



MINDSCAPES

A PSION'S GUIDE

A psionics classbook

BY BRUCE R. CORDELL

Uses the Third Edition rules from the v. 3.5 revision.

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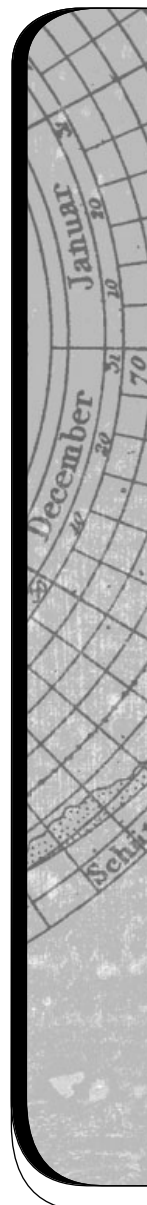
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Mind, Matter, and Reality

Psionics is the inborn mental art of mind over matter, mind over mind, and mind over reality. Magic's opposite, psionics explores personal potential and innate power. As adjuncts to the core classes, the psionic classes are unique professions that appeal to those who want to manifest their deepest desires through sheer determination—and to those with the will to call forth latent powers hidden in their physical and spiritual core.

It's time for a psionics classbook. As people's games develop, players become more familiar with established psionics rules and more willing to stretch a bit and apply a variant rule or system or try on a new prestige class. It's an ongoing experience, for both players and game designers. *Mindscales: A Psion's Guide* is my attempt to help your game evolve.

Since the original release of *If Thoughts Could Kill*, my previous psionics sourcebook, I learned that players wanted an alternative to the *Psionics Handbook* v. 3.0 for psionic combat. That led me to develop the variant psionic combat system in Chapter One, which approaches psionic combat in a fundamentally different manner than the *Psionics Handbook* v. 3.0. Now, with the release of the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*, which deftly ducks the issue of psionic combat by simply deleting it entirely, the existence of an alternative psionic combat system that is entirely new and unique still has a potential place in your game. That alternative, the mindscape psionic combat system, appears in Chapter One.

Another plea that has not fallen on deaf ears is the request for more prestige classes. In Chapter Two I've created a dozen new prestige class types and themes. Just as importantly, the new feats, powers, and items in Chapters Three, Four, and Five allow a broader range of capabilities, enhancements, and new avenues of exploration for psionic characters and creatures.

USING THIS BOOK

This book is named for the mindscape, a plane of the mind that comes into existence when two psionic beings approach each other. Upon this mindscape, the avatars of psionic beings fight their battles, which can affect the physical world—though none but the participants on the mindscape battlefield can sense this psionic combat.

This book is a new edition of the previously published version of *Mindscales: A Psion's Guide*. In this edition, we have updated the material to conform to the v. 3.5 revision of the core rules and the *Expanded Psionics Handbook* and corrected a few typos. Some variant rules from the previous edition of *Mindscales: A Psion's Guide*, such as the attack and defense modes as powers, were removed from this new edition, because they were adopted into the official d20 psionics rules.

Throughout this book, a dagger (†) indicates a power, feat, or item introduced in *Mindscales: A Psion's Guide*. Otherwise, all references to powers, spells, feats, and other rules come from the *Expanded Psionics Handbook* and the v. 3.5 revision of the three Core Rulebooks: the *Player's Handbook*, DMG, and MM.

Bonus source material and ideas to augment the information in *Mindscales: A Psion's Guide* appear on Monte Cook's website. To find the links to these free web enhancements, visit the book's product page online at the following address: www.montecook.com/mpress_Mind.html.

Look for this book's companion volume, *Mindscales: Beasts of the Id*, available now. It contains 18 all-new psionic creatures, plus a handful of new templates, powers, and items to use with them.

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About the Author

Born in Watertown, S.D., **Bruce R. Cordell** earned a degree in Environmental, Population, and Organismic Biology from the University of Colorado. While working as a research associate in process chemistry he learned to synthesize DNA, but he could not resist the call of game design.

