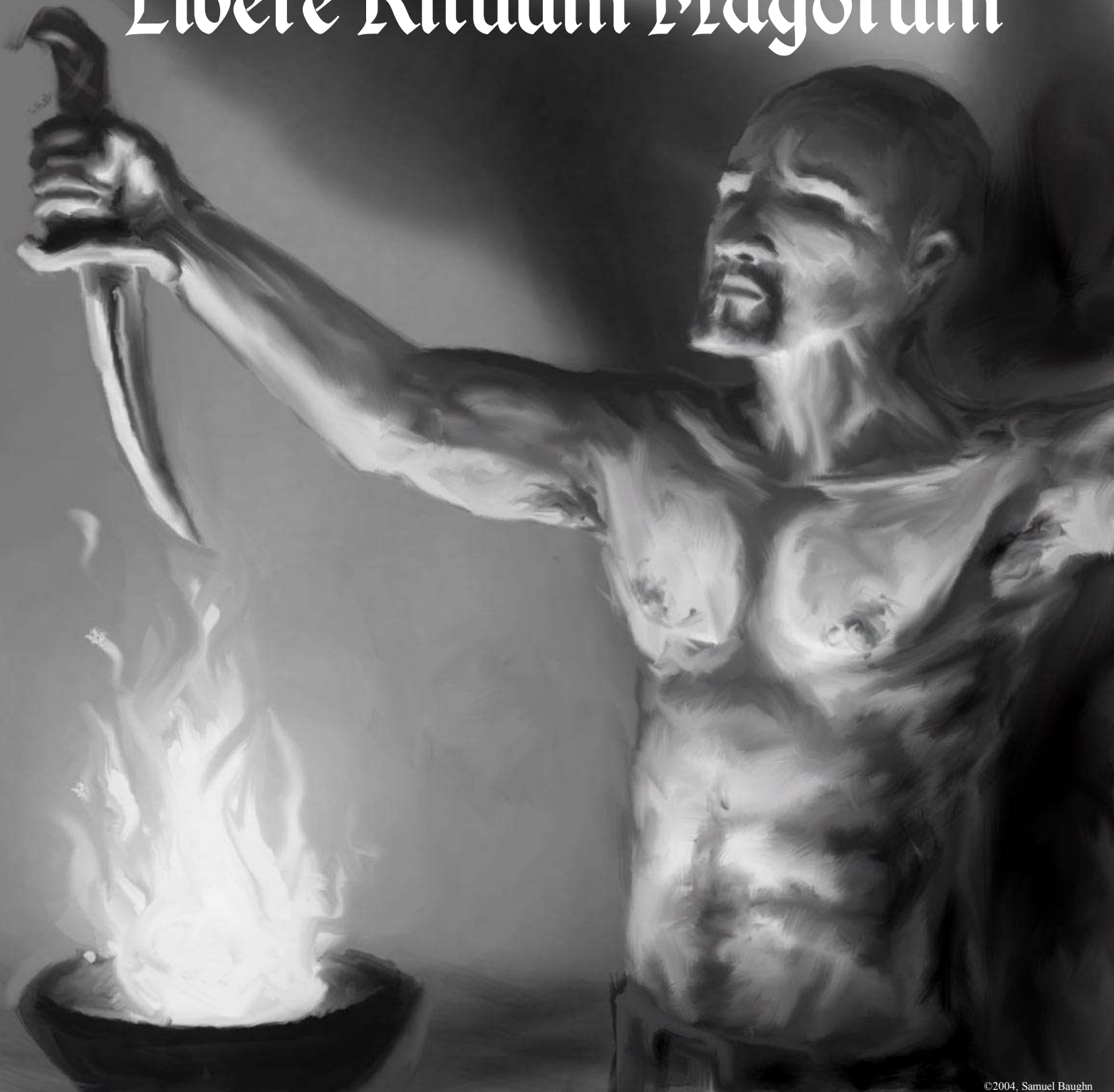


Libere Rituum Magorum



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Libere Rituum Magorum
Cover Art "The Ritualist"

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GURPS, *GURPS Spirits*,
Religion, and *Voodoo*

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Introduction

A priest prays to his god for deliverance from a terrible curse. A shaman summons an eagle spirit to guard the soul of a warrior going on a vision quest. A sorceress hexes an enemy to lose everything he holds dear. The core list of spells needed for a good magical narrative doesn't change much from system to system.

But most magical systems are designed to represent *high fantasy*, the kinds of magic that you find in mainstream fantasy novels and video games. And this shows in the mechanics, which tend to be relatively predictable and formalized into highly specific, situational spells... particularly tactical spells.

Libere Rituum Magorum models the feel of real world magical beliefs and practices, while still providing impressive spells. It also acts as a toolkit – most of the spells here are building blocks for the desired effects, and a creative magician can come up with dozens of applications for a single generic ritual. The remainder are mostly examples of what can be done with the building block rituals.

With ritual magic, you can run a campaign of modern parapsychologists hunting ghosts, a superstitiously medieval Russian campaign of priests and demons, or subtle wizards who call on incorporeal dragons to influence the path of nations.

This text includes everything you need to incorporate ritual magic rules in your campaign, and to adapt the standard *GURPS* advantages to such a campaign.

Administrivia

*GURPS*TM and Steve Jackson GamesTM

The material presented here is my original creation, intended for use with the *GURPS* (<http://www.sjgames.com/gurps>) system from Steve Jackson Games (<http://www.sjgames.com>). This material is not official and is not endorsed by Steve Jackson Games.

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GURPS Spirits

This text is a fan work, intended to capture the feel of the ritual magic system presented in *GURPS Spirits*, for the 4th edition. While everything in this text was written by Thomas Weigel, he drew inspiration and ideas from *GURPS Spirits*, *Religion* and *Voodoo*.

The Author

Thomas Weigel lives in Austin, Texas, in the thrall of his Muse and her crown of cypress. While he is not a practicing magician, he has drunk deep of the Well of Odin, and sometimes imagines he knows things. Secret, horrible things. The rest of the time, he wonders what Odin *puts* in that well. It's good stuff.

The Artists

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<http://www.melissagay.com>

<http://www.epilogue.net/cgi/database/art/list.pl?gallery=11822>

http://www.popthought.com/display_gallery.asp?GalID=10

Magical Mechanics

Advantages and Disadvantages

Existing Advantages

Blessed

At the GM's discretion, the Psychic Gift advantage can replace this one. See the Divine Will ritual (p.18). Reaction modifiers for the god's worshippers combines well with this.

The heroic feat version is unrelated to the above, and can represent self-hypnosis and visualization as easily as granted powers from a diety.

Channeling

At the GM's discretion, the Psychic Gift advantage can replace this one. See the Summoning ritual path (p.24).

Clairsentience

This advantage should be purchased for Sight or Hearing only, with Increased Range 1 (+10%), Variable Range (+0%) and Uncertain Flashes (-50%).

Typical Clairvoyance (25 pts): This results in a Clairsentience which requires an IQ roll, at a penalty due to range (but can theoretically achieve any range), can only be used with sight, and the vision consists mostly of vague impressions, focus on details, and similar things.

Danger Sense

This advantage can provide warning against harmful spells (possibly allowing a barrier roll when it otherwise wouldn't be allowed).

Detect

Spirit Sight (56 pts): Detect Other Spirits (common, precise +100%, discriminatory +80%).

Magic Sense (10 pts): Detect Magical Activity (occasional).

Most spirits have both of the above Detect abilities, and some psychics may also have such (although human psychics often have more of a spirit sense which is as vague as the magic sense).

Healing

At the GM's discretion, the Psychic Gift advantage can replace this one. See the Healing ritual path (p.20).

Innate Attack

See Telekinesis (p.5) for the appropriateness of this.

Some purported psychics in the real world were said to be able to generate heat at a distance, sometimes through their palms, sometimes simply via staring at a point. This can be represented as an Innate Attack (Burning, 1d-1 pts of damage) for 4 pts, with the Costs Fatigue (1 FP/attack, -5%) and Reduced Range 2 (-20%). Total cost is 3 points.

Medium

At the GM's discretion, this can be replaced with a combination of the Detect (Spirits, Common, Vague -50%) and Psychic Gift advantages. See the Summoning ritual (p.24).

Mind Control

At the GM's discretion, the Psychic Gift advantage can replace this one. See the Geas ritual (p.16) and Suggestion ritual (p.22).

Otherwise, this advantage should be purchased with Reduced Range 2 (-20%), Variable Range (+0%), and Uncertain Flashes (-50%) limitation. Only vague commands can be sent, unless you are able to talk to the target; and distance reduces the chances of success. Purchased this way, Mind Control costs 15 pts.

