

## Collinites:

*Living spaceships with an unusual conception of individuality. The robbed foundation of Biotech.*

### Appearance

A Collinite colony resembles an organic spacecraft but is in actuality an interconnected group of many organisms. Collinites have three morphs, each fulfilling different roles in an organism.

Pilot morph individuals resemble earth octopi, albeit with interlocking carapace plates, internal bone plates protecting the central brain, and ten tentacles. Neuron tails extend throughout their limbs, networking their entire body into one processing unit. They can use this massive brain to perform the millions of calculations necessary for performing FTL spaceflight. Losing a limb might make a Pilot morph forget how to perform basic tasks or even decades of their lives. Propulsion can be achieved in nebulae through inhaling hydrogen and helium dust through an aperture on the top of their head and expelling it through their limbs. Pilot morphed individuals can only reach the size of a human torso, but might be as small as a suitcase.

Shift Morphs resemble boneless pilot morphs until they reach maturity, at which point they are able to rearrange their body into a form that might better aid a whole colony. Usually, they will gestate inside a Traveler morph, shifting into a powerful organic weapon system, a lightning fast FTL drive, or some other useful addition. Their appearance is entirely dependent on how they construct their bodies.

Traveler morphs resemble an oblate spheroid and are covered with a boney plating similar to that of Pilot morphs. Apertures reminiscent of sphincters line the dorsal ridge which allow accepted guests, such as Collinites, cargo, or other passengers, into its body. Long streamer-like tails extend from their lower stomach and rear. This flesh can change shades rapidly and allows for Collinite communication. Hundreds of compound eyes dot the prow and sides of Traveler morphs, allowing for nearly 270° vision. A stingray like mouth sits at the bottom of the prow and is used to ingest hydrogen and other edible gasses. They can achieve propulsion, even outside of nebulae, but cannot reach FTL independently.

### Life Cycle and Reproduction

After about 400 years of unity between a Pilot morph and a Traveler morph, eggs can be produced by a Shift Morph that has tasked itself to reproduction. These eggs are then fertilized and laid by the Pilot and Traveler Morph. Nebulae are the homes of Colonies and the only place where eggs can be safely laid. Typically, a clutch will contain 100 eggs, 80 of which will be Shift morphs, the remaining 20 split between Traveler and Pilot morphs, favoring Pilots. As such, pilots must compete for

the attention of Traveler morphs with elaborate color changing shows on their tentacles.

Fresh hatchlings feed on the mass amounts of hydrogen and helium, growing quickly. Collinites will frequently reproduce synchronously with other members of their species, leading to a mass return to generational birthing spots.

Collinites are considered mature at 100 years but can live for thousands, rarely dying of natural causes and instead succumbing to the innumerable dangers of space flight.

## Society

Socialization is immensely important in Collinite culture, despite the fact that most Collinites are 'solitary' wanderers. When Collinites form a colony, it is usually for life. It is rare that two colonies will meet in space, and it is rare that members will move between colonies. Most colonies are formed within the nebula in which they reproduce, just as Collinites are leaving adolescence. Finding a group to spend the rest of your life with is a big decision. As such, individuals who are not able to find cohesion with other colonies are usually left within the nebula to wait for the next birthing cycle.

Typically, a Pilot and a Traveler with a similar ideology will merge first, other Flex morphs joining later, attracted by the strength of this first bond.

Colonies view individuality in a much different way than humans. A single Pilot morph might be said to have aspects, such a curiosity or determination, that might be added to a whole colony, rather than labeling those as personality traits. It is not believed that a single individual is a whole being. In fact, they are usually referred to as 'partial' Collinites, while a Collinite Colony would be referred to as a Whole Collinite. Urges and opinions from members of the colony will present as strong conflicting emotions or physical sensations rather than fully articulated statements of intent.

A gender is often selected by a Whole Collinite that reflects its overall purpose. For example, a Collinite that has devoted itself to conflict might choose the Wargender. Others include exploregender, mediategender, pleasuregender, and many more.