In 1995, after a few years as a freelancer and designer of online text-generated virtual worlds (specifically the Tolkien-inspired *Elendor MUSH*), he abandoned science for a designer position at TSR, now Wizards of the Coast. His many design credits include the *Psionics Handbook*, *The Sunless Citadel*, *Heart of Nightfang Spire*, *Expanded Psionics Handbook*, and the *Origins Award-winning Return to the Tomb of Horrors*. He won the 2002 EN World d20 System Award for Best Adventure for his first Malhavoc psionics title, *If Thoughts Could Kill*, as well as the 2003 EN World d20 System Silver Award for Best Electronic Product for *Mindscales*.

Bruce lives in Seattle, Wash., with his wife Dee and their dog and five cats. He recently completed his second novel. Visit his website at www.brucecordell.com.

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Alan Pollack was born in New Jersey in 1964. He studied at the School of Visual Arts in New York City and in 1991 received his first cover assignment for TSR's *Dungeon*® Magazine. Two years later, Alan became a full-time illustrator at TSR. In 1997 he went out on his own and has worked for many roleplaying game companies as well as for Del Rey, ROC, Tor Books, and Wizards of the Coast. Alan lives in Freehold, New Jersey, with his wife, their two children, and his Siberian huskies Xena and Pikachu.

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Malhavoc Press

Malhavoc Press is game designer Monte Cook's d20 System imprint devoted to the publication of unusual magic, monsters, and evocative game elements that go beyond traditional fantasy. Malhavoc Press products such as *The Book of Eldritch Might* exhibit the mastery of the d20 System rules that only one of its original designers can offer. Look for *When the Sky Falls*, an event book designed by Bruce R. Cordell detailing the cataclysmic effects of a meteor strike on a fantasy campaign, available now.

Current titles are available to purchase in either print or electronic (PDF) format at www.montecook.com.

Mindscape Psionic Combat

Psionic beings possess minds that extend outside their physical forms, and because of that, they must be constantly on their guard against others who seek to influence them for good or ill.

The mindscape psionic combat system introduced in this book requires you to rethink your philosophy of psionic combat (if you were familiar with the psionic combat systems of the *Psionics Handbook* v. 3.0 and earlier editions of the psionics rules, that is). A few mindscape psionic combat terms are similar to terms utilized by the defunct combat system, but their meanings differ in this book. Here, psionic individuals engage each other's mental avatars on a fully visualized mental plane, while their physical bodies clash in the realm of the real. This mental plane, this mindscape, lies beyond the senses and comprehension of nonpsionic creatures.

When two psionic beings encounter one another, they instinctively go on the defensive to protect the territory of their minds, much as wolves protect their territory when

threatened. This instinctual response can call up a mindscape, where each being presents an avatar of itself. A mindscape is a nonphysical plane where beings with psionic capability can meet. If either being seeks conflict, then mindscape psionic combat begins, and its effects can influence how matters go in the physical world.

WHAT HAS CHANGED?

The optional mindscape psionic combat system completely replaces the psionic combat system described in the *Psionics Handbook* v. 3.0 and sits “on top” of the basic rules of the *Expanded*

Psionics Handbook as a fully integrateable rule module. The psionic combat system described in the *Psionics Handbook* v. 3.0 is hereafter referred to as the “defunct system,” and the system presented here is referred to as the mindscape system. Keep in mind that the attack and defense modes of the defunct system have been translated into straightforward powers in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook* and are available for the various psionic classes to take as part of their psionic power repertoire. (You can see these powers in Chapter Five of the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*.)

When Zelestine the colorless adept* encounters her acquaintance, T'leth the psion, their psychic avatars may immediately engage on a mental plane. As friends, the two call off their avatars, with no harm done. But, if ever they should meet as enemies, the results of that engagement have significant repercussions in the physical world, affecting the ability to manifest powers against each other, engage in melee, resist the effects of specific attacks the other might launch, and more.

In the defunct psionic combat system, psionic characters choose whether to engage in psionic combat. In the mindscape system, the mere presence of another psionically endowed creature can put a psionic individual on mental combat footing—it happens automatically when two or more psionic characters detect one another and at least one of them desires mindscape contact. However, whether actual psionic combat occurs is a decision either can make—they can refuse to clash psionically, they can keep the conflict to the mental plane alone, or they can allow the combat to spill over into the realm of the physical.

