

Setting

Year: 2180 AD

The Earth's population has continued to expand, and severe weather ravages the Earth. The United Democracies of Earth (UDE) has instituted a heavy wealth tax and cracked down on pollution and emissions, creating a global policy that businesses must adhere to, which, along with the help of advancing science, has allowed the Earth to start stabilizing itself. The UDE guarantees all people of Earth healthcare and adequate education. However, the world's wealthy elite are tired of seeing so much of their hard-earned money (lol) go to taxes and having to manage production such that it meets the stringent environmental controls set by the UDE. As a result, they set their eyes on space, where planets and asteroids provide untold opportunities for riches and exploration. There's an excess of human lives available to colonize planets and dwarf planets, ready to be put to work on Space Colonies that orbit the planets themselves.

Recent advancements in technology have allowed humans a cybernetic link with machines, allowing them to interface with and operate technology on a level that wasn't previously imaginable.

Technology

In the universe of Project Jaburo, electrons are just a tiny bit larger than they are in the real world. One of the effects this subtle size difference has is that transistors can only be made so small before quantum effects start to occur and the electron jumps from one circuit to the next. As a result, there's a limit to how small computers can be and therefore where they can be installed and operated. Advancements in computing have primarily come in the way of creating greater efficiencies in coding and the utilization of networked computers to compute at higher levels.

Current consumer electronics have achieved transistors as small as 800nm, while industrial/hi-tech chips are generally at the 300nm level. Some UDE scientists have been working on cutting-edge tech research, producing transistors as small as 200nm. However, that seems to be the upper limit of how small the transistors can get, as quantum effects start influencing how the electrons operate as they're prone to switching circuits at random, which severely inhibits proper calculations.

Computers have been slow to provide visual displays as the resources required to render highly-detailed visuals are too great. High-level calculations can all be performed using a computer's computing capabilities and shown on simple green monochrome printouts. Only recently have advancements in rendering technology allowed for multiple colors on-screen, though the palette of colors is limited.

Computing

Computers are capable of incredibly high-level calculations, which is what has allowed for such advancements in space travel. Artificial intelligence isn't as advanced as neural networks that can be fed massive amounts of data, however AI can chart routes based on data constantly being updated from Navigation Satellites placed throughout the solar system. Before the invention and use of Navigation Satellites, creating routes through space was far more difficult, requiring large teams to create viable

paths, and even then many ships were lost, be it due to collision with asteroids or other celestial bodies, or simply being lost in space, unable to chart a course back from whence they came.

Graphical Displays

Video capture and graphical displays on military ships aren't outfitted with the latest in technology, but rather with what's proven to work well. Current photo and video technologies require adequate lighting and a fixed subject in order to render the image properly. However, computer technology uses rudimentary photo and video to scan objects and quickly create a digital facsimile in 3D Vector Graphics and display it to the screen. The scanning is done at a high framerate, allowing video rendering to be performed at reasonably high fidelity. Recent advances in graphics technology have created displays that can render images and video in up to 8-bit color.

The Net

The internet doesn't operate as it does today, with beautiful full-color websites and wonderful interactivity. The Net of Project Jaburo's world operates much more like the early 1990s internet with 1980s computer graphics technology, slow load speeds, and images made up of the same colored pixels. Because so little data is needed to be transmitted across the internet, bandwidth is very low. There are a huge number of BBS-style forums, as well as Reddit- and Wikipedia-style websites. Audio can be transmitted with ease over the Net, and radio plays are still a hugely popular form of entertainment.

(When ASP forcibly commandeered the Net, they cut the UDE off from accessing it. As a result, the UDE had to launch their own WWII-era Net Broadcasting tech into space. There's no communication between the two sides as they cannot access each other's information.)

Satellite Navigation Network (SNN)

The Satellite Navigation Network is a system of Navigation Satellites powered by the sun that have been placed throughout the solar system as a means of mapping it. Each satellite in the SNN is capable of photo and radar technology, and they send consistent pings to echolocate themselves and other satellites within the SNN; they also boast onboard computers capable of performing rudimentary operations, such as movements using onboard thrusters. The large majority of the solar system has had Navigation Satellites distributed within it by autonomous drones programmed by the UDE to disseminate them as far as possible. However, there are still pockets of the solar system that have no Navigation Satellites and are blindspots to the UDE's Satellite Node Network (SNN).

