Annex

by John Keyworth, Kiwi RPG Design

A game for 4 or more players, inspired by the universe of the book Ancillary Justice. A session typically lasts 3 hours, although this is quite flexible. It uses concensus hand gestures, similar to those used by the Occupy movement and other activist groups.

The player who has read the rules reads the script (in *italics*) and helps the others understand the rules. No player has a privileged position with respect to any other. The rest of this booklet will be addressed to the facilitating player.

You should start by explaining the first concensus hand gesture...

> *At any point anyone may ask to clarify something in the game by raising their hand with their fingers forming a 'c' like this <gesture appropriately>. This includes during these introductory sections.*

> *To show you like what someone else is saying, out of character, you can use ASL for applause... by holding your hands up and wiggling your fingers <gesture appropriately>.*
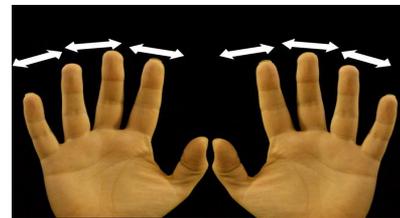
> *While someone is talking you may not interrupt, instead use hand gestures to ask for the right to say something and wait for acknowledgement.*

Introduction

Next explain the basic premise and setting of the game...

> *A world has just been annexed by the Radchaai, bring it into the empire. We are an AI... a <u>warship</u> orbiting the planet and it's <u>Ancillary</u> segments(soldiers) on the ground. We are many things but of one mind, always in agreement.*

> *The Radchaai have tasked us to maintain order on this new world, we have the technological and military superiority to achieve this but we must also remember the natives are <u>citizens</u> and we are <u>civilised</u>.*

> *A few additional setting details to consider…*

> - *Ancillaries are the dead, reanimated by technology, fitted with numerous implants and controlled by the ship's AI.*
> - *Each Ancillary in a squad is called a segment, and the squad is commanded by a human lieutenant but directly controlled by a ship's AI.*
> - *Radchaai don't have gender pronouns and use the feminine as gender neutral.*

World Creation

Next we must agree on what the world that has just been annexed is like. To do this you will facilitate a discussion which will require 6 additional gestures, which you should explain now.

> *If you want a turn at speaking raise your hand, when the current speaker has finished their point the facilitator will pick who goes next from those with raised hands, taking care that everyone gets an equal chance to speak.*

> *If you have a direct reply to make regarding what is being said raise both hands in front of you, like this <gesture appropriately> and speak when the current speaker acknowledges you. After you have made your point the original speaker can continue.*
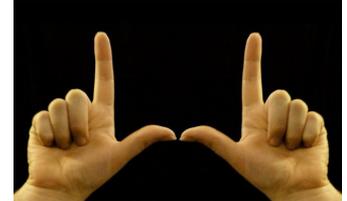
> *If it is your turn and you feel you need help, ask for it. No one will interrupt otherwise and suggestions can be made as direct points.*

> *If you want to make a technical point... maybe about the rules, suggest a break or some other out of fiction comment… then make a T shape with your hands like this <gesture appropriately>.*

> *Finally there is thumbs up, down and neutral <gesture appropriately>. You can use these at any point when someone else is talking to have your part of the AI agree or disagree with what they are doing. Additionally when we want to check if we have consensus on a point all perform one of these to show your support or otherwise for the consensus. If no thumbs are down we have a good enough consensus to proceed.*

Now we know the basics you should facilitate a discussion to achieve consensus on the answers to the following questions.

- *How true to the book's setting are we keeping?*
- *What societal structure did this world have?*
- *What are the stereotypes for each class of people on it?*
- *How do the natives generally feel about the Rachaai occupation?*
- *What is our Lieutenant like?*

Let us talk about the point, taking turns and interjecting using the gestures described above and stop us from verbally interrupting each other, if we are struggling a 'talking stick' can makes the process easier.

This stage should help us get used to the gestures as well as provide a starting point for the game.