* Prestige class and character introduced in *If Thoughts Could Kill*.

OVERVIEW

The mindscape psionic combat system includes the various psionic combat modes described in this book on page 10. A psionic creature automatically knows each combat mode described here; knowledge of each mode is simply part of every psionic creature's heritage. Think of mindscape psionic modes as akin to “mental attitudes” for the psionic individual. One mode or another is always active—just as a normal creature always has an attitude, be it happy, sad, murderous, or pacifistic, so too does a psionic creature always have a mode active.

Key Terms

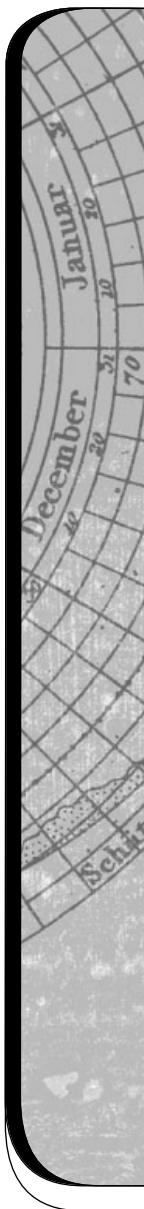
Mindscape: A mindscape is a nonphysical temporary plane that opens when two psionic beings knowingly encounter one another and at least one of them desires mindscape contact. On this temporary plane, psionic combat can ensue should either being seek it.

Mindscape Type: A mindscape type refers to the variety of landscape that makes up the mindscape. Each type provides a different mode check bonus.

Mode: In a manner similar to a nonpsionic creature's mood or attitude, every psionic creature can choose the psionic state of its mind. The specific state, whether it is offensive or defensive in effect, is called a mode, and modes have an effect on psionic combat. Additionally each mode has a name, a modifier (for combat), and an effect.

Opposed Mode Check: An opposed mode check occurs after initiative is rolled and modes are declared. The check simply determines who gains the benefit of his or her chosen mode that round. Each combatant makes a mode check modified as appropriate, and the results are compared (thus it's an “opposed” check). The higher score wins the opposed mode check.

Resting Mode: A psionic creature, under normal circumstances, always has a mode engaged. This mode is called a resting mode. A creature can change its resting mode at any time as a free action when not in a mindscape. Otherwise, changing a resting mode follows the rules presented under Step 3 in the mindscape psionic combat system (see page 6).



This “mental attitude,” or active mode, takes shape as a particular psychic avatar in a temporary mental plane (mindscape) created when two or more psionic creatures become aware of each other and at least one decides they should meet. Friendly psionic individuals can choose not to create a mindscape, or call off their psychic avatars and dissolve the mental plane after making initial contact. Other psionic creatures can use the outcome of a series of psionic clashes between their psychic avatars to decide a point of honor or to determine mental strength. Antagonistic psionic creatures battle both on the plane of the mind and in the physical world—the round-to-round outcomes of psionic combat on the mental plane directly influence the combatants’ physical attacks and tactics in the physical world. The choice of a particular mode can have a synergistic effect on the individual’s real-world attacks or defenses in a given round, alter one opponent’s saving throws for good or ill, or provide some other benefit or bane. From round to round, real effects can change as modes switch and as one combatant or the other wins the psionic combat round.

STEPS OF PSIONIC COMBAT

Follow this guide, step by step, when psionic combat occurs. Psionic combat occurs within the confines of a standard round during regular combat. That means that a psionic character takes one mindscape action and one normal round of action on each of her rounds.

STEP 1. MINDSCAPE FORMATION

When two or more psionic individuals knowingly encounter each other within a range of 60 feet, a plane of the mind (a mindscape) instantly springs into existence if at least one of the psionists desires mindscape contact. Mindscapes depend on the psychic resonance created by two or more psionic creatures that are aware of each other, and so mindscapes do not form around lone psionic creatures or psionic creatures who haven’t detected each other’s presence (or if one of the creatures is using *mind blank*, or if another is suffering from *brain lock*). Once the mindscape forms, the two avatars do not necessarily attack each other. Instead, they size each other up as two warriors would eye each other on the street or in a tavern when crossing paths by chance.