Mind Probe

At the GM's discretion, the Psychic Gift advantage can replace this one. See the Mind Reading ritual (p.18).

Otherwise, this advantage should be purchased with Reduced Range 2 (-20%), Variable Range (+0%), and Uncertain Flashes (-50%) limitation. This allows answers to be gotten, but mostly as insights and vague knowledge. Purchased this way, Mind Probe costs 6 pts.

Mind Reading

At the GM's discretion, the Psychic Gift advantage can replace this one. See the Mind Reading ritual (p.18).

Otherwise, this advantage should be purchased with Reduced Range 2 (-20%), Variable Range (+0%), and Uncertain Flashes (-50%) limitation. This allows answers to be gotten, but mostly as insights and vague knowledge. Purchased this way, Mind Reading costs 9 pts.

Mind Shield

This can be used to represent a character who is naturally resistant to mental influences... he may or may not be able to

throw off spells as such, but attempts to use magic to subvert his will tend to meet with failure.

Oracle

At the GM's discretion, the Psychic Gift advantage can replace this one. See the Divination ritual path (p.18).

Possession

This is usually only available to bodiless spirits, and should have the Spiritual limitation (-20%).

Precognition

At the GM's discretion, the Psychic Gift advantage can replace this one. See the Divination ritual path (p.18). However, it is useful as a separate advantage!

This advantage can be used to construct seers and others who seem to receive visions on a semi-regular basis.

This version can be assumed to have the Uncertain Flashes limitation at the -50% level. This can be increased to the -80% level, dropping the cost to 10 pts, but no deliberate attempts to use the ability are possible.

Dull Precognition: As a *very* cheap option, a psychically sensitive individual can have dull precognition. At this level, the individual only receives a precognitive vision on a critical success on the IQ roll (this applies to the included Danger Sense advantage as well). Divide the cost by 5.

This can be appropriate in campaigns where most psychically sensitive individuals may theoretically receive vague premonitions, but usually don't.

Psi Static

Although this advantage is not appropriate for most campaigns using ritual magic, see Catapsi (p.6) for an alternative.

Psychometry

This advantage can provide clues as to what kind of magic might be appropriate in unknown places of power, or confirm that an item belongs to the desired target of a spell!

Racial Memory

Dull Racial Memory: As a *very* cheap option, a psychically sensitive individual can have dull racial memory. At this level, the individual only receives memories on a critical success on the IQ roll. Divide the cost by 5.

This can be appropriate in campaigns where most psychically sensitive individuals may theoretically receive vague memories of past lives, but usually don't.

Talent

The following Talent is available for use in a campaign using ritual magic:

Ritualist: Autohypnosis, Breath Control, Circle Magic, Dreaming, Hypnotism, Meditation, Mind Block, Ritual Magic, all Ritual Paths, Symbol Drawing. *15 points/level.*

Mystic Symbol: A powerful mystic symbol can be represented by taking this advantage (and possibly levels of Will) with the Gadget limitations.

Telecommunication (Telesend)

At the GM's discretion, the Psychic Gift advantage can replace this one. See the Mind Reading ritual (p.18).

Otherwise, this advantage should be purchased with Uncertain Flashes (-50%) limitation. This allows information to be transmitted and received, but mostly as insights and vague knowledge (note: this is identical to taking the Vague limitation). Purchased this way, Telecommunication costs 15 pts.

Contrary to the rule on p.B91, this *can* be purchased with Receive Only (-50%) or Send Only (-50%) in a campaign using ritual magic.

Telekinesis

The strongest of real world purported psychics have demonstrated telekinetic ST around 0.2 (Basic Lift of 1/8 oz.), with Increased Range 1 (+10%) and Variable Range (+0%). This costs 1 point, and is primarily a perk.

That doesn't mean that stronger telekinesis would be wholly inappropriate to a campaign using ritual magic, however, and telekinesis can provide a minor physical outlet for otherwise subtle wizards. Some good limitations for Telekinesis (and similar advantages) in a campaign using ritual magic are Costs Fatigue, Nuisance Effect (Headaches, -5%), Unconscious Only, Uncontrollable, Unreliable.. and of course, Increased Range 1 and Variable Range.

Other advantages that may work well in this fashion include Innate Attack (p.4) and Temperature Control (below).

Temperature Control

See Telekinesis (above) for the appropriateness of this.

Some ghosts in the real world are believed to be able to chill or warm rooms, and some purported psychics have made similar claims. This can be represented with one level of Temperature Control with the Cold or Heat limitation, and the usual array of limitations for Telekinesis.

Tradition UB (Unusual Background)

In a campaign with considerable presence of knowledgeable, full-bodied magical traditions, being a member of such a group is probably not worth much in the way of points. But if magic as a whole tends to be secretive, fragmented, or otherwise unavailable to most of the population, requiring a UB for access to such a tradition is reasonable.

A tradition can come in several grades (with costs established by the GM, according to their rarity), as given below. In addition to the UB, advantages and disadvantages such as contacts, allies, enemies, rank, duty, and so on may be appropriate.

Delusional Tradition

The magical's tradition is, well, wrong. He may possess psychic powers and may even have some significant skills, but ultimately has no access to knowledge of initiation and his knowledge of actual magic has followed a narrow and crooked path. He can learn any magical skill, but is at a -2 penalty to skill.

In a modern setting, this will typically be 0 pts, and the default!

Fragmented Tradition

The magical tradition has most of the basics available, and can get a would-be magician started with a minimum of wrong ideas. Non-initiates can learn magical skills normally, and can acquire the Initiate rank.

Complete System Tradition

The magical tradition possesses everything needed to become a potent magician. A complete system includes the basic information needed for an Initiate to choose to become an Adept, and for an Adept to Transcend (and in the latter case, some may even have a history of such).

Visualization

At the GM's discretion, the Psychic Gift advantage can replace this one. See the Visualization ritual (p.21).

Wild Talent

This is quite appropriate for members of enlightenment traditions, as well as tranquil ancient masters who draw on the global consciousness to do things they have no training in.

New Advantages

Libere Rituum Magorum introduces four new advantages specific to the magical system presented herein (Catapsi, Initiation, Ritual Adept and Psychic Gift).

Catapsi

5 pts per level Mental, Supernatural

The character can interfere with the working of magic. Any time the character is either the *target* of a spell, or is in a position to witness the effects of the spell, he adds a -1 penalty per level to the magician's Path skill. This can be turned off for spells the character wants to occur.

If the hostile witnesses optional rule is being used, this stacks with that.

Special Limitations

Non-switchable: The character *always* applies the penalty, even if he wants the spell to work. -20%.

Initiation

Variable Mental, Supernatural

Individual magical traditions typically divide magicians into ranks or initiatory grades, though rarely fewer than three or more than twenty. In practical game terms, there are four grades, Non-Initiate, Initiate, Adept and Transcended. You must purchase them in order, and the point costs are added together.

Some campaigns will require an Unusual Background, called a Tradition UB, before the character can progress beyond Non-Initiate.

Non-Initiate

0 pts

An individual who is not initiated into magic may be able to perform some minor magics with great effort, and may even be intimately familiar with magical tradition, but has not undergone a transformative experience. Raising power rituals (p.23) are one step harder than listed, and Non-Initiates do not gain any defaults.

In the modern world, the majority of grades or ranks fall within the Non-Initiate category, and are based on the development of core skills, primarily the ritual paths of Binding, Mentalism and Warding. Community-focused groups may also emphasize Administration, Circle Magic, Diplomacy and Teaching.

Initiate

10 pts

This is the basic grade that most magicians will be concerned with. The Initiate has prepared for and undergone a transformative experience to unlock his magical potential. Initiation into this rank is generally treated with a great deal of pomp and ceremony.

Raising power rituals (p.23) are at the listed difficulty, and they gain a Ritual Magic default of IQ-6.

Most magical traditions do not progress past Initiate – this is the final step in the magician's development.

Adept

81 pts

See text for additional costs

The Adept rank is a step beyond one's own, natural potential – a rewriting of the foundation of the self, and a kicking down of the walls hemming the Magician in. Walls that most people don't even know exist. This is not just getting more powerful – the Adept transcends his own ego and self, and becomes something no longer human, yet not entirely inhuman. The adept is more spirit than flesh, and his power is sometimes difficult to categorize.

To become an Adept, the character must first overcome (and buy off) every “negative” mental disadvantage. In some cases, “positive” mental disadvantages may also be “negative” – for example, Honesty may be an unthinking response to political authority, rather than a personal system of developed ethics. Confucius obeyed the law because he believed that was the best path; the typical uptight sheep, however, obeys the law because he is afraid of being caught.

