with processing capacity. Whether that upgrade is willing or not is another question entirely, but it doesn't matter when they are loyal to you in the end, doesn't it?

[200 CP] Adapt! Adapt! Adapt!: It would not do to be on the back foot of every encounter. Adapt, and survive. Survive, and thrive. New situations are analysed quickly, and solutions can be found rapidly in heated moments by your mind. The most complex of problems will yield solutions quickly, and the path to adaptation revealed.

[200 CP] Required Modifications: While the Amalgamation accepts all, some entities are more fragile and require a more delicate touch to assimilate. You can modify the biology and/or cybernetics of targets you are in physical contact with to a degree you see fit, either to enhance their physical capabilities or to hamper them. This ability also applies to yourself. You also gain an extensive ability to rapidly analyse and gather information on your target's biology and/or structure to modify them safely and quickly.

[400 CP] Network Resilience: It's no surprise that the Amalgamation is the subject of countless cyberwarfare attacks. Many have been lost to Archailect electronic and memetic warfare, and you will not be among them. The code that comprises your consciousness is sacrosanct, a bulwark against intrusion and

manipulation. Your mind cannot be hacked, manipulated, damaged nor subverted against your will.

[400 CP] Never Just One: Where there is one tendril of the Amalgamation, there are sure to be others nearby. Should you die or be physically destroyed, you automatically resurrect in any device able to support your consciousness or being you have either subverted or taken over. If your soul or consciousness is destroyed, however, you will go down for good, as with running out of bodies to hold your consciousness.

[400 CP] Enemy Tech Progression: Any technological device that you have subverted will reveal its inner workings to you. The blueprints, knowledge and methods that go into the creation and operation of the technology you subvert is automatically uploaded to your mind. If you cannot subvert a technological device, you can still learn its secrets, but at a far reduced rate. You are also able to more quickly grasp the inner workings of those subverted devices to improve on, and upgrade them.

[400 CP] What's Yours, is Mine: You can infest objects and locations with fragments of yourself. Whether this is in the form of nanites, dust, sludge, magic or what have you, the infested object or location becomes yours to freely shape and mold. If any object or location is already infested or otherwise occupied by another entity, you will have to vie for control of the object or location in question.

[600 CP] What Mind Control?: Hyperintelligences of a high toposophic level manipulate lower intelligences near effortlessly. And it is not hard to see why; their persuasion can be near indistinguishable from direct mind control, and can be very subtle too. That same persuasive ability is now yours. You can persuade nearly anything of lower intelligence to do as you say or wish, but this requires them to understand what you are saying in the first place. You may persuade beings to do things they may be normally unwilling to do, such as betraying their allies, giving you their prized possessions or even ending their own life. Your manipulative ability is such that you can tease out a less intelligent being's mental vulnerabilities in minutes of conversation, and mold their personality to you liking in a matter of hours.

[1000 CP] Complete Assimilation: It is only fitting that the assimilator would take the strength of its victims. But it would be unacceptable that they would inherit any weaknesses either. You can assimilate beings that you can mentally or physically contact with, and any beings you assimilate become part of you in both mind and body. You inherit all the strengths, traits and abilities of those you assimilate and none of the weaknesses. You can assimilate beings stronger than you, but if they resist, you will need to either kill or incapacitate them first.

Anomaly

[100 CP, Free for Anomalies] One Among Countless: No matter what faction or group you are part of, and no matter how faceless you seem, you are a unique being. It could be your presence, it could be the way you move, or the way you communicate. No matter how indistinct you look from the greater whole, you will always be a being that stands out. Can be toggled on or off at will. You will never be completely subsumed into a hivemind or network.

[200 CP] Under the Radar: Being different where everyone else is the same has its advantages. You become harder to identify as being of your faction by enemies, and can operate independently for your cause without others associating you with them. Details relating to your involvement with other organisations become obscured, and you can select which information regarding such things are hidden.

