

The Nlom And You: Psionic Theory For Dummies

Psionic History

Although by human standards psionics were ‘discovered’ in the year **2332 CE**, their influence has shaped Skrell society and the species’ overall development for millennia. Even the earliest ancestors of the modern Skrell species exhibited some level of psionic potential, and it is a commonly-held belief that the Skrell’s unique place among the Spur’s sophonts has spurred advancements in science, culture, arts and even religion in a way that few other species can begin to understand. Even after thousands of years of ongoing research, psionic theory remains **a nebulous and poorly-understood** field among academics across the Federation and beyond – outside the Federation itself, research into the field by humanity has proven almost impossible to conduct without Skrellian assistance, and even then progress has been glacial at best.

Formal study into psionics by the Skrell is first documented as far back as **7000 BCE**, with the first texts and writings separating psionics from early Skrell beliefs and religions manifesting during this period. The ‘psionic centre’ of the brain (better known as the **zona bovinæ** in most languages of the 25th century) was medically discovered at some point in this era, sparking intense speculation over the exact nature of psionics from a scientific and rational point of view. The subject found itself under specific scrutiny for the first time, with academics among the developing Skrell societies no longer content to view the phenomenon of psionic potential as something inexplicable but otherwise intrinsic to their species – often tied inextricably to religion – but as something biological that necessitated a full and comprehensive understanding.

Unfortunately for the scientific community, however, the greatest gift given to the Skrell has also proven to be one of the hardest to fully unpack. Though the discovery of the **zona bovinæ** itself helped to jump-start **psionic theory** as a legitimate field of study among academia, further analysis into the exact nature of psionics quickly found itself bogged down by a lack of clarity and direction. The ‘shared dream’ of the **Srom** and ‘psionic wake’ of the **Nlom** were first formally codified by psionists as **reality-moulding phenomena** in the year **2012 BCE**, and this fundamental understanding of psionics has so far stood the test of time. Further breakthroughs in both psionic theory and the newer field of **psionic technology**, however, have been inconsistent and sporadic.

The most major breakthrough of recent centuries in the field of psi-tech came about in **2067 CE** with the invention of the **Nlom interface** – a bio-component composed of artificial, lab-grown Skrell brain tissue designed to mimic the **zona bovinæ**. Despite the disastrous implications of this particular technology during the Skrellian Synthetic Age which I am not going to get into here, go read the appropriate pages!!! Nlom interfaces remain in common usage across the Federation to this day, as they allow Skrell to interface remotely with machinery in a way that would otherwise be next to impossible. Nlom-capable equipment has been a cornerstone of Federation technology ever since its invention, and its ubiquity means that the average Skrell has long since become accustomed to interfacing psionically with a wide variety of devices, from lights that can be brightened and dimmed quite literally at will to more complex computers capable of being operated by thought alone.

Psionic Theory – the Nlom (the psionic wake)

Under conventional psionic theory, the Nlom is viewed as the all-encompassing **psionic wake** or **psionic field** generated by a psion's *zona bovinæ*, the strength of which is understood as an individual's **psionic potential**. Species with a developed *zona bovinæ* (solely the Skrell themselves, to the best of the Spur's knowledge...) are the only creatures of generating this psionic field and therefore classified as **psionically active** – all other species are categorised either as **psionically capable** (humans, monkeys, Tajara, etc.) or **psionically inert** (Vaurcae, Diona, etc.) in accordance with their brain structure.

The Nlom has both active and passive influences on a psion's perception of reality, almost all of which are best exhibited between two separate points of psionic potential. In layman's terms, this means that two separate *zona bovinæ* can interact psionically to form a **new consensus** on local reality – a phenomenon most easily observed in the Skrell's penchant for telepathic communication, where one or more psions interact to either impose or build consensus. **Active telepathy** involves a singular psion imposing a thought on one or more psionically active or capable receivers in the immediate vicinity, effectively thinking a thought directly into the recipients' brain(s); **passive telepathy** is a shared phenomenon in which multiple psions form a shared consensus by a similar but unconscious mechanism, which becomes a shared reality of emotion or understanding among the group.

The most common form of active telepathy involves a psion choosing to communicate specific thoughts, ideas, emotions or concepts through conscious effort – either to the Nlom field in their immediate vicinity or directly to another *zona bovinæ* they can perceive within that same field – whereas passive telepathy most commonly manifests as the mixing of several individual psionic wakes into a melange of emotions and perspectives. Neither of these aspects of the Nlom field can be fully experienced by anyone not considered psionically active; other sophonts with less developed *zonæ bovinæ* are incapable of anything beyond experiencing any psionic effects produced by Skrell participants in the local Nlom field, and their perception of any such effects is often **muted or incomplete**.