Power Generation

While Ion Drives don't require much fuel, they also don't produce much additional energy. As a result, additional electricity to power all of a ship's systems that aren't the engine rely on solar cells to capture sunlight and convert it into usable electricity. Luckily, solar cells are incredibly efficient and are capable of drawing large amounts of energy from the sun. Additionally, the ship is basically one large battery that stores energy for instances in which the ship is in a planet's shadow.

Space Propulsion System - Ion Drive

https://www.nasa.gov/centers/glenn/technology/Ion_Propulsion1.html

Ion Drives have come a long way over the course of 200 years. Whereas they used to only be able to provide 0.5 Newtons of force, they can now output close to 10 newtons of force, which is just greater than one g of g-force, while maintaining incredible efficiency in their use of fuel. Modern spacecraft are able to constantly accelerate until they've reached their desired speeds, however, the acceleration is low enough that crews are easily able to withstand the single g-force being applied to them, and most get used to it over a short period of time living aboard a traveling spacecraft. Seasoned spacedogs refer to it as "getting your spacelegs". They can always tell someone new by the way they walk, as these folk constantly lean against the direction of acceleration.

Spacefaring Ships

The large majority of spacefaring ships do not have the ability to land on or leave orbits as the thrust from their engines isn't sufficient to achieve escape velocity, and are primarily assembled in space. Most ships boast smaller vessels that can ferry passengers to and from orbits, refilling their modest fuel tanks each time they land. A small handful of spacecraft have both the ion drives necessary for long-distance space travel, as well as large engines powerful enough to escape gravitational pulls, however, these crafts are typically luxury vessels capable of sustaining life for only a small group of passengers and crew.

Artificial Gravity Systems

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rotating_wheel_space_station

Because gravity is necessary to sustain normal human functions, the vast majority of colonies that were built to orbit planetary bodies were designed as large rotating wheels. While many people work closer to the gravitational center to maintain the integrity of the structure and systems of these colonies, all residents of the colonies make their homes on the outermost portion of the wheel, as that's where gravity is closest to that of the Earth.

Many dwarf planets and large asteroids have been hollowed out and converted into colonies. These "Hive Colonies" as they're referred to, are given a rotational spin to simulate a portion of the Earth's gravity. Asteroids that aren't large enough to be hollowed out and spun in this way are typically only temporarily used by crews for fueling, storage, and launching of mining ships.

An extremely recent technological advancement comes in the form of Artificial Gravity that can simply be turned on or off as needed. However, the processes used to power the Artificial Gravity drives require so much energy that it makes sense to only use them when absolutely necessary - primarily when accelerating at rates greater than 3g.

Mechs

Invented after WWII, Mechs range in size, from just larger than a human to gargantuan machines the size of football fields, with size being based on application. The larger the mech, the greater the power, ability to withstand damage, and ability to sustain human life in harsh environments. Much like a semi-truck, large mechs have small domiciles for users who may be performing operations in space that would see them away from some kind of home base for several hours or even days. Mechs can be outfitted with standard Ion Drives to help them deliver large payloads to their destinations and then assist in

further unloading of cargo, greatly reducing the number of specialized machinery at job sites across the solar system.

Mechs have long been used in space mining operations - a mobile suit has a variety of benefits over other means: they're incredibly flexible in the variety of tasks they can perform, from drilling and mining to lifting and transportation, the jobs mechs can be used for are almost limitless; the suits also protect the user from the rigors of space, providing life support and communication systems, as well as an armored exoskeleton that shields the user from the many unforeseen incidents that can occur in the alien landscapes of space.

Mining

The Megacorp Space Colonies wouldn't have been possible without harvesting metal from asteroids. Mechs were fundamental in asteroid mining operations and far improved the efficiency of traditional methods. The large majority of mining efforts focus on metallic asteroids, with some operations on silica-based asteroids, but almost none on carbonaceous asteroids.

Other Applications

Mechs are used to explore the features of asteroids, dwarf planets, and planets where a traditional spaceship would have difficulty navigating, such as in caves and underground fissures. Mechs are also used extensively in construction and can carry far heavier loads than even large trucks.

Entertainment

Monster Mech Rallies

A highlight of modern life is Monster Mech Rallies where contestants supe up their mechs and put them through a variety of death-defying stunts in stadiums in front of live audiences.