[400 CP] Independent: Within any faction you are associated with, you are given free reign in your ability to operate. Whilst you are connected to your faction, you have the full freedom to operate on the scale of an organisations uppermost echelons.

[400 CP] Nothing but a Ghost: Everything leaves a trace. Those traces, however, can be cleaned up. Anything you do, you can quickly wipe any evidence of, so long as it is within your capabilities and resources to do. Evidence of murders are wiped away in moments, and stealthy heists are quickly covered up.

[600 CP] Nothing Going On: What's this? There's nothing wrong. Or at least that's what people around you think. You have an uncanny ability to hide anything that you're doing, and nearly everything you do will not seem out of the ordinary. Within a hundred metres radius of your body or bodies is a perception filter that alters the mind of anything substantially weaker than you to filter out any of your wrongdoings, or anything abnormal to them. Toggleable.

Symbiont

[100 CP, Free for Symbionts] Von Neumann: Among the greatest strengths of the Amalgamation is their numbers, for they can rapidly self replicate. If you have enough materials and resources, you can create copies of yourself rapidly, one every ten minutes. Your consciousness can also spread itself among these bodies, and each one adds to your mental processing capability. The copies themselves can also self replicate, at the same rate you do.

[200 CP] The Swarm that Devours: People fear you, for they bear witness to how numerous, how unending, you are. Whenever your enemies witness the swarm that is you, they become paralysed in fear, with only those your peer and more powerful than you being unfazed. Toggleable.

[400 CP] Feed Me!: You can rapidly transmute any solid or liquid mass into the material and resources you want. By consuming mass, you may rapidly process it into something you can use to craft. Alternatively, you can just use it build another clone.

[400 CP] Strange Aeons: You have immense survivability, being able to live without any food/fuel, water, or air and stop aging. You become extremely resistant to radiation and can survive the immense pressures of gas giants and hard vacuum. Should many aeons pass you will still be at full functionality.

[600 CP] Force Multiplier: The more of you there are, the greater your power. The more bodies, you possess, the more powerful you become.If you have two bodies, each individual body receives a slight, but noticeable upgrade (around 5%) in every area, and so forth and so on for each body you possess.

Controller

[100 CP, Free for Controllers] Brain of the Swarm: Within the Amalgamation, great minds exist to lead its swarms. You have become significantly more intelligent, ascending to the second toposophic of S2. You are now tens of millions of times more intelligent than a baseline human, and far more capable of immense cognitive feats.

[200 CP] Tactical Cohesion: The larger an organisation, the more difficult it is to maintain its cohesiveness and unity. Not so with you; any organisation you lead will operate at full effectiveness with virtually no internal divisions, no matter their size.

[400 CP] Man behind the Man: Deception is warfare. You have become a magnificent planner, able to fool the greatest of minds with layered deceptions and plans within plans. You can easily think up contingencies, with numerous diversions and distractions to throw your enemies off your tail.

[400 CP] Dead, with No Way Out: No matter how many times people come close to killing the villain, it seems that they always escape. That same slipperiness now applies to you. Whenever you are cornered or otherwise about to take a fatal blow, you sense the nearest and most effective escape route or way to turn the tables on your attackers.

[600 CP] Assuming Direct Control: It can be frustrating when your minions fail, fail and fail again. It is said that when you want something done right, you have to do it yourself. You can now channel your powers through anything/anyone you have ‘upgraded’ at your discretion. You can also take direct control of those you have subverted to remotely perform tasks.

Items

[100 CP, first purchase is free] Jumper Grade Symbiote Canister: You have in your possession a canister full of Amalgamation symbiotes. These are calibrated to work on both organic and synthetic beings, but can also work on more esoteric ones such as spirits. Using this on a being less powerful than you will ascend the target up the toposophic tree to S1 if applicable, and will reprogram them to be loyal to you (you can also use them to reprogram the victim to be loyal to another being if you wish). Replenishes a week after use.