Put simply, humans and other sophonts can generally receive active telepathy without much issue, but much of the 'nuance' and overall understanding intended by the originating Skrell is likely to be lost in the process, and the overexertion of these species' undeveloped *zonæ bovinæ* can cause headaches, nausea, and other physiological reactions if the telepathy in question is overly complex or extensive. Similarly, the passive telepathy of the Nlom field can affect the emotions or understanding of any psionically capable being within the boundaries of the field, but their grasp of specific concepts and the depth of overall 'feeling' rarely goes beyond a surface level. A Nlom field radiating intense sorrow might be perceived by a human as a vague sense of melancholy at best; similarly, an otherwise well-rested Tajara could find themselves feeling an inexplicable sense of fatigue if exposed to a room full of exhausted Skrell all resonating within the local Nlom field.

Psionic Theory – the Srom (the shared dream)

The Srom, sometimes known as the **shared dream** or **unconscious wake**, is a unique phenomenon within the Nlom that incorporates both active and passive aspects of telepathy at the same time – those immersed in the shared dream can both actively transmit and passively receive thoughts and influences from one another with the utmost intimacy. While in theory the Srom can take any shape its local dreamers envision, by cultural convention the participants generally dream the form of a small ‘island’ suspended in an endless expanse of stars, with this perception being gently imposed on any new psions entering the unconscious wake. Psionic activity within the Srom is often imperceptible to those outside the dream-bubble itself, as in effect the Srom constitutes a **pocket reality** within the Nlom itself. The more powerful the potential of the participating psions, the more this psionic dream-reality can delve into the realm of the fantastic and the unbelievable, allowing for unparalleled creativity and freedom of thought for those skilled enough to manipulate the dream to their will.

One of the few ways the pocket reality of the Srom interacts with the real world is via the **Srom interface**, invented in **2204 CE** – a much more recent development than its Nlomic counterpart. Srom-capable devices remain a rarity in civilian life within the Federation even to this day, as the concept of a **dreaming machine** is disturbing to many Skrell in the post-Glorsh era, but their use in research, logistical, and military fields continues to expand year after year. The underlying technology behind these devices remains a closely-guarded secret of **Qerr'Zolvq Industries**, the Federation enterprise responsible for their manufacture and distribution, but the effects of a machine projecting itself into the Srom's pocket reality are much more easily understood than the underlying mechanics. Within the boundaries of the Srom, a machine can both broadcast and receive instantaneous psionic feedback to and from its Skrell dream-operators without abiding by many of the physical world's restrictions – for instance, a Srom device can be operated in abstract terms and at the speed of thought, allowing for complex calculations and concepts to be relayed by the operating Skrell to the computer much more rapidly than any conventional input method could allow. This effectively allows the operator or operators of the machine to act as bio-computers and extensions of its own processing power, with the device itself also working as an ‘interpreter’ to transmit the results of any calculations into the real world as electrical impulses.

The most common application of this technology is within modern Skrellian FTL travel – calculations that would take days or even weeks for Skrell to work out conventionally, even with computer aid, can be done in mere minutes by Skrellian navigators working in the Srom. Larger and more complex teams of aluminium-insulated Srom scientists and researchers, working in parallel with Srom-capable computers, are increasingly common fixtures across the Federation and serve as the Skrell's answer to the true artificial intelligence they relied on in past centuries.

[POTENTIALLY SHAKY LORE BEYOND THIS POINT!!! THIS IS JUST A WRITING EXERCISE RIGHT?]

It is important to realise that the fundamental understanding of psionics as an ability to **manipulate reality** is incredibly limited when applied to anything without any innate psionic capability, such as plant life or most forms of inorganic matter. In theory, the reality-moulding nature of the Nlom field is still a fundamental manipulation of energy and can be applied to any form of matter, but in practice the Nlom seems markedly less able to affect anything without the biological capability to 'agree' with the psion's reassessment of reality. Therefore, while many cultures across the Spur believe the Skrell to be widely capable of feats such as telekinesis and other such reality-warping powers, in reality psionics of this nature are limited to only **much more powerful** psions among the species – and even then, their capabilities are often much less pronounced than one might first think.