

Magic

Fundamental Principles of Magic

Magic infuses this and all worlds. It links and binds all things, tying entities together and creating invisible bonds between the planes. The utilization of magic is concerned with controlling the flow of thaumaturgical energies along these paths. Magic appears to be governed by well known principles and is as much a science as physics, mathematics, theosophy astrology, phrenology or even biology. However, due to the chaotic nature of thaumic energies the application of these laws is unreliable, and very frequently dangerous.

In this chapter we outline the fundamental laws of transfiguration, channelling, ensorcellment, evocation, summoning and the like. But the reader should beware, verily it is said that those who play with the devil's toys will be brought by degrees to wield his sword. The basic principles of magic are as follows:

The Principle of Potentials In order for magic to occur there must be a difference in thaumaturgical potentials.

The Principle of Flux Magic occurs when thaumaturgical energies flow from a high potential to a low potential along a line of flux.

The Law of Contagion Magic shapes all things. Logically it follows that similar things are linked by the lines of flux that created them.

The Law of Conductivity Lines of flux may be broken or enhanced using a variety of techniques. Different materials conduct magic better than others. Natural and biological materials such as flesh, wood, and water conduct magic very well, as does silver. Ferrous metals and rock do not conduct magic well and can interfere with its casting in unpredictable ways.

The Corollary of Knowledge The more you know about a subject the greater your knowledge about the lines of flux that bind them.

Mechanically, magical spells are skills. Casting magic uses a pool of magic dice, and magic checks are dice pool checks. Each character has a different dice pool depending on their archetype, their abilities and their skills. Most non-magical characters will only have animus dice and no way of using them. Other characters will have greater energy and a variety of ways of using it.



In order to cast spells the player chooses a set of dice from their pool, rolls them and attempts to roll greater than its difficulty level, and less than its over-charge value if specified.

Cast:

$$\text{Over-Charge} \stackrel{?}{\geq} \text{Dice Result} \stackrel{?}{\geq} \text{Difficulty}$$

If the sum of the magic dice is less than the difficulty then the spell is under-powered, sputters out and fails. If the sum of the magic power is greater than the spell difficulty then the extra theurgical energies must be dissipated somehow.

These magical checks are affected by the complex, chaotic nature of thaumaturgic energies. We now describe how the laws of magic effect the casting of spells by increasing or decreasing their power depending on circumstance.

The Law of Potentials

The first law of magic is that *magic requires a potential difference in magical energy levels as a prerequisite*. Furthermore, *the productive use of magic requires the construction of a thaumaturgical conduit between potentialities* through which the magic can flow.

There are many different sources of thaumaturgical potentialities, such as the potential difference between planes of existence, energy from stored thaumaturgical sources, the animus (a person's spark of life) and so on. We examine the most important, the most widely used, of these potentialities here.

Sources of Magical Potentialities

Raw/Planar Magical Sources

Planar Magicks are those that use the raw potential differences between planes directly, these so-called Protinus magics, are the most powerful and the most dangerous to magical sources to use:

Planar Potentialities are the most volatile and perhaps the most dangerous means of controlling magical energies. They employ the potentiality across two planes. That is they harness the flow from planes of higher energy to planes of lower energy. There are two main dangers of using this form of thaumaturgical energy. The first is its volatility. Casters using this energy source are more likely to over charge their spells. The second danger are the lurkers in the dark. There are a myriad of creatures lurking in the frigid abyssal planes who hunger eternally to escape to higher planes to feed indiscriminately. They wait for the opportunity a miscast might provide.

Elemental Magic is a subset of planar magic that uses the potential between a particular set of well-known planes of existence, the so-called elemental planes. The advantage of this energy source is that these planes are comparatively stable and their behaviour is fairly well-understood. Unfortunately, elemental magic is less versatile than, the more general, planar magic.

Types of Magic Items

Magical items use thaumaturgical energies stored within the device itself. Magic by its very nature is evanescent - it has a tendency to dissipate after a period of time. Magical items tend to be made of thaumic insulating materials in order to minimize the rate at which magic is dissipated.

In game, this stored magical potential is represented by each magical device having its own magic pool and refresh rate. The item used to store magical energies may be one use, rechargeable or self recharging. One use magic items will have no refresh rate. When a one-use item's pool is depleted the device is spent.

