

Mysteria Unveiled: Alignments, Senses, & Languages

The following playtest material includes new roleplaying options for your character's alignment, new senses that can be used in place of standard darkvision, and new languages to help breathe life into your setting.

This is Homebrew Playtest Material

The rules presented here are in draft format, and have not been refined through extensive playtesting. These rules are also unofficial material, and don't have the benefit of a fully staffed development team. The content here is experimental, meant to expand the game to include new ideas and options. If you find this material useful, or if you have suggestions for how to improve the system, please drop an email at mysteria.unveiled@gmail.com with your feedback!

Alignments: The Cosmic Axis

In addition to the societal (Law vs. Chaos) and moral (Good vs. Evil) axis, characters may further align themselves spiritually. Cosmic alignment determines the character's outlook on faith, religious organizations, and the gods themselves. Cosmic alignment is a very personal attitude, so no specific ancestral tendencies are listed.

Pious individuals believe that the gods, nature, and other divine forces should be revered. Pious people tend to be quite spiritual in their outlook, believing in concepts such as fate and divine providence.

A **Neutral** person (also called a **nullifidian**) has no strong beliefs regarding religion and spirituality. Some clerics, druids, and paladins gain their powers from

philosophies, codes of conduct, or veneration of natural forces, so it is possible even for clerics to be nullifidian in alignment.

Iconoclast characters believe that the gods are malicious and antagonistic toward mortal beings. They chafe under what they perceive as the tyranny of organized religious institutions and monarchs who pretend to divine providence.

When abbreviating the character's full alignment, place their cosmic alignment first. For example, a pious chaotic neutral character would be abbreviated as "PCN." To avoid confusion with existing alignment abbreviations, *nullifidian good* and *nullifidian evil* alignments are abbreviated "GN" and "EN" respectively when discussed without reference to Law or Chaos.

The Role of Alignment in the Cosmos

Prior editions of the game have presented alignment as a cosmic affiliation, with characters taking sides in the struggles between the forces of Law and Good against those of Chaos and Evil. Cosmic alignment brings this metaphysical struggle back to a more central focus, but does so through the auspice of religious faith. This not only opens up the alignment system to representing a character's attitude toward the divine and helping players to explore their characters' religious beliefs, but additionally presents the option for a character to be disinclined to religious worship, or even to the very concept of religion itself.

These additional alignments should not be treated as essential character traits: ultimately, alignment is a roleplaying tool, and it works best when its touch is felt lightly at the gaming table. If you do decide to include cosmic alignments in your

campaign, be mindful that changing cosmic alignment is a major event in a person's life, representing a crisis of faith or conscience.

Pious lawful (PL): Pious lawful individuals usually adhere strongly to religious traditions and place great faith in organized priesthoods. These people may be prone to excluding or even harming those they deem heretics to the faith.

Pious neutral (PN): Pious neutral people tend to place all of their energy and focus into their religious life. They are often extremely concerned with the afterlife, and with representing their god and spreading the faith on the prime material plane.

Pious chaotic (PC): Pious chaotic worshipers prefer a more personal relationship with the divine that does not necessarily rely on the clergy to act as intermediaries.

Pious good (PG): Pious good characters enjoy the community and good will that faith engenders, and seek to practice their religion through good acts.

Pious evil (PE): Pious evil characters revel in the personal power that comes with religious fervor, and enjoy manipulating the faith of others to their own ends. They seek to bring suffering to enemies of the faith, and see non believers as heretics and infidels.

Nullifidian lawful (NL): Lawful nullifidians may see the gods as capricious or prone to whimsy, and feel unable to place their faith in such inconstant powers. They generally tolerate religious institutions, but believe that religious freedom is a vital component of a healthy society.

Nullifidian neutral (NN): Neutral nullifidians believe that veneration of the Gods simply isn't necessary to lead a fulfilling life, seeing clerical and druidic magic as extensions of natural processes.