Collinite names are complicated symphonies of color displayed across the entire visible body. Humans will often simplify these sequences into nicknames like Zebra, Red Rain, or Kaleidoscope. These bastardizations are not universally loved by Collinites, although some find them quaint. Many prefer names that better reflect the actual meanings of their sequences, such as Passionate Mercantilism, Comforting Warmth of a Dying Star, or Frightening Discovery.

Communication occurs through the changing of pigmentation on exposed skin and tentacles. As such, Flex Morphs are regarded as being the most expressive since

they have the largest surface area on which to display patterns. For more in depth communication, and for merging into Whole colonies, Collinites will touch each other's flesh and merge their nervous systems to create a single interconnected brain. For this reason, they regard humans as incredibly lonely creatures as they can never truly know another.

When two colonies cross paths in the black of space it is regarded as a joyous occasion and is celebrated accordingly, even if the two have never met previously. They will share navigational data, discoveries, but rarely continue to interact for long periods.

### Religion

Collinites believe every member of their species shares the same fragments of a universal soul which is scattered among all living beings. Unifying into colonies allows many fragments of this soul to coexist at once in the same space. The ultimate hope is that all fragments of this soul will one day be able to merge into a single universe spanning organism that is able to explore all facets of itself.

### Government

Since every colony is, in essence, a self-governing body, Collinites see no need for a unifying government, especially since they are rarely in contact with other colonies for long. Especially old Collinites that can no longer travel the stars often act as guards in birthing nebulae and are treated with reverence. Often, in times of strife like the Blackpool incident, they will be consulted for advice, although each colony will be ultimately expected to make their own decision.

The only territory Collinites will guard are birthing nebulae, but otherwise they freely travel the stars and have difficulty conceptualizing human territory ownership.

### Blackpool

Unfortunately, relations between humans and Collinites have frequently been fraught. The first organization to encounter Collinites was Blackpool industries. They did not initially realize they were sapient organisms, or ignored this, and captured dozens to dissect and study. The findings derived from the murdered colonies became the foundation for Blackpool's current expertise in gene editing and bio-tech. Fearing these attacks, Collinites organized and began striking back at any human ship that crossed their path. Since every human craft they had encountered had been hostile, they naturally assumed humanity was a hivemind. The majority of the losses were suffered by human civilian craft. Eventually, human mediators were able to learn how to communicate with Collinites. After these peace talks the Collinites shifted their efforts to official Blackpool transports and defense vessels. Soon Blackpool offered

Collinites an armistice which many accepted. Kidnappings and attacks are ostensibly over, although many wonder if Blackpool has really stopped their research, and many Collinites are not satisfied with this 'justice.'

### Piloting

It is rare for a Collinite to be a part of a human wing. Establishing consensus among a single colony is sometimes difficult, but managing to agree with other humans is even more trying. Human space often feels actively hostile, necessary hydrogen resources fiercely guarded rather than being documented and freely shared. To communicate with humans often requires technological or biotech implants which can be deeply uncomfortable. Since most Collinites never need to interface with technology naturally, it can feel like talking to a corpse, or like having a dead organ stuffed inside you. Blackpool biotech implants are even worse, mindless hunks of flesh many Collinites regard as twisted mutations and echoes of themselves.

To prevent this, some Flex Morphs have recently discovered how to shift themselves into translator morphs, allowing for human communication. Still other Flex Morphs have shifted themselves into human morphs. These bipedal simulacrum could not be mistaken for humans with their rapidly shifting, half translucent skin, but can be used to walk amongst humans and interface with them successfully. However, becoming a human morph requires that one exist outside of a colony, something traditionalist Collinites fear separates them from the experience of being with a colony and the universal soul.

Other Flex Morphs shift themselves to fill roles in human vessels. Pilot morphs, often unable to find a colony, might resort to purchasing a ship. Some Traveler morphs, having lost their pilot or a significant number of their Flex Morphs, might resort to having a human pilot.

A growing number of Collinites have found themselves saved by humans, avoiding certain death due to intervention by corporate ships. Unfortunately, they are then expected to repay that debt, leading to decades long contracts. Injuries are often repaired through expensive implants, necessitating a reliance on humans. They also need to acquire human currency to eat at tightly guarded hydrogen and helium farms. These and many other factors might necessitate becoming a pilot for hire.