Powerful magical devices may be imbued with the residual animus of their creators, or tainted with by the nature of their magical source. In either case, this is represented in game by the item having one or more aspects that are applied to actors when they interact with the item. The nature of the interaction required to transfer the item's aspects to the actor depends on the item, e.g. the aspects might be applied when they touch the item, or when they have used the item a number of times, etc.

Conductivity	
Ground with Staff	Remove the lowest or highest die from a roll.
Ground with Spear	Remove the lowest die from a roll.
Metal Armour	Stops grounding.
Running Water	Lose dice on a 1-3.
Standing Water	Lose dice on a 1-2.
Rune Half Life In stone or steel	Years
Rune Half Life In Other Materials	2d20 minutes
Contagion	
Knowledge	One or two extra dice.
Knowledge of the True Name	Four extra dice
Holy Symbol	Theurgic magic assumes the use of a holy symbol. No extra benefit.
Improvised Holy Symbol	Holy symbol of the wrong material. Lose dice on a 1-2.
No Holy Symbol	Magic dice dissipate on a 1-3.
Casting spells without a verbal component	+7 to difficulty and overcharge.
Casting spells over-range with no contagion	+7 to difficulty and overcharge.
Biothaumic Magic	
In Cities	Use d4s
In Villages, Outskirts, Dungeons	Use d6s
In the Wilderness	Use d8s

Table 1.1: Magic Effects

Scrolls Like rune spells, scrolls contain the written incantations that must be entoned to cast a spell. Unlike runes they do not contain any magical energies with which to automatically trigger or power the spell. A scroll user must be able to read the language in which the scroll is written, checking to do so if necessary, and must be able to read the scroll aloud. Furthermore scroll users must power the scroll with their own magic pool. These requirements make them difficult for non-casters to use. Scrolls may be reused unless they become damaged, or the creator has built some limit into the scroll (which may be done in order to reduce the danger of misuse or limit competition with the creator).

Potions Potions store thaumic energy in liquid form. The magic is enufused in a liquid solvent, and contained within a glass flask with binding magical inscriptions. Energy stored in a potion begins to escape as soon as the flask is opened. Potions are generally created by magic users for the use of non magic users as potions are easy to use and moderately easy to create.

Wands A wand is a slight baton made from a thaumic conducting material that is used to better focus and control raw thaumic energy. Using a wand allows the caster to reroll one of their spell dice.

Rods A rod is a short, 1'-2', heavy staff that is used to store and direct the flow of thaumic energy. They are constructed from a thaumically conductive core encircled in an outer thaumic insulating shell. Typically, rods can store an extra two dice worth of thaumic energy. Magical rods can be used in combat and are equivalent to a club. Once used the caster needs to recharge the rod.

Staffs and Spears Staffs are long sticks, 5'-6', that can be used in combat. In addition because they are constructed from a conductive material, typically wood, they can be used to ground out a spell, in order to mitigate the problems associated with over-charging a spell. When using a staff to ground out dice you may remove either the highest or lowest die from the roll. A spear may also be used for this purpose but its metal tip effects the flow and so when grounding with a spear only the lowest die result may be grounded out.

Holy Symbol Holy symbols use contagion to increase the strength of the conduit between a theurgical caster and their sponsor. It is assumed that theurgical casters have a magical symbol and there are penalties for casting theurgical magic without a holy symbol of the appropriate type.

Runic Magic Magical runes are essentially spells that automatically cast themselves when a certain triggering event occurs, usually within the vicinity of the runes.

The small amount of magic required to cast the runespell is stored in the runes themselves when they are created. Overtime this magic will leach from the rune and it will no longer be viable, but may still be replenished by a skilled Runemaster. For this reason runes are usually carved into materials which are highly thaumaturgically non-conductive such as ferrous metals or rock. Once the runespell is cast it behaves as any other spell, drawing the energy for the spell itself from some second source. For runes carved in stone and steel this is almost always from the elemental planes of earth as the spells powers are enhanced by the contagious nature of the substrate.

Magical swords, armour, rings and the like are typically runic in nature.

The Animus

Every living creature is imbued with a store of thaumic energy within and of themselves, their *Animus*. This energy is used by a number of forms of magic, the most widely know examples are: necromantic draining, blood magic, death curses, human sacrifices, and ingestion.