Once these have all been eliminated, the Magician may then purchase the Adept rank. This grants a few basic advantages: Ritual Adept +3 [15], Detect (other spirits, common, precise +100%, discriminatory +80%) [56] and Detect (magic, occasional) [10].

Individuals who progress beyond Initiate are rare indeed. For most magicians, the price is losing who they thought they were, and few wish to pay that. Most magicians prefer to retain their insecurities, psychological hangups, prejudices, and other detritus of the human experience, seeing these (perhaps accurately) as parts of their very humanity.

Transcended

181 pts

The Adept becomes a true spirit, leaving his earthly flesh behind and becoming a powerful spirit. This is most often ceremonial in aspect, and is reminiscent of the Adept's original initiation rank. Afterward, the Adept is a spirit, and usually a fairly powerful one.

The character basically purchases the Spirit Template (minus the Detect Spirits ability, which he already has as an Adept), and then dies. He is a spirit from that point forward (but with all of the abilities of an Adept).

Advantages: Darkvision (can see colors +20%) [30], Doesn't Breathe [20], Doesn't Eat or Drink [10], Immunity to Metabolic Hazards [30], Insubstantiality (always on -50%) [40],

Invisibility (affects machines +50%, substantial only -10%) [56], Unaging [15].

Disadvantages: Cannot Speak (mute, material only -20%) [-20].

Transcendence is written deep in our cultural bones. Jesus transcended on the cross; Obi-Wan transcended in his fight with Darth Vader. A transcendence ritual typically has social impact well beyond what a simple death would warrant, and should always be a special event if it occurs in game.

Ritual Adept

5 pts per level

Mental, Supernatural

The magician is particularly skilled at doing without certain aspects of a ritual. Each level of this advantage negates one point of penalties due to shortened casting time, equipment, combining rituals, or existing active spells.

Special Limitations

No variance: The advantage only negates penalties from one source, chosen when this advantage is taken. -40%.

Single path only: The character only gains this benefit with a single Path, chosen when this advantage is taken. -40%.

Single ritual only: The character only gains this benefit with a single ritual, chosen when this advantage is taken. -80%.

Psychic Gift

Variable

Mental, Supernatural

A character with this advantage gains a special default in a single ritual or ritual path, and reduces the difficulty of that ritual by one steps. For 10 pts, the character gains a default in a single ritual equal to IQ-6, and the difficulty of that ritual is one step easier.

To expand the advantage to an entire ritual path costs an extra 5 pts per separate ritual in the ritual path. So Healing (which has 4 separate rituals) would cost 30 pts.

To reduce the difficulty further, multiply the cost of this ritual by the number of steps easier the ritual is for the character. Thus, Psychic Gift (Healing ritual path) which made rituals three steps easier would cost 90 points.

A character with a Psychic Gift and no magical training is considered to have a Delusional Tradition (p.6), and so suffers an additional -2 to the skill rolls.

Enhancements and Limitations

Libere Rituum Magorum has two new enhancements (Discriminatory and Magical Ability) and two new limitations (Uncertain Flashes and Variable Range) specific to the magical system presented herein.

Discriminatory

+40% or +80%

This advantage modifies the Detect advantage (p.B48), which must already have the Precise enhancement.

At the +40% level, the Detect provides sufficient resolution that shapes and some details can be seen. A character with the detect can target with the sense as if he had Bad Sight (near-sighted, p.B123).

At the +80% level, the Detect is equivalent to sight in terms of information that can be acquired. The character can identify specific objects by their signature, memorize and recognize individuals.

Magical Ability

+10%

This can only be applied to advantages which require a roll to use, and take at least one second to activate.

The ability is magical, and is affected by the same modifiers as the Path skills (for example, using the ability without any ritual gear gives a -5; having fine-quality gear gives a +2). In addition, it is affected by ritual magic as if it were a spell (this is mostly important for the Breaking ritual path).

Uncertain Flashes

-50% or -80%

This is used in conjunction with an advantage which provides information of some sort (either receiving *or* transmitting). At the -50% level, the advantage provides flashes of insight, vague knowledge, or (often symbolic) visions about the topic. The information is rarely clear, but can provide some advantage.

The -80% level is identical to the -50% level, except that the character has no control over *when* the advantage provides this information.

Variable Range

+0% or -10%

This changes the range of an advantage to be based on the range/speed chart penalties. The range must be 20 yards (if it isn't, use the Increased Range, p.B106, or Reduced Range, p.B115, to bring as close as possible to 20 yards) to take this

limitation. For advantages which normally have a range of line of sight, treat as if they have a range of 100 yards.

If the advantage does not normally require a roll, this is a -10% limitation, and the advantage now requires an IQ roll, at a penalty equal to the range (p.B550). If the advantage does normally require a roll, that roll is now modified by the range.

Existing Disadvantages

Epilepsy

p.B136

In some settings, and epileptic fit is an ecstatic trance, during which the magician is both more capable magically... and more vulnerable. In such settings, the magician can cast spells while suffering an epileptic fit, as long as the spells either do not have a target, or target only the magician. He gains a +2 bonus on these rolls; however, he also suffers a -2 penalty on Will rolls to resist the spells of others, and to resist possession.

Skills

Autohypnosis

p.B179

This skill is very useful to the magician who has a long ritual ahead of him. Each use only helps for one ritual, and the ritual must be at least an hour long.

Body Language

p.B181

Many magicians rely more on body language and psychology to read minds than on actual magic. It is also useful in combination with the Divination ritual path (p.18).

Brainwashing

p.B182

Brainwashing is common among magical cults. It can be combined with the Dreaming ritual path (p.19) or Passion ritual path (p.22), or even the Binding path (p.15) or a sending version of Mind Reading (p.18). Each success on a brainwashing attempt gives the victim 1 pt worth of mental quirks or disadvantages.

Magical Modifiers: Hallucinations can grant a +1 or +2; total control of dreams a +3 or +4; Passions can modify the victim's Will rolls; Bindings may inflict feelings of hopelessness, granting another +1 or +2; Mind reading can provide insight into what methods will work best, for another +1 or +2 bonus.

Breath Control

p.B182

This skill is useful for swiftly recovering from a fatiguing ritual. It can also be combined with the Revitalize ritual (p.20).

This skill can also be used in conjunction with a raising power ritual (p.23) for traditions using breathing exercises as the *primary* method of raising power. A successful roll grants a +2 skill bonus to the raising power ritual.

Circle Magic

IQ/Hard

Default: Ritual Magic-3

Prerequisite: Tradition UB (any level).

This is the skill of aligning within a magician's circle when group rituals are being enacted. It is essentially the ability to not get in the way of others!

Circle magic is usually social in function, but it also is believed to have some benefits, namely: more people can field and handle more power, more experienced members can help guide (and prevent mishaps) for less experienced members, and to a *small* extent can buttress each other to produce more skilled results than a solitary practitioner.

See Circle Magic (p.13) for more details.

Dancing

p.B187

This skill can be used in conjunction with a raising power ritual (p.23) for traditions using intense dance as the *primary* method of raising power. A successful roll grants a +2 skill bonus to the raising power ritual.

Dreaming

p.B188

This skill can replace Will against *any* spell cast against the character in a dream (see Walkabout for casting in dreams, p.19). In addition, the skill user's Barrier is equal to 3 + Will/2 or 3 + skill/2, whichever is better, for Dreaming rituals only (p.19).

Erotic Art

p.B192

This skill can be used in conjunction with a raising power ritual (p.23) for tantric magic and similar traditions using sexual energies as the *primary* method of raising power. A successful roll grants a +2 skill bonus to the raising power ritual.

Esoteric Medicine

p.B192

In a setting using ritual magic, this skill is entirely replaced by the Healing ritual path (p.20).

Exorcism

p.B193

In a setting using ritual magic, this skill is entirely replaced by the Banishing ritual (p.15).

Fortune Telling

p.B196

This skill is useful to almost any magician as a professional skill, but is particularly useful to those using the Divination ritual path (p.18).

Group Performance

p.B198

Magical dances and performances are one way of performing Circle Magic. For traditions that use these methods (usually low tech traditions), a successful direction roll using this skill may give a +2 to Circle Magic skill for the group members.

At the GM's discretion, a particularly pleasing performance may grant a +1 to the actual ritual being used.

Hypnotism

p.B201

Hypnotism can be used to grant another person the same benefits as Autohypnosis.

It can also be used in conjunction with the Mind Reading ritual (p.18), to hypnotize someone at a distance.

Meditation

p.B207

Although not as useful as actual autohypnosis, meditation is commonly learned by magicians of various sorts.

Mind Block

p.B210

In a setting where ritual magic is relatively common, this skill is likely to be common as well.