### Pilot sex

Immediate Needs: N/A

Regular Needs: Weekly meals of hydrogen and ionized gas, Weekly Hibernation

Senses: sight, touch, taste

Communication: Collinite color code, Collinite Interface, galactic sign language

Abilities: FTL Mind: can plot FTL jumps twice as fast.

Biologic interface: Can intuitively operate biologic systems while touching them, gaining a d4 to checks even if you are not competent with said system. (Note: you cannot access all systems in a ship with this ability, only those which you can immediately touch)

#### Traveler sex

Immediate Needs: N/A

Regular Needs: Weekly meals of Hydrogen and Ionized gas, Weekly Hibernation

Senses: Sight, touch, taste, Visual Sensors, Electronic Sensors 10 KM

Communication: Collinite color code, Collinite Interface, galactic sign language

Abilities: Ship Shape: choose a size I ship chassis to emulate. That chassis gains the collinite tag. You do not need a cockpit to operate. Construct your ship normally, including paying the purchase price of this chassis.

Growth: You may pay that chassis purchase cost at a station to buy a massive amount of hydrogen gas, allowing you to grow. Increase your size by one, double the number of slots and mounts available, and the maximum system rank available to install in those slots. Double your hull. The next time you use this ability, the price will double.

Self Pilot: You count as a pilot for yourself. If someone else is piloting you, you count as a crewmember. You do not have health and do not have a land speed. You cannot use equipment. You do not need to install a metabolizer to power biological systems.

#### Morph Sex

Immediate Needs: energy metabolized by a ship

Regular Needs: Weekly Hibernation

Senses: touch

Communication: Collinite color code, Collinite Interface, galactic sign language, pidgin

Abilities: System Shape: choose a system or weapon to emulate. That system or weapon gains the collinite tag. You may pay that system's or weapon's purchase cost at a station to buy a massive amount of hydrogen gas, allowing you to grow. If it is a weapon, double its damage die and range. If it is a system, double its effective range, any bonus it provides, and any dice it adds to the dicepool. The next time you use this ability, the price will double.

You count as a crew member on any ship you are installed in. You have 3 integrity. If an effect would damage you, take 1 integrity damage. If an effect would

destroy you, take 2 integrity damage. Lost integrity damage is repaired when you pay upkeep. You do not have a land speed. You cannot use equipment.

### Whole Colony

Immediate Needs: N/A

Regular Needs: weekly meals of Hydrogen and ionized gasses, Weekly Hibernation

Senses: Sight, touch, taste, Visual Sensors, Electronic Sensors 10 KM

Communication: Collinite color code, Collinite Interface, pidgin, galactic sign language, any one human language

Abilities: You are a whole colony of Collinites. Build a ship as normal. You do not need a cockpit to operate. Every part of your ship gains the collinite tag.

You count as a pilot for yourself. You do not have health. You do not have a land speed. You cannot use equipment. You do not need to install a metabolizer to power biological systems

### Humanoid Morph

Immediate Needs: N/A

Regular Needs: Weekly meals, Hydrogen and ionized gasses, Daily Hibernation

Senses: Sight, sound, touch, taste, smell

Communication: Collinite color code, Collinite Interface, any 2 human languages, pidgin, galactic sign language.

Abilities: Biologic interface: Can intuitively operate biologic and collinite systems while touching them, gaining a d6 to checks even if you are not competent with said system. (Note: you cannot access all systems in a ship with this ability, only those which you can immediately touch)

### Trikkates

*Short lived insectoid traders who saw bartering systems and said, 'Hey, you could make a religion out of this!'*

### Appearance

Trikkates stand around three meters tall at their highest point and resemble great carapaced urns supported by three chitinous legs. Three arms ending in needle-like fingers sprout from a mouth on the top of their bodies. Each hand has an eye hidden in the palm of their 7 fingered hands. Their fingers ring their circular palms, resembling sunflower petals.