Nullifidian chaotic (NC): Chaotic nullifidians may be agnostic or even atheistic, questioning whether the gods actually exist. They may be doubtful of the goals of the priesthood or the good will of the gods.

Nullifidian good (GN): Good nullifidians see their irreligious life as freeing, allowing for the appreciation and respect of all spiritual beliefs. These individuals see their own lack of faith as just one expression of religious freedom.

Nullifidian evil (EN): evil nullifidians might pay lip service to religious beliefs in order to attain positions of power among faithful communities. They also might try to make others doubt their own faith, or portray faithful people as ignorant or unable to think for themselves.

Iconoclastic lawful (IL): Lawful iconoclasts believe that personal religious belief is a corrupting influence, and that enlightened, secular rationalism is the cure for the spiritual illness that veneration of the gods precipitates.

Iconoclastic neutral (IN): Neutral iconoclasts are not concerned with whether religious faith is a personal or cultural practice: they see the tendency to relinquish one's spiritual autonomy to a god or a church as an abdication of spirit. Such impious individuals believe in the importance of undermining the religious dogma of institutions, as well as confronting the personal, unexamined adherence of the flock.

Iconoclastic chaotic (IC): Chaotic iconoclasts want to tear down organized worship of the gods to the very foundation, seeing religion as a stifling influence on personal spiritual growth.

Iconoclastic good (IG): Good iconoclasts fight against religious intolerance, working to curtail the abuses of those in powerful positions of religious authority.

Iconoclastic evil (IE): Evil iconoclasts wish to bring low the faithful, eroding the power of religious institutions or the very gods from their base by corrupting those who worship the gods (and in so doing, secure their power).

The Unaligned

Not every character needs an alignment. If you wish, you may designate your character as *inscrutable*, meaning their alignment is mysterious or unknown, or *unaligned*, meaning that they lack an alignment.

Inscrutable (??). Your motives are your own to know, and others are left to wonder. It may be that your alignment shifts based on the situation, or it may be that you have somehow reconciled aspects of conflicting alignments (*Lawful Discord*, *Benevolent Evil*, etc.). You might place your alignment in the hands of omens or fickle forces like fate. You might even wake up with a different alignment each day. You may have transcended the need for alignment, or your worldview may encompass all aspects of all alignments - an ineffable state sought after by monks of all traditions.

Unaligned (NA). Intelligent creatures may be unaligned, meaning that they are unconcerned with questions of good and evil, and care nothing for debates surrounding law and chaos. Unaligned, intelligent beings are, as a rule, amoral and

mostly concerned with their own self-interest, but they will act in the best interests of those they care about. An unaligned character has no other alignment axis: such an individual exists wholly outside the boundaries of law & chaos, good & evil, and faith & heresy. Note that this differs from the neutral alignment in that a neutral character might still recognize the importance of other alignments, but they don't strongly adhere to any one of them in particular. By contrast, the unaligned reject the very concept of alignment, whether cosmic, ethical, or moral.

Senses: New Ways of Seeing the World

In addition to the ubiquitous *darkvision*, the following special senses might exist among certain ancestries. With the GM's permission, you can substitute one of these vision types for the darkvision provided by your character's ancestry or lineage. You can use the following suggestions to determine what type of special vision your character might have:

Ancestry	Special Senses
Dwarf	cryptovision
Elf & half elf	low-light vision
Gnome	cryptovision
Half orc	infravision
Tiefling	cryptovision, infravision, or low-light vision (your choice)
Custom Ancestry	cryptovision, infravision, or low-light vision (your choice)

Cryptovision. Creatures with cryptovision possess compounds and structures in their eyes that let them see magnetic fields,

allowing the creature to orient more easily while navigating. This form of vision is especially sensitive to blue light, and while utilizing their cryptovision the creature sees magnetic fields and eddy currents in brilliant shades of blue. A creature perceiving their surroundings through cryptovision can always tell which way is magnetic North, and can sense unusual disturbances in the local magnetic field that might indicate the presence of ferrous metal deposits or potentially near especially strong magical fields (at the DM's discretion). Effects that distort the magnetic field can stymie cryptovision, making navigation difficult or impossible.