Musical Instrument

p.B211

This skill can be used in conjunction with a raising power ritual (p.23) for traditions using instrument playing as the *primary* method of raising power. A successful roll grants a +2 skill bonus to the raising power ritual.

Path (Ritual Type)

IQ/Hard (requires specialization)

Default: Ritual Magic-6, default can not exceed 14-.

Prerequisite: Tradition UB (any level), Ritual Magic.

This skill must be specialized by tradition (see Ritual Magic, p.10) *and* by ritual path. The default, generic paths are Affliction, Binding, Breaking, Charm, Divination, Dreaming, Healing, Luck, Passion, Raising Power, Sacraments, Summoning, Warding, Weatherworking and Wrack. However, different settings will have different paths, and some paths may only be available to certain traditions!

Casting spells is always based on Path skill.

Psychology

p.B216

The applied specialty is very useful to a magician, whether or not he actually knows magic.

Religious Ritual

p.B217

In a setting using ritual magic, this skill is entirely replaced by the Ritual Magic skill. If you wish to represent the performance aspect of large ceremonies, take the Performance skill (p.B212).

Ritual Magic

p.B218 and B225

Default: None* or IQ-6 with the Initiate advantage.

Prerequisite: Tradition UB (any level).

Depending on the desired feel of the setting, this could also be called Ceremonial Magic, Psionic Will, Shamanism, or Thaumaturgy. Common traditions include *astrum argentum*, catholicism, chaos magic, parapsychology, shamanism, voodoo, wicca, and so on.

Techniques: Each actual ritual (such as summoning) can be learned as an Average technique. This can not exceed the base +2.

Singing

p.B220

This skill can be used in conjunction with a raising power ritual (p.23) for traditions using song as the *primary* method of raising power. A successful roll grants a +2 skill bonus to the raising power ritual.

Symbol Drawing

p.B224

Default: None.

As a third option, settings where symbols are *important* to the magic, but not *vital*, a successful skill roll grants a +2 bonus to the specific ritual the symbols were drawn for. In settings where Symbol Drawing provides the larger bonus (half the margin of success), the GM may wish to increase the difficulty of all rituals by one or two steps to maintain balance.

Casting Spells

A full-blown spell normally involves four steps:

- Preparing the ritual space. Cleansing and warding.
- Optional: Raising power
- Casting the spell.
- Cleaning up.

A skilled or powerful magician may do away with parts of this sequence, and minor rituals may not require other parts. For example, cleansing a typical ritual space can be done with little or no preparation.

Each of the first three steps requires a roll, although in most cases, the GM can dispense with rolling for the first two.

Preparing the Ritual Space

There are several things which can be done to prepare the ritual space. Depending on the setting, this may involve banishing spirits from the space, sweeping away bad energies, warding the space against the return of those spirits and energies, and arranging equipment.

In most real world beliefs, a *very easy* ritual combining all three is usable for most purposes.

Example Ritual Space Preparation: *Very easy* Binding (Banishing) ritual (p.15), *very easy* Breaking (p.16), and *very easy* Warding (Basic) ritual (p.25). The difficulty gives a +6, combining them (p.13) gives a -2. Additional modifiers are -2 for lack of a ritual space and -1 or more for being in an unclean area.

Since it is a *very easy* ritual, it will take 10 minutes, but it can be reduced to one minute for a -1 penalty. The Binding will

only last 10 minutes, but the Ward will last at least an hour and a half (a success by 0 means it will last for 90 minutes before it drops to strength -10), so spirits who were pushed out by the banishment will remain out due to the ward. Final skill is +0.

Alternative Preparation: A *very easy* Sacraments ritual (p.23) can be substituted for the Binding and Breaking in some traditions; and some traditions only use one of Binding or Breaking. This changes the final skill to Path+1. Warding seems to be part of almost every form of preparation – protecting the space the magician will work in is a priority in most cultures.

The preceding two ways aren't the *only* way a magician can prepare. He can go without a ritual space (and take the modifiers for that), or spend extra time and effort to more thoroughly cleanse or ward the area. He can even do them separately!

Equipment is brought in and cleansed simultaneously with the cleansing and warding ritual. If the rituals are dispensed with, setting up the equipment may still take a few seconds.

Permanent Ritual Spaces

A magician can create a permanent ritual space. To do this, create a long-lasting ward, and cleanse occasionally. A permanent ritual space allows the magician to reduce the time and effort necessary to prepare for a ritual, and often means stronger wards as well. However, it requires a private, permanent space, which may not always be available.

Raising Power (Optional)

This is an optional step. Taking the time to raise power improves the chances of success slightly. See Raising Power (p.23). A magician can also expend his body's own resources to generate power.

Casting / Ritual

The more difficult a ritual is, the more time and skill is required to cast it. Rituals are classified in difficulty according to the task difficulty list (p.B345), as shown at right.

| Ritual Difficulty | | |
|-------------------------|-------|--------------|
| Difficulty | Skill | Casting Time |
| Automatic | +10 | 1 second |
| Trivial | +8 | 1 minute |
| Very Easy | +6 | 10 minutes |
| Easy | +4 | 30 minutes |
| Very Favorable | +2 | 1 hour |
| Favorable | +1 | 2 hours |
| Average | +0 | 4 hours |
| Unfavorable | -1 | 1 day |
| Very Unfavorable | -2 | 3 days |
| Hard | -4 | 1 week |
| Very Hard | -6 | 1 month |
| Dangerous | -8 | 3 months |
| Impossible | -10 | 1 year |
| Impossible 2 | -12 | 1 decade |
| Impossible 3 | -14 | 1 century |
| <i>each step beyond</i> | -2 | x10 |

Casting Time

Taking one step longer on the difficulty chart to cast a spell gives a +1 bonus to Path skill; each additional step longer gives a cumulative +1 bonus. Depending on the setting, the GM may wish to impose a maximum bonus of +4; in settings where

General Modifiers

| Type of Modifier | Skill |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Casting Time: Per step longer | +1 |
| Casting Time: Per step shorter | -2 |
| | |
| Raised power (equal to difficulty) | +1 |
| Raised power (one step harder) | +2 |
| | |
| Equipment | Equipment Modifiers p.B345 |
| | |
| Neutral aura (cleansed ritual space) | +0 |
| Mild aura | -1 or +1 |
| Strong aura | -2 or +2 |
| Powerful aura | -3 or +3 |
| | |
| Autohypnosis | +2 |
| Symbol Drawing | see p.10 |
| | |
| Range | Range/Speed Table p.B550 |
| Poor physical tie to subject | cancels -4 of range |
| Good physical tie to subject | cancels -8 of range |
| Subject's flesh or blood | cancels -12 of range |
| | |
| One target | +0 |
| 2 targets | -1 |
| 3-4 targets | -2 |
| x2 targets | -1 cumulative |
| | |
| Magician has 1-2 active spells | +0 |
| Per x2 active spells | -1 |
| | |
| Combining rituals | -1 per ritual past the first |
| | |
| Circle magic: 2 magicians | +0 |
| 3-4 magicians | +1 |
| 5-8 magicians | +2 |
| x2 magicians | +1 cumulative |
| Circle Magic skill roll | -1 per magician who fails |

magicians regularly take decades to guarantee success, no maximum should be imposed.

For each step *shorter*, the magician takes a -2 penalty to skill. The time can be reduced any number of steps (to a minimum of 1 second) by this method.

Example: Catava is casting an *unfavorable* ritual. She decides to take three days to cast it, for a +1. Her net modifier is +0 (-1 for being *unfavorable*, +1 for the extra time).

Raising Power (Optional)

A raising power (p.23) ritual of equal difficulty to the ritual it is intended to enhance grants a +1 bonus to that ritual; if it is one step more difficult, it grants a +2 bonus. A magician can also acquire this power (and gain the same bonus) by other means.

Multiple smaller rituals: Multiple magicians in a circle (p.13) can each perform a weaker raising power ritual, and add their efforts together. Two *automatic* rituals makes up one *trivial* ritual; two *trivial* rituals makes up one *very easy* ritual; and so on. Eight magicians attempting to raise power for a *hard* ritual could each, individually, cast an *average* raising power ritual to meet the need.

Personal fatigue: A magician can also sacrifice his personal energy reserves to make up the difference. An *easy* ritual or easier is equivalent to 1 FP or 1 HP. This also doubles with each step harder, so a *hard* ritual will require 64 FP or HP to count as a raising power ritual!

You can combine this step with an actual raising power ritual. For example, to power an *unfavorable* ritual, a magician could cast an *average* raising power ritual, and spend 8 FP to make up the difference.