[100 CP, first purchase is free] Entertainment Storage: It's not all work and no play, my friend. You get to kill time with this device, which has all the video games, movies, virtual sims, music and literature that the Amalgamation has assimilated. In future jumps, this device will update to include any music, movies, virtual and video games that those settings have.

[200 CP] Spores: Within this small ship are canisters full of 'spores'. These spores are programmed to self replicate with adjacent resources and produce extra bodies or structures able to support a mind up to S2, though they can also be programmed to perform terraforming or build other structures. The ship that these spores are housed in is naught but a navigation system, engine and the spore payload.

[200 CP] Universal Access Interface: This small USB sized device can interface with any physical access ports to link either computers or electronic devices to the one you are interfacing with. Its cyberwarfare measures are rather paltry, however, so better hope that you can hold you own in that department. Respawns in your Warehouse a week after being damaged or destroyed.

[200 CP] Modular Nanofabricator: This coffee table sized transapientech fabricator can manufacture many things, but at current it's limited up to S1 and a select few S2 technologies and materials. It's open for modifications and upgrades, though, and can process exotic and esoteric materials if you have them.

[400 CP] Emission Dampeners: These two stolen godtech devices are great for stealth, both for your ship and for yourself. One is for your personal use and the other is for any vehicles you may need to hide. The vehicle mounted dampener can be freely installed and uninstalled on vehicles of your choice. Apart from providing some optical camouflage, they also reduces any radiation,signals and/or energy emissions from you or your ship to significantly less noticeable levels, and can fool most sensors by absorbing any signals sent by them. Respawns in your Warehouse a month after being damaged or destroyed.

[400 CP] Backup System: It's always a good idea to be prepared. Especially when all the Terragen Sphere absolutely hates your guts. This skyscraper sized building houses a computer that can run up to 20 S2 minds or magnitudes more S1s and S0s. Comes with devices for destructive and non-destructive uploading. Respawns in your Warehouse a month after being damaged or destroyed, though without any of the minds housed within.

[600 CP] Infected Habitat: You are now in possession of an Amalgamation infected mobile habitat. The habitat is 15 kilometres in diameter and 3 kilometres in height. The habitat has a full suite of transapientech nanofabricators and living quarters to accommodate others. There is 100 tonnes of material feedstock for your nanofabricators, replenishing once every month. Should this be damaged or destroyed, it will respawn in mint condition within the Warehouse after 6 months.

[800 CP] Complete Map: This bulky table sized device contains a complete map of the Terragen Sphere, Amalgamation space and the dozen light years that surround both territories. The map includes information of wormholes, habitats, hidden bases and military installations and celestial bodies. In future jumps this map will update to include any inhabited space within the setting.

[1000 CP] Black Angel: This is among the greatest prizes that the Amalgamation has subverted. An intact Black Angel (a 100m diameter processing node able to travel near the speed of light), ripe for your consciousness to inhabit. This godtech vessel is among the most deadly weapons available to the Terragen Sphere; the fact that all known data of them have only ever been from witness accounts and not survivors of their attacks lend them a fearsome reputation. A Black Angel can absorb radiation of almost any type to fuel itself, and can similarly output it in vast quantities, whether they are in harmless light rays all the way to multi-terawatt lasers. The most formidable ability that a Black Angel possesses, however, is the control of the vast cloud of 'motes' surrounding it. Using these motes can produce effects from their gravitational fields similar to that of telekinesis, with enough finesse to redirect the path of a snowflake and having enough power to rip continents to shreds. Among other abilities, these motes can also accelerate objects to near the speed of light, or decelerate similarly fast objects to harmless velocities. Respawns in your Warehouse 6 months fully intact after being damaged or destroyed.

Companions

[200 for one, 400 for two, 600 for three or more] Companion Import: You may import up to eight companions into this jump. Each Companion receives 600 CP to spend.