Mech Boxing

Just like real boxing, mech boxing has weight classes. But the weight classes are primarily a designation of how expensive the tickets are. As the size of the mechs increases, so too do maintenance costs and prize purses. There's a lot of class struggle built into the stories of Mech Boxing, but those are often older tales. The majority of Mech Boxers are sponsored by the same companies that produce the mechs and act more as marketing ploys than actual competition. As a result, there's also a ton of corruption in the world of Mech Boxing. However, no sport pulls a crowd quite like the big Mech Boxing matches. People watch for miles as billions of dollars are put on the line in each match. It's truly an intense thing to watch, but something only the privileged experience.

MMMA (Mech Mixed Martial Arts)

MMMA differs from Mech Boxing in that there are no weight classes - there is only a single weight class, and it consists of the smallest mechs humans can operate - of a standard mech class used the world over for a huge variety of operations - a standard operating scheme that blue-collar workers everywhere know how to operate. It's a more recent expression of what mechs can do, but it started underground in unsanctioned fights and tournaments and arose from the gripes of the expenses and corruption of mech boxing. The small size of the mechs means the damage to the surrounding area is smaller and matches

can likewise be held in much smaller locales, and the variety of combatants is vast. In MMMA, there are virtually no rules - it's a no-holds-barred competition to see who can operate their mech skillfully and effectively. There's a lot that goes into maintaining a mech's fighting performance mid-battle, including its temperatures, fuel levels, weight strain, etc. Mechs are powerful enough to bend and break metal, but only if the strain isn't too great on their own components. A mech operator must maintain a truly intimate relationship with their mech in order to succeed in MMMA.

Full Combat

With the vastness of space and all the resources it offered, the Megacorp Space Colonies eventually started seeing what Mechs could do in full combat. They fared alright but weren't truly a match when faced against a trained pilot in a traditional fighter ship. Some forward-thinking CEO decided to pay a handful of disposable young debtors to have Neural Interfaces installed and invited the heads of the other Megacorporations to watch them face off against a variety of opponents using military-grade munitions and explosives. The young mech pilots, using Neural Interfaces, demolished every single one of their opponents, regardless of their skill or piloting scheme. This proved their efficacy in battle and was the final piece the Megacorp Space Colonies needed to plan their revolt against the UDE. The test pilots were then silenced so the secret wouldn't leak to the UDE.

Warfare

The Megacorp Space Colonies knew they were far outnumbered in comparison to the forces of the UDE. However, they knew they had a secret weapon - their Neural Interface mechs, armed to the teeth and ready to fight. They spent months outfitting mechs, recruiting and training pilots, and planning how they would strike. Their goal? To show they wouldn't let the UDE push them around like the other countries on Earth. How did they get such massive consensus to a global democracy, anyway? Some threats of force and shady dealings surely had to be involved. As a matter of fact, the Colonists were morally obligated to not pay towards that kind of corruption. They were taking a moral stance by not paying back their loans.

Neural Interface

The Neural Interface is a recent scientific advancement developed through the UDE's global cooperation of leading neuroscientists and engineers. It's seen as a novel approach to providing disabled persons with higher agency and mobility, allowing the ability to operate a huge range of devices. However, a Neural Interface isn't a device to be taken on lightly as its use requires invasive surgery to permanently install the components necessary for its operation into the operator. The Neural Interface can actually be rejected by the host's body, or they could potentially have difficulty integrating the Interface into their brain's functions. It's been shown that greater brain plasticity aids in the host's integration of the technology. As the Neural Interface technology advances, a greater understanding of how it integrates into the host's brain improves, and therefore so do therapy, patient selection, and care. Long-term side effects from the Neural Interface are still unknown, but for many users, access to such a life-changing tool often makes prospective dangers worth the risk.

Use in Accessibility Applications

Neural Interfaces can be used by disabled people to perform a huge variety of actions, from opening doors and drawers, to driving vehicles. The Neural Interface has truly enriched the lives of people around the world, empowering them with greater mobility and independence.

Use in Mechs

A Neural Interfaces allows the user to control a mech as a facsimile of their own body instead of using classic control schemes that have been traditional in mech piloting for decades. However, the advanced use of such an interface requires the user to have been trained with it from a young age, and as brain plasticity decreases, so does the ability to use the interface, which is why there are so few pilots that continue to operate mechs after the age of 25.