In some campaigns, a magician can not simply will away some of his body's resources – he must actually spend the time and effort to expend that energy. Assume one minute of hard exertion per 1 FP; for HP, he must actually cut or beat himself, or otherwise do actual injury to himself for the extra power.

Equipment

The equipment modifiers on p.B345 apply normally to rituals. Rituals are considered a *non-technological* task.

Equipment can include: ceremonial clothing, symbols, and accoutrements (such as a wand or athame); a private space away from distractions; reference books, organized shelves of ritual items, and similar. Some traditions may be satisfied with a clear glade, a willow wand, and a small circle of stones; while others will require conditions an alchemist would envy.

The magical qualities of a ritual space are a separate consideration from equipment.

Traditions: In addition to the normal equipment modifiers, ritual equipment designed for a different magical tradition than the one the caster is specialized in gives a -2 penalty for familiarity.

Aura

Aura is used to describe, in game terms, the effect that a place can have on ritual magic. Depending on the setting, this can be caused by a magical background count, the presence of spirits, ley lines, planetary alignments, auspicious dates, feng shui, magical aspects of ancient sites of worship, an artifact left by elves, and any number of other things.

See *Places of Power* (p.27) for different ways to handle auras.

In many belief systems, neutral auras do not occur in nature, but are the result of cleansing rituals; and *most* auras interfere and distract rather than aid with ritual magic. Neutral auras grant no bonus or penalty to Path.

A mild aura is the most common, and gives a -1 penalty or +1 bonus, depending on its nature. A strong aura is uncommon to rare, and gives a -2 or +2. A powerful aura is exceedingly rare in most settings, and gives a -3 or +3.

Depending on the source and setting, very different auras may stack with each other. For example, certain auspicious dates

may stack with the benefits of ley lines. Auras from the same sources tend to overlap rather than stack.

Some auras can not be cleansed (a conjunction of planets, for example); others can be cleansed by banishing spirits or by breaking a magical effect. For some settings, a generic cleansing ritual (*very easy* for mild auras, *favorable* for strong auras, *hard* for powerful auras) may work.

Also depending on the source, an aura may be conducive to some rituals, detrimental to others. The site of a horrific murder, for example, may work well for malevolent rituals and poorly for healing rituals.

The GM can *simulate* a more complicated setting by rolling 3d on the chart at right, to determine how the current location, time and aura interact for any given ritual attempt:

| Aura Strength | | |
|---------------|--------|----------|
| Roll | Single | Multiple |
| 3 | -3 | -5 |
| 4 | -2 | -4 |
| 5 | -2 | -3 |
| 6-7 | -2 | -2 |
| 8-10 | -1 | -1 |
| 11-13 | +1 | +1 |
| 14-15 | +2 | +2 |
| 16 | +2 | +3 |
| 17 | +2 | +4 |
| 18 | +3 | +5 |

Use the Single column if auras are universal and do not overlap, and the Multiple column if there may be multiple, stacking auras.

For a setting in which positive auras are more rare than negative auras, subtract -1 or -2 from the roll (and the highest positive auras will never be placed randomly).

A magician who spends a lot of time *searching* for good places (or auspicious times) can also improve the roll. A week or less gives no bonus; each step longer on the difficulty chart gives a +1 to the aura strength roll above.

Range

Use the range/speed chart (p.B550) normally for distance to the target. If the magician is covering an area, use the farthest possible target (there is no special penalty for targetting an area, other than the increase in number of targets).

High quality symbolic representations of the target can reduce the range penalties. A small belonging, piece of clothing, or similar item taken from the subject's daily life negates -4 of range penalty; biological detritus (such as fingernail clippings) or an item which is very important to the subject (such as a favored doll) negates -8; a photograph, video, or piece of flesh or blood negates -12.

This can also be applied to symbolic representations of places, objects, or even abstract concepts... such as an official seal to target a particular city, or a bit of wedding cake to target a couple's marriage.

Sympathetic talismans (p.17) simply negate the range entirely – the magician's range is calculated from his distance to the talisman, rather than to the target.

Simplifying Range

Instead of the range/speed chart, a simpler set of parameters can be used as follows:

Immediate area: +0.
Nearby (within one Move): -2.
Out of reach: -4.
House length: -6.
Large temple or city block: -8.
Across a large field: -10.
A mile: -18.
Ten miles: -24.
One hundred miles: -30.
One thousand miles: -36.

The results are about the same, but may be easier to judge in a game without miniatures or precise distances.

Targets

Targetting multiple individuals gives a penalty to the skill roll, whether they are friendly or not. One target gives no penalty; each doubling thereafter (round up) gives a -1 penalty.

Thus, 2 people gives a -1; 3-4 people gives a -2; 5-8 people gives a -3; and so on, doubling each time.

In some campaigns, there will be minor spirits in everything. If each spirit of every rock is considered a person, magic will be quite difficult – for most campaigns, it is suggested that most *minor* spirits not count against this rule, or only count in large numbers.

In a very humanocentric campaign, only *sapient* spirits might be counted.

Active Spells

If the magician has 1-2 active spells (such as a personal ward and a permanent ritual space), there is no penalty; 3-4 spells give a -1; 5-8 spells give a -2; and so on, doubling each time.

Combining Rituals

Two or more rituals can be combined into a single ritual! The combined ritual uses the longest casting time (but does not add them together), and one skill roll, at the *lowest* skill level, with a cumulative -1 penalty per spell past the first.

For raising power, use the most difficult ritual.

If the caster is using more than one skill level (such as from multiple ritual paths), use the lowest skill.

Barrier

A target who is *aware* of the spell can attempt to deflect the spell away from himself, in effect negating the ritual. Treat this as an active defense (called a *barrier roll*) equal to 3 + Will/2.

A magician is *always* considered aware if the spell crosses a ward he is maintaining.

A magician may take a penalty to skill to better penetrate the barrier of a victim. For each -2 to skill the magician takes, the victim's barrier roll is at -1.

Ordinary Will Rolls: The barrier roll above is to *deflect the ritual*, not to resist mind control or any other such thing. On a failed barrier roll, the ritual is now in place. If the ritual (or magician) then attempts to manipulate the spirit's decisions, it gets an ordinary will roll just like any other attempt to control it.

Cleanup

Cleanup mostly involves dismissing excess power and the wards. This takes a few seconds, and does not require a roll.

Failing to cleanup a ritual space is not immediately bad in any way, but tends to create a bad aura in the area for future attempts at making a ritual space.

Circle Magic

A group of magicians can work together to cast spells. This is usually done for social and religious reasons, but there are some real benefits that can be gained from working together. Except where stated below, circle magic works exactly like a normal ritual.

Preparing the Ritual Space

All magicians who will participate in the circle must help prepare the ritual space. Roll Path skill *once* for the group, using the *lowest* skill in the group.

If this step is skipped, the usual penalties apply for not preparing the ritual space.

If there are different traditions involved, this preparation takes the -2 penalty for working with the equipment of different traditions, but once the circle is prepared, this penalty goes away – preparation arranges for everyone to have their own equipment, and works the traditions harmoniously into the circle.

Raising Power

Each magician can raise power individually and contribute it into the circle. Since each magician needs to call less power, the time required is often reduced.

Non-magicians with the Circle Magic skill can sacrifice FP towards power as well, but they must make their Circle Magic rolls just as the magicians do. With sufficient helpers, raising power may not be necessary at all.

Example: Eight magicians are planning to use circle magic to cast an *unfavorable* ritual. Since there are eight of them, they can each cast a *favorable* raise power ritual (taking two hours each), which adds up to a *very unfavorable* amount of power (which would normally take 3 days). They gain a +2 bonus to their skill for purposes of the *unfavorable* ritual they plan to cast.

Aligning With Circle

Once the circle is in place and power is called, each magician makes a Ritual Magic-3 or Circle Magic skill check to align with the circle. On a success, they are in harmony. Each failure gives the rest of the circle a -1 to all Path skills.

Casting / Ritual

Only one magician can attempt to cast at any given moment, but the others can attempt to buttress and aid that magician. This has effect as follows:

Firstly, if there are 3-4 magicians in the circle, the casting magician gains a +1 bonus to his skill; 5-8 grants a +2; 9-16 grants a +3; and so on, adding +1 per doubling.

Secondly, no matter how many magicians there are, if the magician casting the spell *critically fails*, the most skilled magician in the group (who *isn't* the one that critically failed) rolls *his* Path skill (at the same difficulty and penalty to skill). If he succeeds, the critical failure is turned into a failure. If he fails, the critical failure happens normally.

Cleanup

This happens normally.