Additionally, the same compounds that produce cryptovision in a creature are also involved in regulating the creature's day-night cycle, so a creature who is using cryptovision has an especially acute sense of the passage of time, as well as the current time of day, even if they are underground or in a lightless environment. Cryptovision is blocked by copper, making those deposits easier to detect. Iron is also easy to detect using cryptovision as the metal reacts to the magnetic field around it.

Low-light vision. Creatures with low-light vision have eyes that are so sensitive to light that they can see in dim light as if it were bright light, although they cannot see in complete darkness. Low-light vision is color vision. A creature with low-light vision can read text on a page as long as even the tiniest candle flame is present as a source of light. Creatures with low-light vision can see outdoors on a moonlit night as well as they can during the day.

Infravision. Creatures with Infravision are able to see the heat radiated by other creatures, objects, and effects out to 60 feet. Within this range, characters can see

the degrees of heat radiated by an object as a glowing blob translated into colors (with shades of yellow and red being warmer, and shades of green or blue being cooler). Cooler creatures and objects are visible as if they were standing in dim lighting, while hotter items are visible as if they were in bright lighting. Large heat sources will temporarily blind characters with infravision just as looking at a bright light blinds those with normal vision. Those attempting to use infravision must make the effort to avoid looking directly at fires or torches, either their own or the enemy's. (The light from magical items does not radiate significant heat to interfere with Infravision.)

Most creatures with similar anatomy have similar "thermal outlines" — somewhat fuzzy blobs. They do not radiate at different temperatures and even if they did, infravision is seldom so acute as to register differences of just a few degrees unless the heat source is viewed up close (within 15 feet). Infravision relies on the character's ability to see light in the infrared spectrum, and so is confounded by spells and effects that affect vision, including illusions.

New Languages

Alignment Languages

Some languages are constructed specifically to serve the purposes of certain secret societies or cultures. Druidic and thieves' cant are two examples of this sort of secret language. There are also languages that were created to serve the interests of specific alignments. A creature can select an alignment language that matches their alignment as one of their initial languages during character creation.

Alignment Languages in Practice

In previous editions of the game, alignment languages were secret codes known to all

intelligent creatures of a particular alignment. Alignment languages consisted of codewords, body language, and turns of phrase that could help you identify other beings that shared your alignment. This concept is not carried over into this treatment, but some small nods to this prior usage are included, such as the use of certain alignment languages in the rites of cults or secret societies.

In practice, alignment languages should not be used as “detect alignment” features, but rather as a way to provide depth in world building.

Aspersian (philosophical). Less a structured language and more of a sort of collection of scholarly terminology, Aspersian is used by religious skeptics and iconoclastic dissidents to discuss matters of spirituality. The *Impugnian* school questions the very existence of the gods, while the *Contemnian* school accepts that the gods exist, but interprets their motives as destructive and self-serving. The *Sybaritic* school sees adherence to religious dogma as stifling to one’s enjoyment of life, and so rejects worship of the divine.

Babbling (ineffable). The protean language of chaos. Babbling is a language of pure emotion, structured by tone and inflection rather than specific words or phrases. It is said that the babbling tongue was a curse upon those who once attempted to distill the essence of the archetypal, exordian language, an act that prompted punishment from the gods. To non-speakers, babbling sounds like nonsense words (and to a great extent, this is the case).

- *Maunderan* is a dialect spoken by certain secret societies that are deeply concerned with security and

privacy, the dialect consists of slowly oscillating speech punctuated by deep intonations. The effect of well spoken Maunderan produces a dual tone to the speaker’s voice.

- *Ecstatic* is a dialect used in the religious rites of certain chaotic mystery cults.
- A dialect called *gibbering* is spoken by ghouls, ghosts, and their kin; gibbering has been described alternatively as the yipping and baying of hounds, the blubbing of the hopeless, and the laughter of madmen.