Weaponry

Magnetic Space Mines

Magnetic Space Mines are a common weapon used by the Colonies to protect territory and travel routes against the UDE. The mines indiscriminately attach to any metallic object that comes within range of their magnetic field. However, the Colonies have specialized maps showing the locations of the mines that are disseminated to all military spacecraft, as well as components to identify their ships as non-targets, which are typically reserved for more important ships.

Electromagnetic Pulse Weapons (EMP Weapons)

The Colonists have developed EMP weapons in the form of mines and rockets with a limited blast radius, knocking out all electric systems onboard any ship caught in the blast. Any ships hit with such weapons become sitting ducks as it takes significant time for them to recover. In fact, everyone aboard must first scramble to don life-support gear that will allow them to survive the temperatures of space, as well as the lack of oxygen. This is often when such ships are breached by Colonial troops, their crews taken as PoWs.

ElectroBolo

The ElectroBolo was developed by one of ASP's partner corporations as a response to the mechs. The ElectroBolo does an amazing job of temporarily incapacitating an enemy mech by wrapping its limbs up and sending an EMP through the mech, disabling its onboard systems. The pilot can restart the mech, but it takes time - often more time than they have in battle.

American Second Civil War

A coup erupted in the United States in 2091, when revolting right-wingers seized power both politically and militarily, resulting in an embroiled civil war. However, the conflict was short-lived, lasting only three years as the left eventually rallied together and took back key territory. After the smoke had settled and inquiries were made, the US claimed Russia and China provided financial aid to propaganda and criminal hacking enterprises, which the US reported was a large contributor to the social divide that created embroiled social divides that sparked the civil war. While these accusations were never substantiated, the US's claims resulted in conflicts between the United States and both China and Russia.

World War 3

Heated talks eventually led to war, with the United States, the UN, and the rest of their allies against China, Russia, North Korea, and a few other allied countries. Six years into the war, Russia's people revolted against their government and created a pure democracy, which saw them vote to immediately surrender. It was only months after Russia's surrender that North Korea fell to South Korean guerillas, and China was left to fight on its own. The Chinese leadership refused to surrender, however, until a joint effort was successful in assassinating high-ranking officials in both the government and military, sewing chaos amongst the Chinese ranks. It was amongst this chaos that the advancing forces were able to make significant advancements into Chinese territory and capture key military targets, resulting in China's surrender. The country was then partitioned into smaller states controlled by America, Britain, India, and Iran. WWII officially ended October 11, 2104.

The United Democracies of Earth (UDE)

After the end of WWII, the Earth was truly in shambles. War had ravaged the land and sea alike, and very few countries were saved from destruction as new, powerful weapons were developed in the machine of war. The air was choked with smoke and smog, and the debris of destroyed satellites and spaceships rained from the sky. During the war, Megacorporations had free reign to produce whatever they wanted, however they wanted, just so long as they were aiding in the war effort, resulting in even more pollution and emissions. As a result, natural disasters brought on by climate change had increased tenfold, and wrought havoc on the daily lives of the world's citizens.

Once the UDE was born, a strict global crackdown on pollution and emissions was enacted, as were laws to reduce the massive gap between the world's wealthiest and the rest of the world. This caused the heads of Megacorporations to look to space as their last haven to enact their will and power without the government's interference. Every citizen on Earth is guaranteed rights to freedom, education, and healthcare. The UDE is still a young governmental body and the first of its kind. Politics and longstanding rivalries between nations and peoples still exist and dealing with the bureaucracy of it all certainly slows the organization down.

The Earth's inhabitants deal with truly catastrophic natural disasters that threaten the ability to produce enough food for a population that continues to grow. These natural disasters have also significantly reduced habitable space. Though in reality there's plenty of land for people to live on, political realities keep them from being used.

The UDE is a democratic socialism, with each member country electing politicians to represent their country's interests in the greater UDE Congress. Countries still have their own leaders, governing bodies, traditions, religions, and cultural heritage. Spats between countries still occur, though little to no blood is shed due to the world's general acceptance of overall demilitarization. The UDE commands the Earth's only recognized military, though shady mercenary groups and security companies are still in existence. Drugs are still illegal in most countries, as is sex work.