Nonpsionic creatures, or even lone psionic creatures farther than 60 feet from either of the combatants, cannot detect the mindscape. The mental plane springs up only if both psionic characters are aware of the other’s physical presence, so an undetected psionic creature in range of another psionic being will not form a mindscape until both

become aware of the other’s physical presence. Once mutually detected, neither has to know whether the other is psionic; the mindscape emerges if they both are psionic and at least one wishes it to form. Physical barriers, energy barriers, and force barriers block line of sight for the purposes of creating a mutual mindscape. The feat *Suppress Avatar*† (see Chapter Three: Feats) allows you to duck the formation of a mindscape.

An avatar of each psionic individual in range populates the mental plane. The psychic avatar resembles the perfect self-image of each participant. The mental plane lasts only as long as at least two

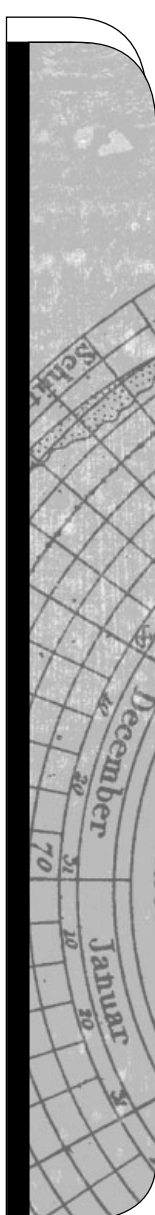
psionic creatures remain within 60 feet of each other and are directly aware of each other—the resonance creating the mindscape fails immediately when the range is exceeded or if one creature is physical, psionic, or magical detection by the other.

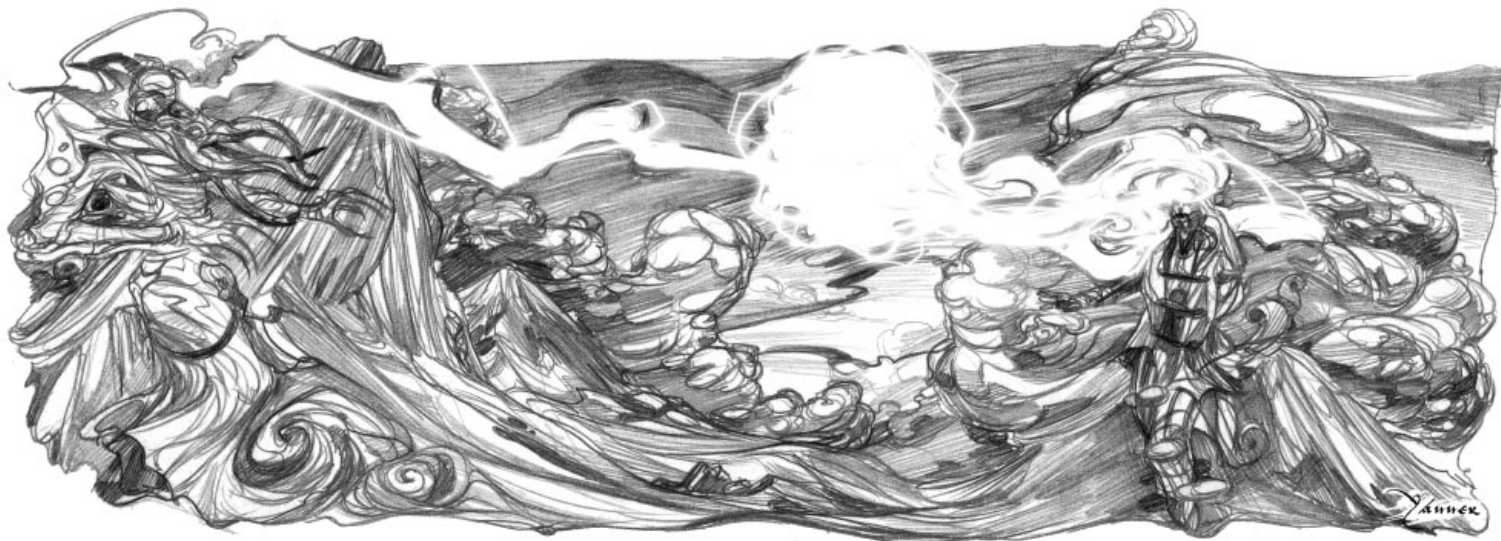
The landscape of the mental plane varies each time it is called up; however, the variance falls within six major types. (Minor variations within each major mindscape type are common but have no effect on psionic combat.) The mindscape type can help or hinder the success of each mode called up by avatars. See the Mindscape Types table on the next page for specific information on each variety of mindscape. Determine the mindscape type randomly when it springs up. Characters with a base bonus of at least +5 to their mode check (see the tables on page 11) who win initiative at the beginning of a mindscape combat can alter the mindscape type by up to two steps in either direction on the Mindscapes Types table. Those with a +8 bonus who win initiative can alter the mindscape type by choosing the type they prefer.