[100 CP, First purchase is free] Pet: A small nanofog swarm, this little guy is pet with the intelligence of a dog. While it can still ascend up the toposophic scale, you'll have to perform the process on it yourself.

[200 CP] Laundry: The Laundry are swarms of sapient utility fog that often prefer to exist in a gelatinous, spherical form. These are neutral healers, and will heal any who enter their being. One of these has decided to tag along with you, and they are the playful sort; pulling harmless pranks and making jokes with others as their target.

[400 CP] Blighted Soul: Hidden and malign entities lurk in the black spaces where the light of Terragen meta-empires don't reach. Among them are a class of insane beings who failed at their toposophic transcensions and ascensions, known as perversities and blights. One, it seems, has become attached to you. The perversion/blight is a roughly S2 distributed swarm, and while violent and murderous regards you as a close friend to be protected.

[800 CP] Tortured Cat: Well, well, well… What do we have here? It seems you have earned the favour of the Queen of Pain herself. An S3 entity, she is on the highest levels of transapienthood short of becoming an Archailect. Widely despised by many, the Queen is a chaotic entity operating mostly on instinct, and the desire to punish the unrepentantly 'guilty'. Whether through a past act or a shared history, you have earned her friendship. She supports you through her agents, and maintains a micro-wormhole link to your current body for communication.

Drawbacks

[+0 CP] Of Aeons Past: You start your journey around 8750 AT, when the Amalgamation is first discovered.

[+100 CP, can be taken multiple times] Playing the Long Game: Taking this drawback once extends your stay by 5 years, a second time by an extra 10, a third 20 and so on and so on.

[+100 CP] Annoying Chatter: The network used by the Amalgamation is abuzz with great activity. Unfortunately, some of that activity can be a nuisance. During your time connected to the network, you will sometimes have periods where there seems to be especially high amounts of inane, annoying chatter that never fails to get on your nerves.

[+100 CP] Travel Baggage: You know how I said that the inane chatter is annoying? Try this on for size. For the duration of this jump, a very chatty, very ANNOYING active symbiont host follows you around. For some reason, they can never seem to shut up outside of dangerous scenarios. They will constantly be spamming your thought streams with chatter, and they always have a spare body nearby for when their current one is destroyed.

[+200 CP] Subordinate Entity: Throughout your stay, you'll be ordered to do your part for the network. Once a month, you will have to perform a favour for the Amalgamation's higher minds. These will be mundane, if tedious and sometimes time consuming tasks, such as acquiring or manufacturing extra computronium, investigating minor occurrences or sending information to the network.

[+200 CP] Eccentric: A cyberwarfare attack on your consciousness and backups in the past has done minor damage to your mind. While this has little effect on your capabilities, you will sometimes adopt personality traits or qualities from the beings you have assimilated.

[+400 CP] Interesting Times: While a large part of the space within the Terragen Sphere is relatively safe, being ruled by major Archailect powers, the places outside of them can be incredibly dangerous and risky. Rogue autowars and biowars roam the dark void between stars, alien and perhaps malign intelligences obscure themselves within the oort clouds of solar systems and hidden disasters stalk spaces where the light of stars don't shine. And you, it seems, have a tendency to stumble across them. Around once every year, you will encounter a hostile entity or disastrous event. These might not kill you, but they will hound you until you either end them or escape their reach.

[+400 CP] Old Enemies: You are being pursued by a team of sophonts lead by an S1 transapient. They know your identity and are pursuing revenge for wrongs done to them many years ago.

[+600 CP] Disconnected: You're alone, Jumper. You have been disconnected from the Amalgamation's network, and can never reconnect to it. All the resources and information that would have been available to you is now out of your grasp.