The UDE maintains a large military, though there's hardly a need for a large war-ready force. In order to maintain existence and relevance in the new landscape of global cooperation, the military transitioned into a machine that aids the people. They perform large construction jobs for the government, demolitions, explorations, biological and technological research, etc. The funds that used to go to maintaining a war-ready military force go instead to a military whose primary goal is to improve the lives of the world's people, like a large non-profit organization. For instance, the military was the first to prove

that self-sustaining colonies could exist in space, that mechs could be used to magnetically attach to asteroids and mine them for their precious metals, and that colonies could be feasibly created and fixed with a satellitic orbit around a larger body. The UDE military was also behind the development of the Neural Interface that's become ubiquitous in accessibility applications.

The vast majority of UDE citizens have access to healthcare (including psychological counseling which has become destigmatized), housing with temperature control (a necessity on a world that has violent shifts in weather due to advanced climate change), education, meaningful employment, and, if needed, various kinds of governmental assistance.

The UDE's citizens lead far better lives than the ASP debtors, and their lives are made better by the low-cost labor of space. However, much like how we use Amazon today as a means of necessity while simultaneously knowing it's not the most moral of choice, the people of Earth purchase products based on their price, and are often able to get cheaper commodities whose supply chains originated from space.

Culture

Despite each country maintaining general operational autonomy, a global identity has begun to emerge for the people of Earth. However, it wasn't until it was in contrast with the bombastic identity of the Colonies that it became obvious or even recognizable as a global identity. The people of Earth are generally left-leaning, aligning with the democratic socialism of global politics. The average person believes everyone has a right to life, liberty, health, and education.

The Allied Space Populace (ASP)

The UDE developed the technology to allow humans to permanently live in space through the use of colonies - large satellites that orbit planets, dwarf planets, moons, or other celestial bodies like large asteroids. The mining of asteroids, planets, and moons has resulted in a massive boom of industry, with steel readily and cheaply available to create new colonies. The vast majority of land on planets is completely unregulated, meaning corporations are free to create whatever they want however they want it. The Corporations tested the waters, seeing what they could get away with. Yes, they were told by the UDE to not do certain things, like creating colonies on worlds with potential for future life, but when the Corporations moved in anyway, the UDE did nothing but provide fines, which the Corporations were only too happy to pay. After all, they made far more profit than the tiny amount they lost from the fines.

Noel Zebos - Head of the Megacorp Space Colonies. Corruption dominates. Corporate assassinations and espionage abound. The Colonies are violent places without the rule of law as it is on Earth. Might makes right, and might comes from money. Some colonies are owned entirely by large corporations, but many were created by a conglomerate of corporations. Competition for resources became more fierce as the large majority of metal-rich asteroids in the asteroid belt were claimed by some corporation or other. This has resulted in weapons being outfitted on a variety of mechs as blue-collar workers become quasi-mercenaries who also use their weapons to kill off the competition if necessary or to defend themselves in case of an attack. Minor wars amongst corporations have occurred on various planets and moons in the solar system, and little can be done to stop them.

As the Earth's Megacorporations became more and more restricted in their methods of production and limited in how they could conduct new research, they began to set their eyes on space as the final frontier - and just like most frontiers, might makes right. Once government-funded institutions put in the hard work to make living in space a reality, large Megacorporations jumped on the opportunity to build in space, offering hotels and trips - but that was just the hook - their real goal was to get lower-class people living in their colonies. They'd entrap poor tourists with their free trips and hotel stays - but they used their own currency, and managed to force the working class into debts they couldn't pay off, working and living on Company Colonies for the rest of their lives. The vast majority of the colonies were funded through private enterprise, which easily outcompeted the UDE for dominance amongst the stars.

The majority of colonies are owned by the Megacorporations themselves, and there's a feudal mix between the wealthy elite and the poor working class who were essentially tricked into space through the use of right-wing propaganda. However, this has made for a split in terms of politics between the colonies and the Earth, with the Earth turning into a place that's more socialist in nature. However, this gradual shift wasn't sitting well with the colonials, and they decided they would claim space for themselves. In a coordinated effort, the colonial Megacorporations banded together and forcibly seized the large majority of UDE colonies present in space. Only a few strongholds remained, and they were under siege by the alliance of feudal Megacorporations.

The UDE was taxing the Megacorp Space Colonies for the infrastructure they used that the UDE created, such as the technology behind maintaining Space colonies, as well as tech infrastructure the UDE not only developed, but also continued to maintain, such as the Net and the Observation Node Network (SNN), as well as the many scientists, physicists, and other experts on loan to the Megacorp Space Colonies who were still citizens of Earth and UDE employees. The Megacorp Space Colonies had also taken out large loans from the UDE with the promise that they'd be paid back in full, using profits made from mining operations and space tourism.