Ritual Rules

The rituals discussed in this section are the building blocks which magicians use to achieve their ends. Some basic rules that all rituals follow:

Basic Statistics

Duration

A spell can have one of three durations: instant, active, or maintained.

An *instant* spell takes place as soon as the ritual is finished, and results in a permanent change of some sort (such as damage or healing). Once the spell is cast, it is over.

An *active* spell lasts for a period of time. A magician can end any spell he has active with one second of the Concentrate maneuver (range does not matter). Multiple active spells can give a penalty to Path skill (see Ritual / Casting, p.11). Note that the caster can create an active spell that maintains itself

(see the Charm rituals, p.17) and can transfer ownership to another magician (see below).

A *maintained* spell lasts for as long as the magician concentrates. This requires a Concentrate maneuver for as long as the spell lasts – if the magician ceases concentration, the spell ends. Note that a caster can transfer ownership to another magician (see below), but can not make a charm.

Escapable

A spell which is *escapable* can be fought off, even after it has penetrated the subject's barrier roll.

Each *day* that the subject is under the effects of the spell, he may make a Will roll, at the same bonuses and penalties as his original barrier roll (if any). He reduces the strength of the spell by *half* his margin of success (minimum of 1).

Transferring Ownership

This takes one second of the Concentrate maneuver, and does not cause a maintained spell to end. The other magician must be willing.

Strength

When the ritual is cast, make a note of the *margin of success*. This is the strength of the spell. The caster can choose to have a lower strength than what he rolled. Strength is used for a variety of calculations, but is primarily a measure of how resistant the spell is to breaking (see Breaking, p.16).

Once a spell is in place, the magician may *reinforce* it or *replace* it to improve the strength. Reinforcing the spell requires a ritual one step easier than the original casting (thus, a *very hard* ritual would need a *hard* ritual to reinforce). A successful reinforcement increases the strength by +1.

Replacing the ritual is just a second casting. At its conclusion, the subject gains a new barrier roll, and if it succeeds, it is freed of both! This can be dangerous, but is useful when a magician has made a temporary spell to buy himself time to make a *good* spell.

Spirits and People

Where a ritual says it affects *spirits* in a certain way, treat material people in the same way – people have spirits, and the spell affects their spirit just as well as it affects a spirit without a body.

A spell which can not affect a living, material person will say so.

Ritual Taxonomy

Affliction

An *affliction* ritual inflicts symptoms of some sort on a victim. Examples could include blinding headaches, hives, constant coughing, drunkenness, and more. Gross physical effects (such as losing a limb) are not generally possible, and most modern hospitals would tend to dismiss the symptoms as self-inflicted.

Note that if plants have spirits (even weak spirits), *barrenness* is the equivalent to a blight, and applied over a large area could effectively destroy a crop.

Only one type of affliction may be applied with a single affliction ritual, but affliction rituals may be combined normally (p.13).

Duration: *Active, Escapable.* Afflictions may be of any duration, decided by the magician. See Difficulty, below.

Difficulty: Once the magician has decided on a duration, look up the duration on the ritual difficulty chart (p.11) and use the difficulty which is one step harder than the duration. Thus, an affliction which is intended to last a week will be a *very hard* ritual.

By default, the spell inflicts one of the following conditions: coughing (or sneezing), drowsy, nauseated, moderate pain, tippy, impotence, barrenness.

The spell can be made one step harder to inflict one of the following: drunk, severe pain..

The spell can be made two steps harder to inflict one of the following: terrible pain..

The spell can be made four steps harder to inflict one of the following: agony, daze, ecstasy, paralysis, retching, unconsciousness.

The spell can be made six steps harder to inflict one of the following: choking, hallucinating, seizure.

The spell can be made eight steps harder to inflict one of the following: coma, heart attack.

Instead of a specific affliction, this can be used to give the victim a disadvantage for the duration. By default, this is a disadvantage worth 5 points; each doubling of point value increases the difficulty one step harder.

Bindings

A *binding* forces a spirit to do something specific, whether that is to avoid something, remain *in* something, serve the magician, kill someone...

Duration: *Active, Escapable.* Bindings may be of any duration, decided by the magician. See Difficulty, below.

Difficulty: Once the magician has decided on a duration, look up the duration on the ritual difficulty chart (p.11) and use the difficulty which is equal to the duration. Thus, a binding which is intended to last a week will be a *hard* ritual.

Targets: One or more spirits within an object, area or person. Note that *new* spirits entering an area after the spell was cast are not affected.

When binding a large area of spirits, the magician takes a penalty on the speed/range chart according to the farthest distance from himself (so a magician attempting to cover an area 10 yards across, who was standing in the center, would take a -2 for 5 yards).

Banishing

A *banishing* attempts to drive away a spirit or a category of spirits. On a success, any spirit fitting the criteria must leave the area, object or person it was present in. When driving a spirit out of an area, it is usually called a *cleansing*; out of a person, an *exorcism*.

If successful, affected spirits are treated as having Dread (1 yard) for the area, object or person. There is no will roll to resist this – the barrier roll is the only defense.

Barrier: The spirit gains a bonus to its barrier roll of +1 per stage easier than *average*; and takes a penalty of -1 per stage harder than *average*. This is in addition to any other modifiers.

Ownership: Driving a spirit out of an area or object that it *owns* is a bit harder: the spirit gains an additional +2 to the barrier roll. The spirit can not simply have claimed the area or object – it must have some means of recognized property transfer (someone gave or sold the area or object to it). Living creatures gain an additional +2 to resist being banished from their natural body.

Cleansing

Banishing most minor spirits is almost pathetically easy, and can be done as a *very easy* ritual. Any spirits within the area of the banishing may make a barrier roll at +3, but most minor spirits have a Will of 2 or 3, and won't bother to resist (it's easier to just move on). In addition, because it is so easy, it can be combined with a simultaneous *very easy* warding. Reducing the difficulty to *trivial* or *automatic* will allow even minor spirits to resist (and be weak enough that they may try).

Note that a *very easy* banishing will only last for 10 minutes, and is usually intended to be followed up with a basic warding (p.25).

Exorcism

In most cases of possession, the host is unconscious and unaware of the possession. In cases where the host is still conscious, he may help or hinder the banishing. If he helps the banishing, the spirit takes a -2 to its barrier roll. If he hinders the banishing, this is treated as if the spirit owned the host's body (see *Belonging*, above).

Fetish

A *fetish* binds a spirit *into* an area, object or person. Once bound, it can not leave until it either breaks the binding or the duration of the binding ends.

A spirit who is already *in* a body (either because it has possessed someone, or because it is a living human being), this ritual can not affect it (other than to bind it into the body it is already in) – it must be brought out of the body by some other means.

Forget

A *forget* ritual binds the subject to repress and alter their own memories. Even after the subject has escaped from the spell, the memories do not return naturally – the subject did that to himself while under the influence of the binding, and the effects are essentially permanent. However, the longer the binding remains in effect, the more durable the repression is.

Difficulty: Simply wiping out a section of memories is normal difficulty for a binding. Replacing the memories with false memories makes the ritual one step harder.

Temporal Range: One second gives a +5 bonus to skill; each step more difficult on the ritual chart that the time is equivalent to gives an additional -1 penalty (thus, to wipe memories out for the past year is a total of -5 to skill).

Longterm Effects: When the individual escapes the forget spell, make a note of how long he was under the spell. Each time that much time passes, the individual receives a Will roll, at a modifier according to the ritual difficulty chart for that amount of time (so if he was under the effects for a month, he would make a Will roll once a month, at a -6 penalty).

A single success means that he gets a feeling of wrongness about one of the memories, or perhaps a sense of *deja vu*. A second consecutive success means that he begins to remember some details of what really happened, although nothing more than hints and clues. A third consecutive success means he has recovered most of his real memories, and will regain the rest over the next period of time automatically.

The Hypnosis skill (p.B201) can be used to help recover memories. In this case, one hypnosis session can be used to prompt one Will roll, regardless of how much time has passed.

Similarly, deep mind reading and similar methods can access the repressed information normally.

Geas

A *geas* binds a spirit to achieving a particular goal. Whether the subject has managed the goal or not, the geas ends when the time runs out. Generally, a geas can not be overly complicated – if it requires more than one sub-clause, forget it.

Treat this as an Obsession (p.B146), with a self control roll of the victim's Will *minus* the strength of the geas. Something the victim is violently opposed to (such as making a pacifist kill someone) gives a +3 bonus to the self control roll; and something which is actually impossible within the subject's lifespan (drink the entire ocean) gives an additional +2 bonus to the self control roll.

A carefully worded geas can specify the *method* to achieving the goal (such as “goal: kill the President using only a fork”).