For example, Zelestine meets with T’leth, a psion, and T’leth wins initiative. The random roll results in a desert mindscape (result of 3). Since T’leth has a +5 mode bonus, he can choose to adjust the mindscape type to forest, plains, sea, or mountain. He chooses sea. This means that, should Zelestine or T’leth use either the *Mind Insurgency* or *Sap Mind* psionic combat modes (see the *Psionic Combat Modes Table* on page 10), she or he gains a +2 modifier to the opposed mode check in Step 4.

Adapting to Mindscapes

Mindscape psionic combat doesn’t conflict with standard d20 System rules or with the expanded psionics rules—the mindscape combat merely sits atop the regular psionics rules, functioning as an adjunct to regular actions that a psionic character could take during a round.





MINDSCAPE TYPES

d6	Type	Mode Check Bonus
1	Plains	+2 on Brain Hammer or Force Multiplier mode checks
2	Forest	+2 on Reflex Catechesis or Id Feint mode checks
3	Desert	+2 on Fortitude Intuition or Body Tank mode checks
4	Sea	+2 on Mind Insurgency or Sap Mind mode checks
5	Mountain	+2 on Indomitable Will or Acumen Screen mode checks
6	Cavern	+2 on Empathic Multiplier or Psychic Subdual mode checks

STEP 2. DECIDE TO FIGHT

As the timeless instant stretches following the formation of the mindscape, one or both of the psionic combatants can choose to engage in psionic combat or ignore the formation of the mindscape. If one chooses to engage in combat, roll initiative normally. The initiative roll is the same roll used in the real world to determine the order of combat actions. Despite the appearance of both avatars in the mental plane, one can gain surprise over the other, if conditions for surprise are met. For instance, if an undetected psion attacks a psionic target from hiding, both suddenly become aware of each other, the mindscape instantly forms, but the attacking psion gains surprise both in the real world and in the mindscape.

If combat has already begun in the real world when the mental plane springs up (perhaps the psionic characters

were farther than 60 feet from each other when real-world hostilities broke out), the psionic combatants use their previously rolled initiative values.

STEP 3. DECLARE MODES

Each psionic combatant who has an action (those not surprised, or both combatants if not a surprise round) can switch to a different mode, if desired, as a free action. Activating or switching a mode does not require power points or any other special cost except the desire to do so. Once the combatant decides to activate a new mode (or stick with the old mode), she cannot switch modes again until her next action. A surprised psionic combatant maintains the mode she previously designated as her resting mode until she gains an action. Remember, a psionic creature, under normal circumstances, always has a mode engaged—this is her “resting mode.” See the Psionic Combat Modes table on page 10 for a list of common psionic combat modes available to all psionic entities, along with descriptions of the benefits of each mode.

Knowing your opponent's mode is important: Her choice can affect your own choice of mode for the round. Thus, whoever has the highest initiative count each round declares his or her mode last, while the opponent with the lowest initiative declares first. Once declared, combatants cannot change modes until the following round. This gives the advantage to the combatant with the higher initiative. The delay action described in Chapter Eight: Combat of the *Player's Handbook*—an action that can be taken only during real-world actions—becomes more important in psionic combat.

For example, since T'leth won the initiative, Zelestine has to choose whether to change her resting mode of Brain