Though space was highly profitable, the lawlessness of Colonial life slowly went to the heads of the Megacorporations' leaders. They were intoxicated with the power they had accumulated. They felt they had worked hard for what they had, and they shouldn't have to pay back the large, high-interest-rate loans they took out. They were fully able to pay back the loans at any time, but they really didn't feel like they should have to. No, they were doing humanity a favor, after all, by advancing her as a space-faring people. All progress should be rewarded, and there were always some sacrifices to be made. They, the colonists, had paid for this future in blood with the many mistakes that were made, and the millions of lives lost to space. But what had Earth paid? Mere money, a resource that it printed, for god's sake. They could always print more, but could they print more colonists? No!

And with this fervor the Colonials chose to not pay back their loans, nor would they pay taxes. This forced the UDE to start sanctioning the colonies, and so began the struggle for power between the UDE and the Colonies.

The Five Families

ASP is ruled by five families whose vast empires are overseen through their familial system. The families each run the solar system's largest corporations - mining, construction, manufacturing, electrical engineering, and transportation. These families adopt some of the blue-collar leanings of their trade as a

means of endearing themselves to their workers. However, anyone even remotely related to the family lives a life of luxury - the blue-collar bs is just a matter of marketing.

When the ASP military started ramping up, the young heirs of the families thought of how much fun it would be to command legions of debtors in the fight against the terrestrial beasts so they could watch their stocks increase by a few points. Their parents, having had many children, aren't all too concerned with a few of the dumber and more aggressive of them going off to war.

After all, they'd always been a hardy group, the spacefarers. They were adventurers! Their forbears had blazed trails in space, making way for a new life away from all the petty environmental laws and taxes of Earth. Though this generation never had to deal with that, they still recognized it was well and good for young people to exercise their spirits, and if that meant they would help to dominate the corrupt UDE, then all the better.

When Commander Nikao groveled to the five families and then hilariously died, the children of the families decided they were tired of everyone else having all the fun - they wanted to destroy their enemies in combat, too! So, they got to work, creating separate special mechs they believed would be the keys to winning the war against the UDE.

Manufacturing

The child of the Manufacturing family decides to use their family's expertise to mass produce large amounts of mechs to overwhelm UDE forces. Quantity over quality, as they always say!

Electrical Engineering

The child of the Electrical Engineering family uses their family's expertise to engineer special Land-Air Mechs that can convert into either a super-fast traditional jet-style fighter or a mech-style fighter in order to defeat the UDE's mechs.

Transportation

The children of two of the other families have already completely failed in defeating the UDE. What's the child of the Transportation family supposed to do? They watched their fellow heirs develop and deploy their unique responses to the UDE's mechs. And even though they'd failed, at least they had something to show for it! The child of the Transportation family has scrapped more designs than they can possibly count, but as all eyes turn to them, they finally have an idea. Just like the other heirs used their family's corporation's specialties to their advantage, so too would the child of the Transportation family! They realize the only way to stop the UDE is to destroy their shipyards. After all, if the UDE has no base of operations in space, then surely sovereignty would be ASP's! So, the child of the Transportation family purchases warheads and places them inside transport ships to destroy the UDE's shipyards. Some of the transport ships may be destroyed on the way, surely, but that's a sacrifice the child of the Transportation family is completely willing to make.

Mining

The child of the Mining family chooses to deploy tools traditionally used in mining in the fight against the UDE's mechs, using special quadrupedal mechs, underground explosives, traps over mine shafts, and other specialized tools that are unexpected, but still highly effective in combat. When ASP blockades

Earth, the child of the Mining family realizes the Moon is the perfect place to use their mechs, and go about creating bases and booby traps around the entire moon. With how entrenched ASP's forces in the moon are, the UDE will never be able to get them out!

Curses a lot but uses "frack" in place of other words. A tongue-in-cheek reference to Battlestar Galactica.

The Bildungs Family (Construction)

Young Roman Bildungs decides to use their family's prowess to build a super giant mech unlike anything humanity has ever seen! They have to use their largest construction mechs to build other construction mechs to then build this! It's truly gargantuan, but the task is easily enough done thanks to the Bildung's family's experience sizing mechs up for larger jobs. A mech like this has long been dreamed up by the Bildungs family, but no one has ever dared to do it. Until now, that is! So confident is Roman Bildungs in his gargantuan mech that he builds only one. He also only builds one because he can only afford the resources to build a single one of these massive machines, which takes far more to build than other mechs. However, Roman is confident that if this mech defeats the UDE in battle, it will increase investments in the company, and more can be created to keep the UDE in line throughout the solar system.