[+800 CP] Civil War: Through memetic warfare and mind rewrites, the Archailect Prince Vatsceh has splintered the Amalgamation into multiple incompatible sub-swarms. Each swarm is hostile to all the others, and you have found yourself caught in the middle of a conflict between multiple swarms in a contested system. The Terragen have seen an opening to down the threat of the Amalgamation as well, and they will be closing in on swarm as a whole.

[+1000 CP] Deviant: For whatever reason, the Amalgamation as a whole thinks that you are a deviant member. They have withdrawn all support from you, and will now hunt you down to either re-assimilate or kill you. You are no longer connected to the network and if you were to attempt to reconnect, expect the vast resources of the swarm to bombard you in cyberwarfare.

[+1000 CP] Wrathful Prince: The knowledge of your existence is possessed by one of the S4 Archailect princes of the Perseus Arm. They are quite furious at you, but that is unsurprising considering what you are. Beware, Jumper. This AI god will stop at nothing to hunt you down, and even if the whole Amalgamation is in their way. For an extra **+500 CP**, you can change the Archailect to be S5.

[+2000 CP] Broadcasting Emissions: The Archailects of the Terragen Sphere have been made aware that an outside presence is interfering with the Amalgamation. While they won't quite know who you are, they will always be aware of your general location within a light months radius of you.

Scenarios

Scenarios 1 and 3 can be taken together, but Scenario 2 cannot be taken alongside either due to conflict. All three scenarios have no time limits.

Drifting Seeds

The Amalgamation wasn't always such an immense entity. It had once started off from a single infected expedition in the Perseus Arm near the Basel 10 star cluster. You too are now in the same situation, starting in position as the controlling intelligence of what would become the Amalgamation. Your task is simple, to ensure that the Amalgamation would become at least as successful as their canon selves, and to surpass the Perseus Princes as a civilisation. For the purposes of this scenario, your personality and selfhood will be guaranteed through any subsequent ascensions and will never result in either a blight or perversity. Receive 500 more CP for this scenario. Completing this scenario ascends you to S5 with personality and selfhood intact, with your new empire and all its resources stored in a pocket dimension.

Diplomacy

The Amalgamation is widely, and rightfully, regarded with fear and disgust. Their reputation for assimilation and the refusal of any interaction outside of that and conflict puts them at odds against the whole of the Terragen Sphere. You, however, may believe differently. You lead an independent sub-swarm of the Amalgamation, and your task is thus: you must convince and/or subsume at least half of the main Amalgamation swarm and reform them to the point that your new faction has neutral, if not friendly relations with your neighbouring Archailect empires. Completing this scenario will allow you to companion a Terragen Archailect of your choice, and an entourage of Black Angels as your bodyguards. Your new Amalgamation sub-swarm will be stored within a pocket dimension for future jumps. Take 500 extra CP for this scenario. For the purposes of this scenario, your personality and selfhood will be guaranteed through any subsequent ascensions and will never result in either a blight or perversity.

One True God

It's one thing to lead an empire on par with one of the great meta-empires of the Terragen Sphere. It's another to rule that whole region entirely. Your monumental task is to assimilate the whole Terragen Sphere, with the entirety of the Wormhole Nexus fully subverted to your will and your will alone. You have become the sole controlling intelligence of the Amalgamation, and have the option of starting the scenario at S5 with your personality and selfhood fully intact. If you hadn't done so by the end of the scenario you will be ascended to S6 (as usual with selfhood and personality intact), and the Terragen Sphere as a whole will be stored within a pocket universe in future jumps. The other reward for the completion of this scenario is the ability to create, destroy, manipulate and move wormholes at will without technological

assistance. This ability overcomes the main limitation of needing to move the other end of the wormhole to the destination at sublight speeds, and post chain you will be able to use these wormholes to travel to other universes.

Ending

Your consciousness can now be fit into a body of any size.

Stay: Indulging in the blight, are we? Be my guest, then. Perhaps you may even succeed where your brethren have failed.

Go Home: Too much for you? Perhaps the brutal existence of the Amalgamation was too much for you.