It has been postulated that the phenomenon of life is a trickle of magical power from some higher plane through to some lower plane. In such a model each creatures life can be construed as a conduit through which magical energies flow. An alternate model holds that living creatures are wellsprings of magical energies, i.e. that they are the sources of magical energies themselves. A third model holds that both of the first two models are holds true. Which of these models, if any, are correct remains an extremely contentious area of debate amongst students of these dark arts. In any case, it is widely believed that their exists an animatic flow that replenishes the animus from some source.

The rate of the animatic flow is proportional to the strength of emotions that the living creature is feeling. For this reason many thaumatergical predators will enhance these emotions while feeding.

It has been hypothesized that apparations, ghosts, banshees and other spiritual manifestations are the remnants of powerful residual animatic flow, eddies in the animatic flow, if you like.

The Biome

Rather than draw magical power from a particular animus, some animistic casters, such as Druids, are able to draw very small amounts of magic from all surrounding living creatures. While very powerful these magics can be difficult to use if the biome is not in balance. The type of biothaumic magic dice changes depending on the environmental balance.

Biothaumic magic uses different dice depending on the environment the caster is in. In biomes with a great deal of balanced animistic energy, forests, swamps etc, each dice in biothaumic magic pool use d8s. In a biome that is out of balance, like a city, use d4s. In biomes that are slightly out of balance, e.g.villages and dungeons, use d6s.

Channelled Magic

Theurgic, Channelled, or Sponsored Magic is magic whose power has been channelled from a third party “god”, demon or celestial agent of some description. Often a shared symbol is used to establish or strengthen the conduit between a caster and the third-party source. In this type of magic the caster typically acts as an agent for the third-party, allowing the third-party to project their power and their influence.

Those with an enquiring mind may be wondering where the third-party gets their energy from. It seems clear that many gain their power from planar magics. For the so-called ‘gods’ it has been surmised that the act of prayer forms a conduit with the god through which some small part of the devotees animus travels. Thus people pray to a god, the god gains animus, the god grants power to clerics to project the gods interest, the clerics use this power to protect those of their faith and convert new devotees, .. and so on. Though, this is just a theory and such musings are clearly not meant for mere mortals such as ourselves. Many religions have also practiced sacrifice as a faster and simpler way of providing animatic energies to their deity.

The Laws of Flux

In order for magic to happen thaumic energies must flow. It does not matter in which direction magic flows across a potential difference it may still be harnessed, as a water mill may be located upstream or downstream from a waterfall and still do work, all that is required is that the magic flows.

Stopping the flow stops the magic. Hindering the flow hinders the magic. **To use magic there must be a potential and a flow.** Certain magical symbols, chiefly the pentagram and the circle, when carved, drawn or laid out upon the ground in salt will stop the flow of magic (salt is used because it is non-conductive, granular, common, cheap, and white.. which makes it easier to see any discontinuities in the symbols).

An alternate problem happens when there is too much conductivity. In practice this happens when there is too much water around, e.g. when it rains, or when the caster is standing in a puddle. Here the caster is likely to dissipate more energy than they otherwise would.

The Law of Contagion

Magic shapes and binds all things. Objects that share similarities are linked by magical ties. These ties can be used to strengthen magical spells. For example, having the blood or hair of a person can be used to strengthen a spell used on that subject.

Blood Magic

Note that a characters magic dice pool represents the amount of inner magical energy the character has available to draw upon when resisting magical effects. However, that is only a small fraction of the total creatures life force, their **Animus**.

The power of **Blood Magic** is derived from thaumaturgical contagion between the blood and the animus of the subject. Blood magic drains the animus from the subject. When a caster or monster uses a form of blood magic to drain a targets animus roll the targets magic pool. The caster or monster then receives extra blood magic dice equal to the total of the subjects magic roll, e.g. a character with a 2d6 magic pool is drained, rolls 7 on their magic pool, then the the caster receives an extra 7 temporary blood magic dice.

Blood magic is temporary. Once lost the only way the caster or monster can get more dice is to drain more subjects.

Symbolic Contagion

Similar symbols form flux lines connected by contagion. Ritual use of special patterns can form an association to other locations and other realms. Holy symbols form conduits between theurgic source, a deity or demon, and the caster. Shared symbols carved into portals tie one portal end point to another.

Temporal Contagion

Events that occur at the same time are connected by contagion. This allows casters to draw on the power of great celestial and planar events, e.g. the alignment of the planets, in order to increase the power of specific spells. Similarly, various times of the year are more auspicious for casting certain rituals because of the contagion with the previous castings of the spell at the same time of the year.