## Life Cycle and Reproduction

Trikkates only live for about 17 years, at which point they commend their soul to a wooden totem they spend their life carving with their sharp nails. These totems are held in high regard and are kept for centuries. Frequently, living Trikkates will consult these totems for advice or guidance. A strange energy has been detected emanating from the totems humans have been allowed to examine, and Trikkates will often be able to convey not only specific advice, but moments from their ancestors' lives after consulting their totems. This has yet to be explained. After death, a Trikkate's empty body will be ritually devoured by the community in a celebration of their life.

They are predominantly carnivorous, consuming large amounts of insects, proteins in the carapaces seemingly necessary for maintaining good health. Still, they enjoy fruits as a delicacy. They require very little water, and their size and the gravity of their ships suggest a planet much smaller than earth with a similar climate and atmosphere.

Trikkates are hermaphroditic and can auto-inseminate, but often engage in mass fertilization events. Spermatophores can be preserved for long periods of time before being used. Children usually complete gestating about a month after insemination, at which point they will continue living in the protective warm embrace of their parents mouth for at least another month before joining society. Typically, only one child will be born at a time, and a Trikkate will only have one or two offspring in a lifetime. After leaving their parent's mouth, a child will be raised communally. While a child might show favoritism towards their parent and vice versa, it is nowhere near the level of sentimentality expressed by humans. Instead, this love is directed towards fellow community members. Children are considered mature at about a year old, at which point they are at least a meter tall.

Trikkates can regrow limbs, but this is seen as a major setback to the creation of one's totem and masterwork. Regrowing a limb takes about a year and requires a great deal of food and rest. Finishing both a totem and a masterwork by the end of one's life after suffering such an injury is seen as a great accomplishment. Some Trikkates find the pressure to complete a great work and a totem by the end of their life to be overwhelming, and succumb to the pressure. Some Trikkates find this sad, a life wasted, but most celebrate the simple fact of their existence. Often, if a Trikkate cannot finish their totem before their death, loved ones will complete it for them, incorporating remembered aspects of their life into the work. These totems are frequently seen as more valuable.

## Ark Ships

All Trikkates met by humanity have lived aboard 7 massive ark ships, traveling through the universe at sublight speeds with seemingly no destination. Trikkates have

been offered FTL drives, but staunchly refuse the use of both drives and worm gates. Conservative Trikkates regard interstellar travel to be a holy endeavor. Most Trikkates don't believe their travel has a destination. It is the journey that was important to their ancestors, and so that is what they pursue.

Their ships are so large that even dreadnaughts can fly through their cavernous halls. Over twenty kilometers in length and often 5 kilometers wide, artificial gravity is created through centripetal force, holding inhabitants against the lush floors and homes carved into still growing trees, stretching into artificial sky. Their ships are masterfully engineered, containing perfectly stable ecosystems that provide the inhabitants with enough clean water, food, and air to sustain populations of around 50,000 individuals, including flora and fauna. Many of these species are similar among the 7 vessels, although they all show signs of divergent evolution. Other species are unique to each ship, Trikkates stating that they were acquired through trade with visitors. The species seem to be carefully selected so as not to upset the balance of the ship's ecosystems. These ships are plated with unbroken panels of wood which would seem to suggest colossal trees on the Trikkate's home planet. Carvings of exquisite artistry cover the panels, depicting the unique story of each ship.

Reverse engineering the flight path of all 7 known Trikkate ships seems to suggest a common point of origin, millions of years away at their current speeds. Even the Trikkates themselves don't seem to know how long they have been traveling, or why they are traveling at all. Some believe that their home planet was destroyed or disrupted in some cataclysm. Since all seven ships show remarkably similar cultures, even after millions of years of change, it has been speculated that the seven ships might have been the project of a religious sect.

Trikkate lore holds that there were originally 10 ark ships. Messages are frequently sent between the ark ships through mercenary couriers or merchants trading between them. They enjoy hearing from their sibling vessels, and eagerly await news of the lost ships. Unfortunately, the last missives received from any of the missing ships were sent hundreds of generations ago.