Scenes

Next is the meat of the game, a series of short stories, usually between 30 minutes and an hour each, describing the problems of post-annexation and how the group deals with them. First you should describe the structure of the game…

> *There are 4 stages to each story, which are played out in order. During a stage we will jump between the viewpoints of multiple ancillaries, but should try and stay on topic for that stage.*
>
> *The four stages are…*
>
> - *Introduce a problem*
> - *Investigate the problem*
> - *Native reactions*
> - *Resolve the problem*
>
> *During each stage we narrate what is happening from the viewpoint of the ancillary each of us is playing.*
>
> *After each stage wraps up we have a moment of reflection, within the mind of the AI, where we seek consensus about how we felt about what happened in the last stage and what we should do next.*
>
> *Native reactions scenes play out differently, however. We each take the role of one of the natives and there are no hand gestures used, narrate what you like in whatever order you like. The only exception is Applause... and the Wrap Up gesture which will be described in a moment, that ends the stage. There is no reflection after the Native reaction stage.*

After fielding any questions about this process go on to describe the remaining three gestures and describe how narration works...

A stage is started by anyone who wants to volunteer, they should have an idea for how to start the stage… what the problem could be, how to start investigation, what a native thinks or how it will all end. They take the first turn as they frame the scene.

While contributing, narrate from the point of view of your character, usually your ancillary, although you can freely describe characters and objects external to them.

If making a direct point during a scene it should either be an action your Ancillary carries out or something happening that will cause of a problem for the group.

During a scene be sure to make strong narration.. make actions have definitive outcomes that push the story forwards, other players have the opportunity to stop you if they want.

Additionally, Ancillaries should not talk to one another directly, only during reflection scene. Your ancillary should act as they see fit without consultation or conferring. If you overstep, again, the other players can stop you.

There are also three final gestures.

If it is your turn you can point to another player for one of two reasons. If they have their hand raised you are passing the turn to them. If not then address them as if they were a character in the story and they should begin narrating that character's words and actions for this stage, which makes conversation easier.

Raise both arms, crossed, in front of you <gesture appropriately> to block an action an ancillary just took. This triggers a reflection scene where all players should reach a consensus about what should have been done, which is then done instead.

The final gesture wraps up a stage so you can move onto the next one and is a gesture like winding wool <gesture appropriately>. When anyone does this, the stage will end after the current player has finished their narration (which they should finish soon), unless someone cancels it by raising their hand and requesting another go.

Answer any final questions and then you can proceed with the game proper. If no one else wants to start the first stage (they probably won't) do it yourself. If you don't know what to do give yourselves a murder to solve.

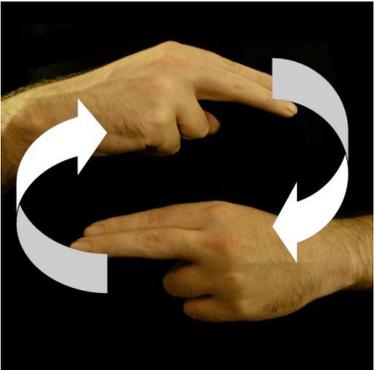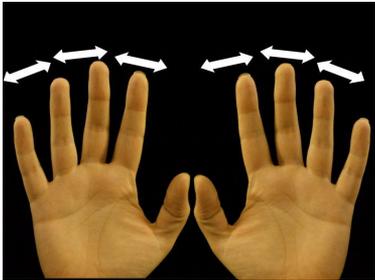Once all four stages are complete you can repeat them as long as time, and enthusiasm, permit.

Additional Rules

These rules don't need explaining to play the game but handle two circumstances that may or may not come up.

When onboard the ship: Treat the ship itself as an ancillary that one of the players can control. Involvement by the captain in the story should be kept to a minimum.

When communications are disrupted between ancillaries: Play as if you are in a 'Native reaction' scene, with no hand gestures or reflection scenes.

Gesture Cheat sheet

Ask for clarification	Technical point/question	Wind up stage

Block (triggers reflection)	Wiggle fingers (encourage)	Direct Response / Introduce Conflict
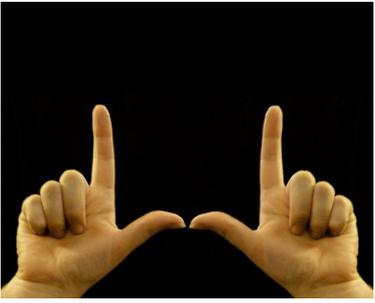
Thumbs up/down/flat (show consensus)

Stage Cheat Sheet

Each story goes through the following stages, in order...

- Introducing a problem
  - Run a reflection scene at the end

- Investigating the problem
  - Run a reflection scene at the end

- Explore the reactions of the natives
  - No gestures except 'wrap up'
  - Play a native instead of your Ancillary

- Resolve the problem
  - Run a reflection scene at the end