Obsessive Behavior: The obsessive behavior of a geas is usually pretty obvious. However, the magician can choose to make it more subtle... for each +1 to the self control roll, any attempts to detect the geas is at -1. Essentially, this allows the victim more of a life outside of the geas, but also makes it more difficult for anyone to realize that there is anything wrong. This must be decided at the time of the ritual (before the magician knows his margin of success).

Contracts: A normal geas can not be overly complicated. However, this can be gotten around with the use of contracts, and a geas to obey the contract. To achieve this, however, the victim must *agree* to the contract, and a material object representing the contract must be created (this is a *charm*).

If the victim is geased to agree to the contract via another binding, then the contract ends if *either* binding ends.

Sleep

A *sleep* binding puts the subject into a comatose state. Essentially, this is a binding to be inactive.

Breaking

A *breaking* ritual severs the connection between a spell's subject and the magician (or charm) maintaining the spell, causing the spell to end. It can also be used to destroy the usefulness of an activation charm.

Difficulty: The default difficulty is identical to that of the spell (or charm) being broken. However, the breaking magician may or may not know what that is, and usually has to guess at how much time and skill will be required to break the spell.

Margin of Success: The breaking magician reduces the spell's strength by his own margin of success (which may or may not end the spell).

Control

A *control* ritual works like a breaking, but it doesn't reduce the strength of the spell and if the magician manages to break the spell, he instead takes over the spell as if ownership had been transferred.

Difficulty: As a breaking ritual, but one step harder.

Redirect

A *redirect* ritual works like a breaking, but it doesn't reduce the strength of the spell and if the magician manages to break the spell, it instead sends it to a new target... usually the original caster.

Difficulty: As a breaking ritual, but one step harder.

Range: Penalties for range apply from the breaking magician rather than the original caster.

Charm

A *charm* ritual is actually just a modification of another ritual to create an amulet, talisman, token or other object which will release a spell at a specified moment *or* maintain an active spell for the magician. Virtually any spell can be bound up into a charm, and some spells are designed only for that purpose.

The conditions under which the charm will activate must be defined when creating the charm, although they can be as specific or as broad as desired.

Duration: *Special.* An activation charm remains good for a fairly long time. In general, each week that passes before it has activated gives it a -1 to the skill roll when the charm is activated. Activation charms do not count as active spells (but the spell, once activated, does).

A maintenance charm lasts for as long as the active spell would normally last, but is not counted against the magician's active spells.

In either case, destroying a charm before it activates renders it useless, and destroying a maintenance charm ends the spell it is maintaining.

Difficulty: Calculate the difficulty for the spell normally, and then apply the following modifiers to the casting:

A charm that will activate at some point in the future is one step more difficult.

A charm that maintains an *active* spell for the magician (so that the ritual doesn't count against his maintained spells) is two steps more difficult.

A charm that does *both* stacks the modifiers above.

Skill Roll: The skill roll is not made until the charm is activated.

Loyal Servant

A *loyal servant* is a special kind of charm, which is usually combined with another spell bound into the same charm. When the charm is made, the magician ties it to the subject of this spell – from that moment on, it will always find a way to return to the subject.

A loyal servant returns to its owner by the forces of chance and circumstance, so it may take a very long time if it is sent very far away, although the furthest place on Earth will not usually take longer than a year to return.

Duration: *Active.* A loyal servant lasts a number of *years* equal to its strength. After this time, it ceases functioning.

Difficulty: A willing subject who is present during the ritual and gives the magician the item to use as the loyal servant (which could be something important to the subject, a lock of hair, or something similar) has a default difficulty of *favorable*. If the magician uses something that isn't important to the subject, the ritual is two steps harder. If the subject is not present, the ritual is two steps harder. If the subject did not *give* the magician the object, the ritual is two steps harder. If the subject is not willing, the ritual is two steps harder.

If the magician is the subject that the charm will be tied to, he is always considered willing and present.

Size Modifier: The magician takes a penalty to Path skill equal to (reversed Size Modifier -5). For example, a SM -3 object would give a -2 penalty to skill.

Barrier: A subject always get a barrier roll against this, even if not aware (this does not make the subject aware).

Sympathetic Talisman

A *sympathetic talisman* is a special kind of charm, which establishes a connection between itself and an area, object or spirit. Once this connection is established, the effective range between a magician with the talisman and the subject is equal to the distance between the magician and the talisman or the magician and the subject, whichever is *less*.

Duration: *Active.* A sympathetic talisman lasts a number of *weeks* equal to its strength. After this time, it ceases functioning.

Difficulty: A willing subject who is present during the ritual and gives the magician an object to use as the talisman (which could be something important to the subject, a lock of hair, or something similar) has a default difficulty of *trivial*. If the magician uses something that isn't important to the subject, the ritual is two steps harder. If the subject is not present, the ritual is two steps harder. If the subject did not *give* the magician the

object, the ritual is two steps harder. If the subject is not willing, the ritual is two steps harder.

Barrier: A subject always get a barrier roll against this, even if not aware. However, this does not *make* the subject aware that the ritual took place.

Divination

A *divination* ritual allows the magician to acquire knowledge he does not have normal access to, such as which horse will win at the races, the location of his car keys, or a sense of what happened on the site of a murder. Divination does not provide sensory impressions, visions, or the like, but rather a combination of vague feelings, insights, and spontaneous knowledge.

Duration: *Instant.*

Difficulty: The more complex the information sought, or the situation in which the information resides, the more difficult it is to acquire. In addition, if the magician wishes to provide someone else with the effects of the ritual (rather than simply acquiring the information and then passing it on mundanely), this is one step harder.

Some examples of types of information include:

Finding: Finding objects and people is *very easy*, as long as the path to the object or person is relatively simple. The magician can help ensure the simplicity by putting the information in simple terms – instead of “where, exactly, is my daughter, including the address?” ask “at what coordinates on this map is my daughter?” More complex information can be gained, but typically increases the difficulty to *very favorable* or *average*.

Predicting an outcome: The more plausible results there are, the more difficult this is. If there are only two possible results, the difficulty is an *easy* ritual. Each doubling (round up) of possible results makes the spell one step harder. Results that aren't actually likely, but which the magician *believes* to be likely, count against this.

Knowing events: A yes-no question, such as “has my husband cheated on me?” is an *easy* ritual; more complex knowledge of events, such as “What is the King of France up to?” may be an *average* ritual or even harder.

Temporal Range: One second gives a +5 bonus to skill if acquiring information about the past, or a +0 bonus if it is in the future; each step more difficult on the ritual chart that the time is equivalent to gives an additional -1 penalty (thus, to gain information about something which happened a year ago is a total of -5 to skill).

Physical Range: Divinations cancel -10 worth of distance penalties. Thus, 100 yards is +0, and 150 yards is -1.

Clairsentience

A magician can combine divination and hallucination (p.19) rituals to tap the knowledge of the divination and produce images or sensory experiences for himself based on the divined information.

Divine Will

A *divine will* ritual works exactly like a normal divination, but draws the information from a particular *willing* diety (for an unwilling diety, see Mind Reading, below). This is easier to do, but the information is only as dependable as the diety who provides it.

Difficulty: Treat as a divination, but one step easier.

ESP

An *ESP* ritual is a special kind of divination which allows the magician to use his spirit senses rather than his physical senses. Spirits are no longer invisible to him, and auras and magical activity become perceptible.

The degree of ESP the magician gains depends on the strength of the spell, as follows:

0: The magician can sense the presence of spirits with an IQ roll, modified by range penalties, but nothing else.

1-2: The magician can see faint auras. This is the equivalent of Empathy (p.B51, the 5 pt level) in relation to animals, humans, plants and spirits, for purposes of sensing broad moods.

3-4: The magician can tell how healthy a living person, animal or plant is; identify Initiates or better on sight; and can see and hear strong spirits.

5+: The magician can see spirits normally; has the equivalent of Empathy (p.B51, the 15 pt level) for animals, humans, plants and spirits; and gains a +3 bonus to any medical skills.

Duration: *Active.* An ESP effect may be of any duration, decided by the magician. See Difficulty, below.

Difficulty: Once the magician has decided on a duration, look up the duration on the ritual difficulty chart (p.11) and use the difficulty which is equal to or harder than the duration. Thus, ESP which is intended to last a month will be a *very hard* ritual.

Mind Reading

A *mind reading* ritual draws information from (or sends information to) the subject's mind.

This works like a normal divination, but once the subject's Barrier has been penetrated, the subject can resist with Will (and the Mind Block skill, p.9).

Duration: *Active*. A mind reading effect may be of any duration, decided by the magician. See Difficulty, below.