Words of Power

Words are the key to magic. When the first great spell casters, monumentally powerful inter-planar beings, cast their spells they did so while intoning in Innochian, the language of magic. Intoning the same words forms a contagious link with the original castings and other castings of this spell through time.

Magic words may also be used to train the invokers thoughts and to gain the attention of other worldly beings, like ringing a bell in the dark.

The Law of Conductivity

Different materials effect the flow of magic differently. Natural and biological materials such as flesh, wood, and water conduct magic very well. Ferrous metals glass, and rock do not conduct magic well and can interfere with its casting in unpredictable ways.

Iron interferes with the flow of magic. Magical creatures, particularly the Fey, do not like it. Non-ferrous metals.. Platinum, Gold, Silver, Copper, etc also conduct magic well, though scholars are in disagreement as to why these do so, given iron does not. Silver, is a particularly excellent conductor and so adversely affects those possessed by extra planar beings such as the undead and lycanthropes.

Magical circles break conductivity (and therefore also break contagion). What the circle is made of generally doesn't matter. Though there are specialized protective circles for the protection of particular beings that while more powerful require special ingredients, (e.g. salt for vampires).

If a spell is over-charged it may be possible to **Ground-Out** the spell. By using a conductive tool, typically a wooden staff, carved appropriately, a character can ground-out a spell by holding it and planting the end on the earth. This removes either the highest or lowest die from the result, at the characters discretion, and places it back in the characters pool.

Ferrous armour disrupts the flow of magical energies and adversely affects grounding. It is impossible to ground-out magic when wearing armour. Similarly, if using a wooden shafted spear with a ferrous head then only the lowest die may be removed as the metal head interferes with the thaumaturgical conductivity of the shaft.

Water, and particularly running water, is an excellent magical channel. Characters casting magic in standing water lose dice from their result when rolling a 1 or 2. In running water they lose dice on a result of 1-3. In addition, running water breaks contagion.

Conduits

Proximal Contagion

Things that are close to one another are linked by proximal contagion. This is why many spells have a range. Beyond that range it becomes difficult to form a decent conduit. Magic at great distance is very difficult.

WHAT ARE WE SAYING HERE? Establishing a conduit. Evocation Blood, Flesh and Indulgence? running water.. sunrises talking through planes.

If a magical act draws upon a flow of energies from this plane to some other lower potential plane then energies are expended from this plane, then the temperature will drop, lights will dim and ice may form. We call such an action an endothaumic reaction. In contradistinction, if energy flows to this plane from some higher plane then the magic is of a type named exothaumic and the tell-tale side effects of such practice are smoke of a sulfurous nature, bright lights and heat. Magic that results from intra-planar sources, that is magic from stored sources has no such side-effects.

Name can be used to create a conduit to allow channelling of energy.

Possession - conduit from some external entity to a person. Gates - opens a door to a different dimension and the creature itself can arrive.

gestures, ingredients, verbalization .. a form of contagion.

Portals

Portals are pathways between or within planes that allow travel or projection through those portals. There are two types of portal, Lesser and Greater Portals. Lesser portals are pin-hole sized, that are too small for physical travel and only allow communication of for beings to project their will through. The lesser portal is briefly opened, usually requiring assistance at the destination, and the being uses this channel to create a simulacrum of themselves through the portal. The facsimile is created by congealling ectoplasm from the environment. When the lesser portal is shut this breaks any link through the portal. However, the simulacrum remains linked with their parent by contagion.

Greater portals require huge amounts of thaumaturgical energy to create and to keep open. Once open they allow beings to physically pass from one plane to another.

Opening portals is extremely dangerous as their are countless beings lying in wait, in a manner not to dissimilar to the way the barbarians of the north fish for seal through the ice. Hungrilly waiting through the eons.

The Corollary of Knowledge

Theurgical fluxes bind all things. The better a caster understands these fluxes for a subject the easier it is for the magic user to cast spells that effect the subject. Knowledge is power. The greater the knowledge the magical practitioner has about his subject the more power they have over that subject . The GM, at their discretion, should grant one or two extra dice to the magical practitioner, if the practitioner can demonstrate special knowledge about the subject. Knowing the true name of a magical being grants an additional dice. Similarly having an accurate physical or mental model or representation of the target of a spell gives you an extra dice.