Hieratic (religious, traditional). The priestly language spoken by those who venerate the Ancient Gods. This is the language favored by the pious, and many early texts of the Church of the Living Goddess were written in Hieratic.

Idyllic (secret, traditional). The blissful and sing-song language of goodness. Idyllic speech brings joy and peace to those who hear it, save for those of evil alignment who find the sonorous syllables unpleasant to behold. The language is believed to be an ancient form of the common tongue, the root that forms a linguistic bridge between peoples of many cultures. Some religions, especially older heathen faiths, use idyllic as a ceremonial language.

Malefic (secret, forbidden). The spiteful and snarling language of evil. The utterance of malefic is said to invite evil and misfortune to those of pure heart, and so the language is considered taboo in most realms.

Precisian (obscure, officious). The intricate and precisely constructed language of lawfulness. Precisian is rigid and

unchanging, and so finds great use as the parliamentary language of courts and legislation. Religions that favor law and traditionalism will use precisian as their ceremonial language.

Secret, Lost & Forbidden Languages

There are some tongues so powerful or profane that to utter them invites doom and ruin upon the unwary and uninitiated.

Exordian (lost). Believed to be the fundamental, first language from which all other tongues stem, exordian is said to have been spoken by the eldest deities. When one speaks a word in exordian, one speaks the most essential meaning of that word. Primordial is believed to have evolved from exordian speech. No known records of the written exordian language have been discovered, although a few words are believed to have filtered down through the epochs: such words have become powerful spells such as *power word: kill*.

Incantic (secret, arcane). The Incantic tongue is the language of arcane magic. It is written in the Celestial script, and can be traced to a corrupted form of the precisian tongue. While incant can be read by those who know the language, the characters are also infused with special meaning that can only be deciphered through the spell *read magic*.

Netherspeech (forbidden). This is the language of the dead spoken in the underworld. Undead understand netherspeech, and intelligent undead can speak this rasping, haunting tongue. Netherspeech is written using Infernal script. In most lands in the material plane, this language is forbidden.

Regional Languages

Regional tongues are spoken by people within a geographic region (including colonies and diasporas). The following languages are examples of how regional languages might be organized.

Andonian. A once rich language used in trade and scholarship, the fall of the Andonian Empire has cast a fog of ignorance over much of its linguistic heritage. Andonian as it is spoken today is a wild and rustic language found mostly on the edges of civilization.

Averdic. An ancient language spoken by the inhabitants of the Isle of Averdeign. A dialect, *Dun'anderan*, is spoken on the southern isle of Dun Andir, while the central Northern isle speaks a dialect called *Caelic*. In the Northernmost isle, *Ulberic* is the regional dialect. All forms of Averdic share many common words with both Kalanosian common and the language of the wood elves who live on the Eastern edge of Averdeign on the island of Selia.

Daurithian. The language of the Daurithian Empire. Daurithian is an ancient tongue originally derived from the immutable precisian language which provides the bulk of its grammar and vocabulary. Daurithian is the ecumenical language of the Church of the Living Goddess in Holy Iprios, and in the great city of Dorith.

Djahrad. A language steeped in poetry and elegant discourse, Djahrad is the native language of the nation state of Zaradesh, a chaotic land where noble houses of sorcerers vie for power in a constant state of struggle. The energy and rhythmic cadence of Djahrad belies the influence of the babbling tongues of chaotic secret

societies, and makes conversation quite animated.

latian. The native language of Kryphonia, a tongue that predates the Daurithian Empire. Believed to have been one of the early languages spoken by practitioners of arcane magic, latian is thought to share roots with Hieratic.

Kalanosian. The common tongue of human settlements, borrowing much from the languages of other cultures. Kalanosian is the language of trade and diplomacy.

Salone. A language spoken in the Eastern Principality of Salonge, this language is used extensively in courtly affairs, as well as in the arts and the songs of bards.