



MAGIC THEORY

THE EARLY DISCOVERIES

It is theorized that raw mana is a pervasive energy that has forever been and forever will be. It is an ambient source of power vacillating throughout the universe. A power flowing through and around everything; binding matter, ether and space alike. It is merely conjecture as to how the planes and the worlds within each were introduced into the mix. Some contend that all was created by the will of some supreme deity, some that the power coalesced in its own

evolutionary sense to form the beginnings of the universe and still others that the energy was drawn to such by our own impending consciousness. The theories of creation are as boundless as the stars of the night sky, nevertheless what exists, exists.

Through the course of time, the boundaries of the inner planes became more substantial and the energy contacting each began to adopt the properties therein, or perhaps the other way around. Nonetheless, scholars of the Age of Magic determined that this energy, which they dubbed mana, had many discernable traits. For each plane of existence, the mana interacting with it had taken on specific attributes, some more apparent than others. For the sake of this discussion, however, let us confine our studies to the world which we humans know. Our own reality, a plane of existence that early scholars dubbed the Prime Material Plane...or simply the Prime.

To fully understand the relationship of mana with the Prime, it is first necessary to understand the relationship of the inner planes to the Prime. For each of the inner planes, the properties of that plane must exist on the Prime. Therefore for the Elemental Plane of Fire, fire and heat must exist on the Prime, for the Abyss, evil and envy must exist on the Prime, and so on. In short, the Prime was dubbed a conglomerate of the properties of the universe. Perhaps as thus, the direct antonym of the word prime, but dubbed so nonetheless.

Now, with that in mind, the sages of the early age were able to determine several things about the Prime and the existence of mana. They found that a modicum of raw mana existed in all things, both animate and inanimate. Also, the amount of mana fluctuated in various environs, ranging from a veritable flood (dubbed a mana well) of mana to nearly none (dubbed a dead zone.) It was from these discoveries that the beginnings of magic study and magery as we know it evolved.

DETERMINATION OF THE KNOWN SCHOOLS

These initial discoveries initiated an age of unbridled and sometimes reckless delving into the unknown. It is uncertain who truly was the first individual to successfully channel the power of mana and gain a tangible result, but happen it did. Over the next centuries, definite patterns began to show themselves through the application of the mana. Research and discovery all too often proved dangerous, leaving many a would be mage dead or severely maimed. But these pioneers laid the paths for what would become known as the Schools of Mana or Schools of Power.

Many of the schools developed from readily apparent properties existing on the Prime, such as the elemental magics. Others came about due to their association with a desired effect, such as Alteration and Abjuration. Although at this stage there was truly no formal classification as research was being carried out in chaotic fashion by various individuals in varying locales. Ultimately it was discerned that there were eight major elemental types of mana and eight major classes of mana. It is certain that many other enigmatic forms and classes fell by the wayside during this time due to a variety of circumstances. Nevertheless, these sixteen areas became well known as the most stable and controllable forms of mana. These more stable spheres of control would become the backbone for the definition of some of the earliest magic formulae; formulae that are now known to the modern wizard as spells.

During this era, the use of meditation and other forms of self-discipline became common methods for mages to tap their own personal mana and recharge the energy from their surroundings. This led to an important discovery as some of the more adept scholars began to develop a "magic sight." These individuals were able to focus so intensely on mana that they could see it visibly. It was noted that raw mana gave off an eerie yellow-white glow while focused and elemental mana each gave off uniquely colored glows. These colors were catalogued, helping to further define the schools and allowing certain magical forensics to begin. As the mysterious spell formulae were systematically broken down, master mages began to understand how they truly worked, allowing them to both fine tune and extrapolate.

NEW DISCOVERIES

By now the Age of Magic was in full swing, mages were a prolific lot and they wielded both an impressive and intimidating power. Many self-proclaimed arch magi began to develop their own schools and colleges for cultivating young mages following their own ideals and practices. Along with this sudden rise in power for wielders of magic came much political control and intrigue as various factions sought to wrest control from one another. But that is another history lesson. In the meantime, the various magical colleges made great inroads in developing in depth knowledge about their areas of specialty.

THEOLOGICAL MAGIC

Understanding magic in the theological sense has always been predominately faith based rather than analyzed meticulously. However, through this analytical approach practitioners of the arcane have indeed discovered some things about theurgic mana. What was found was that the mana was much the same as the mana they wielded, but that it was filtered somehow. That filter being the god or goddess.

It is theorized that these extremely powerful beings have figured out how to unlock the barriers which prevent such small humanoid vessels from wielding any more than a thimbleful of energy at any one time. As such they are able to absorb easily more than a million times such quantities seen in mortal individuals and then bestow that mana to their priests. Unfortunately priests themselves still remain bound by certain physiological limitations that prevent them from being any more of a vessel than a mage.

ALTERNATE MAGICS

Over the millennia various alternative applications of magic have evolved, each with their own strengths and weaknesses. Some are random one off styles developed by some ancient master and which hangs on by some random thread passed along from teacher to student. Others are designed to work with existing formulae but in a different manner of execution while others branch off into their own realms in some fashions. It is impossible to cover all of these aspects as it is truly unknown just how many variants are in practice. Below are some of the major known variants and their inherent strengths and weaknesses.

RUNE MAGIC

This magic variant is designed to empower objects with symbols of power which can hold the powers of magic within them. Runes take a good deal of time to create, but once complete can be empowered to hold spells permanently, recharge themselves in various fashions and generally create powerful, long term effects. A derivative of this variant is tattoo magic, which is basically fashioning runes on a creature. A good rule of thumb for rune creation is that it takes a minimum of one hour/spell level or ten times the normal casting time (whichever is greater) to create a rune. As such, time is the predominate drawback to runic spellcrafting

CIRCLE MAGIC

This magic variant is designed to enhance the power and create an area of effect for spells and create powerful, permanent magics. Circles generally take much longer than any other alternate magic form but allow the creation of permanent artifices that can be recharged with mana and even circles which can power themselves by drawing in mana from the universe. Additionally circle magic is often the focus for ritual type magics which are even more powerful than circles alone

FOCI MAGIC

This magic variant is generally designed to do a couple of things, one being to enhance the function of the spell being cast through the object of the focus (i.e. – fire magic becoming more powerful by focusing through an existing blaze) or to alter how the spell works via the intended focus (i.e. – vampiric touch being cast through a sword to absorb life force with an attack.) There are various specialized effects for foci magic but all involve channeling a complete spell through an object, element or other inanimate item

WARD AND SIGIL MAGIC

This magic variant is in a nutshell a down and dirty version of rune magic. The primary difference between a rune and a ward or sigil is that runes are permanent while wards and sigils are one use items. Thus while a traveling mage might wish to set up an alarm around an odd camp perimeter by painting quick wards on trees, he would probably not want to spend hours creating permanent runes for a place he may never come back to. Another major advantage to a ward or sigil over simply casting the spell is the ability to set up a trigger for the spell.

RITUAL MAGIC

This magic variant is designed to increase the power of a spell to levels not normally possible. Wizards and priests familiar with ritual magic principles and with appropriate skills, power, meta-spells or other abilities can use ritual magic to boost various aspects of a spell (i.e. – area of effect, duration, range, etc.) as well as potentially cause the spell to function as a higher level spell (i.e. – a minor sphere spell could be cast as a median effect) making it more difficult to resist. The primary ways of boosting magic through rituals is a much longer casting time, adding multiple wizards or priests to the casting and tapping such things as ley lines, focusing on astrological events, etc.