

new technology and processes. When it comes time for megacorps to recognize the true brains behind many innovations, it's often a dwarf—to the surprise of many. Most dwarfs are quiet and unassuming about their abilities; as illustrated by noted programmer Frank “Friz” Baylor’s live Matrixcast upon receiving the 2069 Innovative IC award: “I’m sorry I could not attend the awards in person, but I didn’t want to take the evening off work—talk to you next year, when I repeat!”

Of all the metatypes, dwarfs tend to be the most assimilated into mainstream society. Dwarfs encounter less prejudice as they are not feared like orks and trolls or seen as glamorous or conspiratorial like elves, but they do often encounter paternalistic attitudes from those that equate short with child-like. Dwarfs must also struggle living in a world built for taller beings, as well as being literally overlooked when it comes to equal opportunities.

ELVES

Homo sapiens nobilis

Elves are taller and slimmer than the average human, though their bone structure and musculature are no weaker than a human’s. Their ears are distinctly pointed, and many elves wear their hair—which is normally very fine—long, so they can cover their ears in some social situations. Elven body hair is sparse to non-existent, and their eyes are highly capable in dim light. Elves have the longest gestation period of the metatypes, at just under a year.

Elves hold a position in pop culture unchallenged by any other metatype, partly due to their exotic looks, striking features, and the adoption of Sperethiel, their own “ancient” language (a claim disputed by some). Many media icons—from models to singers to politicians to porn stars to high-profile lawyers—are elves. Unlike dwarfs, orks, and trolls, who are discriminated against on the basis of being “different and ugly,” elves are often looked down upon by the other metatypes due to being “different and beautiful.” According to stereotype, elves are either poncy faux-aristocrats, homosexual, or back-to-nature “dandelion eaters” (though in fact a majority of elves *is* vegetarian). This intolerance is fostered by the common perception that there is an “elven conspiracy” set to take over the world (a belief that is not entirely without credible support, as illustrated by the foundation of the “elven” nations of Tir Tairngire and Tir na nOg).

A new generation of elves is attempting to dispel these myths and unfair media portrayal, though some reckless youth are going out of their way to paint themselves as rebellious street toughs, swelling the ranks of gangs like the Ancients.



HUMANS

Homo sapiens sapiens

Humans still make up a slight majority of the Earth’s population, on average. Most stand about 1.75 meters tall and weigh just under 80 kg. Sixty years after the Awakening, humans are still seen as “the norm” by laymen and scientific organizations, and are typically the measuring stick to which the other metatypes are compared.

ORKS

Homo sapiens robustus

Orks are proportioned similarly to humans, albeit with a heavier build that adds to their overall bulk. Beyond size, the most distinguishing physical feature of orks are large lower canines, which often look even more alien when paired with the metatype’s characteristic thin lips and flat noses. Ork ears are pointed just like elf ears, though not as elongated. Also like elves,

ork eyes are naturally adapted for low-light situations.

Likely due to their high birth rates, orks often live in large, communal, extended family groups. Children are most often born in litters of four, but some ork mothers have given birth to as many as eight young. When *sapiens* are born to ork mothers, they will express as *robustus* at puberty roughly 95% of the time. Ork gestation periods are the shortest of any of the metatypes at roughly 6 months.

In 2060, *The Or’zet Codex*, published by the Orkland Community Center, established the basics of an ork language and spread through academic and social networks. This was not a new language; Or’zet is an interpretation of an ancient text, one of the many secrets of the old world that the great dragon Dunkelzahn hoarded until his death. Though some tried to suppress this