## Society

Due to the prohibition against FTL, Trikkate ships frequently see many visitors from far and wide, since the Trikkates won't come to them. Trikkates usually welcome these visitors and the opportunities they present for trade and learning. Most Trikkate vessels seem to have come into contact with hundreds of other species, their coffers containing artifacts and technologies that boggle the mind. Their totems also contain records stretching thousands of years into the past. Most Trikkates are quite happy to show visitors around their ships and allow access to their vaults. They will allow almost anyone to barter with them, as long as the visitor trades valuable artifacts



instead of meaningless money. However, if anyone attempts to take advantage of Trikkates, thousands of years of rare weapons and orbital cannons can be brought to bear on offenders. Thieves are not simply breaking laws, they are disrespecting powerful spiritual forces. Thievery is one of the only strong prohibitions in Trikkate theology, and otherwise, they are incredibly tolerant to both outsiders and other Trikkates when practices differ.

Trikkates communicate by vibrating and striking their shells and fingers while also vocalizing using their trumpet-like throats. This results in an incredibly musical and thrumming speech that is beautiful to listen to. Different Trikkate ships have drastically different dialects that are somehow understandable to other Trikkates. This difference is often characterized by humans as almost genre-like, some Trikkates sounding like elegant choirs, others rock music. Still, Trikkate vocal chords are similar enough to human's that they can accurately emulate human speech, or, indeed, any other speech. Trikkates seem uniquely adapted to communication.

## Religion

Trade is regarded as a holy and intimate exchange in Trikkate society. The majority of their belongings are hand made and represent years of mastery. Each Trikkate is expected to achieve mastery in a specific field, creating a masterwork (in addition to their totem) to be shared with the community and passed from talon to talon over the centuries. As a result, Trikkate theology posits that all objects have a spirit, and these spirits must be maintained and respected. Trikkates will never accept human currency, or any currency for that matter, and are incredibly confused by it. How could it be possible to put a value on a spirit? Only spirits of similar energies can be exchanged, resulting in a very particular form of metaphysical bartering.

The Journey seems to be a separate metaphysical concept from the spiritual energy of objects, but is possibly still related. Trikkate colony ships are not heading in the same direction, and are indeed growing farther and farther apart with each passing day, but many Trikkate thinkers believe that this Journey was of paramount importance to their ancestors and are determined to undertake it on the terms set for them. This parallels a Trikkate's journey through life, slowly attaining mastery in a specific field while participating in the refinement of a craft shared by all.

## Government

Trikkates have little to no concept of gender, and exist in an egalitarian society. Since there is no scarcity of resources in Trikkate society, there is very little need for arbitration. When a problem does arise, such as violent crime or the exchange of a particularly valuable artifact, a council might be convened. These councils are usually made up of the most preeminent craftspeople in the community, and are known for

coming to an agreement rather quickly. Trikkates have only recently come into contact with humanity and relations have been relatively peaceful, if not confused. Humans often attempt to parley with a leader or an elder, of which the Trikkates have none. They might even try to buy or sell valuable resources and objects, which further confuses the Trikkates.

### Piloting

Very few Trikkates will leave their colony ships to explore the galaxy. Why leave a place where all your needs are met and you are free to explore your deepest passions? Why break the taboo on FTL travel? However, not all Trikkates are similarly satisfied. Some might choose to chase the stars, attempting to master the art of piloting, or cartography, or healing, or any of the many disciplines that cannot be accomplished in isolation. Others might find life inside their ships shallow, ignoring the great suffering in the galaxy while not attempting to affect change. Whatever and however noble the reason, many Trikkates chafe at having to engage in capitalism when out in the human controlled galaxy.

Immediate Needs: oxygen rich air, pressurization

Regular Needs: Daily meals of insects, daily water, Daily Sleep

Senses: Sight, sound, touch, taste

Communication: Trikkate song, Pidgin, galactic sign language, two other methods of communication

Abilities: Mastery: add a d4 to one competency's dice pool, or a d12 to one atypical competency's dice pool.

Assessment: You can accurately gauge the spiritual and monetary value of objects.

Carver: You gain one level of competency in the atypical competency woodcarving.

Consult Totem: Once per upkeep you may consult a totem of your ancestor's to gain insight into your current situation. On a woodcarving check of 4 or more, you receive advice and insight in the form of a remembered short anecdote told from the perspective of the totem carver.