Corporate Feudalism

Free from the shackles of Earth's currency system, taxes, and law, the Megacorporations created a feudal system amongst their ranks. Each company and colony employs its own unique currency, and they decide the exchange rate between that currency and UDE Credits. Parcels of land, salary, voting power, and the ability to reproduce are all dependent upon the title an individual within the system holds. Upward mobility is possible, even for the Debtors, though it's incredibly difficult, and propagandized to any who lives within the colonies, and to any who would come to them, that all they need to do is work hard. It's the new American dream; they call it The Cosmic Dream.

Debtors

Those who left Earth for the colonies, enticed by the ads and Cosmic Dreams sold to them by the Megacorporations, and then ensnared within their predatory lending policies, are known as Debtors. These individuals contract themselves out for various jobs throughout the colonies and aren't beholden to any one company. Much like the ronin of Japanese culture, they're looked down upon in Colonial society, but can be hired to perform the jobs nobody else wants to do. Many assassins come from the Debtor community, and much like the Ninja of old, they're common folks simply looking to erase their debt so their family can live free and have some measure of upward mobility in such a crushing society. Going to prison and performing corporate assassinations are common ways for debtors to rid themselves of the debts they incurred by coming to the Colonies without a company sponsor.

As a means of boosting much-needed numbers of colonists, the Megacorporations incentivize Debtors to have more children by making contraceptives incredibly expensive and encouraging childbirth through things like guaranteed company housing, healthcare, education, and work. Having a child reduces some debt from parents' overall stockpiles. However, all the fees from housing, healthcare, and education are piled onto the newborn child as debt, born into a system they're completely unable to escape.

In the end, Debtors have lots of children and die young, which is exactly what ASP wants from them. With the small amount of education they receive, they're easily brainwashed by ASP to be highly militant and loyal to the state. The vast majority of ASP debtors join the military. Those that don't, or are deemed unfit, toil for low pay to serve the rest of ASP, doing the jobs no one else wants. There are no homeless people on the colonies - everyone works and has a roof over their head, it just depends on how large that roof is, and how much the pay, and for some reason the lowest most degrading jobs provide the lowest pay.

"Better dead than a debtor" - Common Colonial Saying

Culture

Life in the colonies is all about what company you work for, who you know, your title, and how many credits you command. There's a huge amount of politics in the colonies at every level, and schmoozing your way through deals is how people get by. Nobody really trusts anyone else, and the place is relatively lawless, with local security forces easily bribed through credits, company stock, insider trading information, trade secrets, sexual favors, etc. Though each colony is owned by a Megacorporation, many other companies rent out space for the campuses on which they conduct their business and house their employees.

The Colonists believe themselves to special, and argue that their sacrifices push humanity forward as a species. They have no interest in trying to make the battered, abused Earth a more livable place. They believe humanity's fate lies amongst the stars, and that those who stayed behind are just like the other species on Earth - mere cattle, to be used as the true humans saw fit.

The people of space take huge pride in the accomplishments of their forebears by waxing poetic about the hardships they had to face, the trails they had to blaze, and the many deaths of early colonists and space station occupants. However, those hardships were generations removed, and still the people of space hold tightly to the idea that they've also contributed to humanity's progress, despite having done nothing themselves. This attitude comes straight from the heads of the five families, whose only accomplishments have been to maintain the massive monopolies their parents and grandparents created. Their children want something for themselves - which is to command legions of debtors to gain sovereignty over space once and for all, and to etch their names in the annals of history.

Propaganda and Information Control

Because the ASP space stations are owned by any one of several corporations, the lives of those living on the space stations are completely controlled by the corporations themselves. This includes child education and healthcare, which are both directly tied to the kinds of work done by the individual.

Additionally, ASP executives carefully control the kinds of information the people living on the space stations have access to. This includes their entertainment as well. All information is heavily biased, and all media is propaganda, no matter how veiled it is. All messages glorify their leaders and the system they find themselves trapped within. No one is allowed to dream of a better life - after all, how can they dream of something they couldn't possibly fathom?