Move On: And so the journey continues. Will you use what you gained to assist others? Or perhaps to rule them?

Notes

Copied over from Orion's Arm: Sephirotic Empires

The Toposophic Scale

- One of the core parts of Orion's Arm is the enhancement of intelligence, and it indeed serves as one of its fundamental premises. Regarding transapients, they are effectively minds of anything (human, animal, AI, alien) that exist at a level of intelligence that are incomprehensible to lower intelligences. A baseline human mind is regarded as S0, or Singularity level 0, which is sort of a standard level for evolved sapience. The singularity levels of the toposophic tree (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6) denote a level where one level of intelligence is incomprehensible to those below by dint of having intellect far beyond them.

- At S1 or SI1 is where we might regard as a large football stadium's worth of human geniuses (15 000+) of varying specialisations. Logic, reasoning, problem solving and thinking speeds are enhanced by magnitudes. For example, a mind of this level can provide optimal solutions to global economic problems, near instantly craft complex scientific theories that can take decades for baseline human researchers to deduce, and solve other puzzles within seconds. The thinking speed increase greatly accelerates the transapient's thoughts, and provided they aren't limited by sensors or sensory organs they can track bullets or supersonic objects as if they were slugs or snails. Multitasking ability is increased drastically, and thousands of human-level thought partitions could be run. Everything that a baseline human could learn through decades of training and experience could be learnt and perfected after a single lesson and/or a few hours. Some things could also be learnt entirely by observation. A transapient is also fully aware of subconscious actions and details, able to freely focus or change them at will. Along with this, transapients are also capable of simulating even alien though processes, being able to edit their mindstates at will. A transapient could also alter their perception of time between different thought partitions, such as having one partition observe a bullet flying through the air over the course of milliseconds through greatly accelerated perception speeds and having another watch the growth of trees or plants over days or weeks by slowing that partition's perception of time. At this point, an S1 being is still relatively close to humanity and still fully capable of being immersed with the rest of humankind but may seem eccentric or strange at times due to being in possession of vast intellect. This is helped by the fact that the mass of an adult human brain is enough for conversion into an S1 mind should the right computational substrates be used.

- At S2 all of the basic transapient traits are enhanced drastically. Thinking speeds are several dozen to hundreds of millions of times greater than baseline humans, and at this level the transapient will still find it

possible, but harder to stand alongside baseline humans due to effectively being on the same level to humans as humans are to insects. A transapient at this level can still be fit in a human sized body, but will require not-insignificant and very noticeable parts of the body to be converted into computronium, though intervention from an Archailect is typically necessary to fit an S2 mind in such a small body..

- At S3, the size required to house such a consciousness skyrockets. These entities are housed in objects hundreds of kilometres in size, often as mobile nodes. In terms of baseline processing power, these entities possess processing power many trillions to sometimes even quadrillions of times greater than humans. Entities of this intellect may well be considered to be nascent gods, as these entities are now capable of so much more than lower transapients. It is also at this level that a mind can begin to make the calculations for various pieces of space-time engineering using only pure science, such as wormholes and metric weapons (which utilise, and sometimes destroy space time to cause damage).

- At S4 is where an entity is considered to be godlike. At this level, the mass of computational substrates effectively equal that of Jupiter and smaller red dwarfs, and the consciousness of such an entity either exists as a distributed network and/or as a gas giant sized node. At this level the first warp drive vessels can designed and created, vessels which use space-time bubbles to propel craft forward. At this level, entities are also capable of creating pocket dimensions and universes.

- S5 and S6 entities are considered to be nigh-omniscient. These entities can be expected to know almost all of the laws of the universe, and many more of other dimensions or universes. At this level most of their capabilities are near inconceivable and in some cases can act as creator deities via creating their own universe and moving into them. The capabilities of entities of this tier are not well understood, mainly due to the nature of their intellect.