Difficulty: Once the magician has decided on a duration, look up the duration on the ritual difficulty chart (p.11) and use the difficulty which is equal to or harder than the duration. Thus, mind reading which is intended to last a month will be a *very hard* ritual.

Sending information to the subject is treated as providing information to the subject directly (and is thus two steps harder).

Dreaming

A *dreaming* ritual manipulates the perceptions of the magician or others. This can be used to create waking phantasms, torment someone with night terrors, lucid dream, and visit others in their dreams.

Duration: *Maintained, Escapable*.

Difficulty: The base difficulty of any dreaming ritual is *average*. A willing subject makes this easier by one step (affecting the magician himself makes it easier by *two* steps). An unwilling subject who is *awake* makes this harder by one step.

Barrier: A subject who is awake gains a +3 to barrier rolls.

Targets: One or more spirits within an object, area or person. Note that *new* spirits entering an area after the spell was cast are not affected.

When casting on a large area of spirits, the magician takes a penalty on the speed/range chart according to the farthest distance from himself (so a magician attempting to cover an area 10 yards across, who was standing in the center, would take a -2 for 5 yards).

Within a dream, area is the *perceived* area. Recreating a landscape, for example, would be a very large area hallucination.

Hallucination

A *hallucination* causes the subject to perceive something the magician imagines. The magician must make an Illusion Art check if he wishes for the hallucination to be convincing. If the subject resists, he sees a flicker where the hallucination would have been, but nothing else.

This can be used to insert an object into the subject's dreams that night, or to make something appear to exist in the real world.

Line of Sight: If the magician can not see the subject, he can not control *where* the subject sees the hallucination. Instead, he merely visualizes and creates the hallucination, and the

subject's mind inserts it into some appropriate place. The magician also receives no feedback from the hallucination, so a lack of line of sight can be debilitating to creating a convincing illusion.

Guise

A magician can cloak his physical body in a hallucination, disguising his own appearance. This only works on the targets he has selected, but can be very effective. Make a Disguise skill check (p.B187) with a bonus equal to the strength of the hallucination spell, and no need for special equipment or materials.

Subconscious Hallucinations

A magician can create a hallucination for *himself*, allowing his unconscious mind (or higher self, or total spirit, or whatever you wish to call it) enough control over it to interact with the magician, giving him visions, a talking companion, or clairsentient images (see the divination ritual, p.18).

Lucid Dreaming

This is a simple ritual to help the subject dream lucidly. On a successful use of the spell, the subject's dreams will be lucid for the duration. The primary effect this has is that the subject can attempt to cast rituals while lucid, and is considered *awake* for purposes of resisting *other* dreaming rituals.

While in a lucid dream, the subject has a +4 to skill to create hallucinations within his own dreamscape. Also, he may decide to awaken at any time.

Duration: *Active*. Lucid dreaming lasts for one full day.

Projection

A *projection* allows the magician to project his spirit into the spirit world(s). Depending on the setting, this may be the dreamlands, astral plane, higher vibrations of existence, or simply a communal hallucination. This spell can also be used to enter the dreams of a particular individual.

By default, the magician can not see into the physical world while projecting, but this can be combined with Clairsentience (p.18) and Hallucination (above) to create clairvoyant knowledge of what is going on in a region of the physical world.

Difficulty: In a setting where a projecting spirit can see into the material world, the difficulty of the projection should be one step harder.

Spells: A magician can cast other spells while projected out of his body. This can have a number of effects, depending on the setting:

Dream Effects: The spells affect only things in the spirit world the magician is presently in, and have no direct effect on the material world.

Visualization: If the magician takes the time to cast a complete ritual in the spirit world, and then repeats the spell in the material world, this can be treated as a Visualization (p.21) ritual.

Material Effects: Spells can target subjects who are not in the spirit world that the magician has projected into. This may give a special penalty for crossing boundaries... or spells in the spirit world may be *easier*, making projection a vital part of any magician's arsenal.

Projected Self: When the magician projects, his spirit is *out of his body*, and is vulnerable to fetish bindings, spiritual attacks, and similar, and his body is open to possession. Wards are recommended.

Dream Walking: Entering the dreams of another spirit is resisted by the spirit (and if he is warded, this may be very difficult!). Once penetrated, however, the spirit immediately sees the magician (who looks like himself, unless he has created an hallucination in the subject's dream, in which case he can possess the hallucination).

This does not grant any special control of the subject's dreams, but the magician is considered to have line of sight for purposes of creating hallucinations.

Healing

A *healing* ritual restores physical energy and health to the subject.

Duration: *Instant.* While the actual healing process may take a while to occur, the spell only starts or enhances the process, it does not maintain it.

Difficulty: See the individual rituals.

Cure

A *cure* ritual completely removes a single illness or toxin from the subject's system, by providing the body with the capacity to destroy it. This usually takes one cycle of the disease or toxin to work (so a disease that deals damage once per day would be completely cured after one day).

This does not automatically make the subject immune to future exposure, but many diseases can only affect a given person once.

This can be reversed, to cause an individual to *contract* a disease. Although the specific disease can't be chosen by the spell, the subject is guaranteed to fail the next contagion he is exposed to, and the magician can seek to ensure what he is exposed to.

Alternately, this can be used to cause other conditions, such as impotency or pregnancy. At the GM's discretion, this could also be extended to mental illnesses, crop failures, and similar.

Difficulty: A disease or toxin which provides a HT+0 roll to resist it is a *very favorable* ritual. Each +1 to the HT roll reduces the difficulty by one stage; each -1 to the HT roll makes it harder by one stage. Thus, a toxin that allowed a HT-3 roll would be an *unfavorable* ritual.

A disease which can not normally be cured (such as herpes) or a toxin which becomes part of the subject's chemical balance (such as physiologically addictive drugs) are considered HT-8 (for a *impossible* ritual).

Healing Energy

A *healing energy* ritual boosts the subject's natural healing energies, enhancing the natural recovery rate for injuries and similar things.

Add *half* the strength of the spell to the subject's HT rolls to recover HP, *and* to Physician rolls for medical care. Alternately, this bonus can be added to other sorts of HT rolls the subject might make, such as fatigue rolls, fertility rolls, resistance rolls against *acquiring* a disease or toxin, and so on. The type of roll must be specified when the ritual is cast, however.

This can be reversed to give a penalty of the same sort.

Difficulty: The default is a *average* ritual.

Duration: *Instant.* However, the energies last for a comparatively long time. Each time a roll is made, reduce the strength of the ritual by 2. When it reaches 0, the healing energy is gone and the effects end.

Revitalize

A *revitalize* ritual defatigues the subject, restoring them to a rested state. Once the ritual is cast, it takes two minutes per FP for the subject's body to assimilate the energy. The subject must still rest to recover this fatigue (and a Breath Control roll, p.B182, can reduce the time per FP to 30 seconds).

This can be reversed to fatigue the victim by the same amount.

Difficulty: The default is a *very favorable* ritual to restore 1 FP, and the difficulty increases by one step per doubling of FP (round to the harder difficulty).

Soothe

A *soothe* ritual reduces pain and symptoms for a short period of time. Reduce penalties due to illness, fatigue or pain by half the strength of the ritual. This benefit fades at a rate of 1 strength per two hours.

This can be reversed to inflict soreness, irritability, weariness and general malaise on the subject, generating penalties of the same amount.

Difficulty: The default is an *average* ritual.

Luck

A *luck* ritual modifies the chances of something.

Duration: *Active*. A ritual of luck loses -1 strength per hour after the ritual is cast. When it drops below 0 strength, it ends.

The magician can attempt to make a luck ritual which lasts longer! Each step of longer duration give a -2 penalty to the ritual roll. Thus, a luck ritual which loses one point of strength per day would take a -6 penalty.

Difficulty: See the individual rituals.

Lucky Break

A *lucky break* ritual guards the subject against one instance of bad luck. At any point before the ritual ends, the subject may act as if he had the Luck advantage (p.B66). If there are multiple instances (see Difficulty), these are not limited to one per hour.

This ritual can be reversed to *either* prevent the use of a natural Luck advantage *or* to cause a specific instance of bad luck. In the latter case, the subject takes one instance of the Unluckiness disadvantage (p.B160).

Alternately, instead of guarding the subject, it can provide the Serendipity advantage (p.B83) for one instance within its duration.

Duration: *Active*. In addition to the normal duration limits for a luck ritual, the duration ends when the spell is used (if multiple instances are available, when the last instance is used).

Difficulty: The default difficulty is *average*. If the ritual is usable against more than one instance, increase the ritual difficulty by one step per additional use. At the GM's discretion, multiple instances can be combined into a single *big* instance.

Extreme Luck

A very strong lucky break may be sufficient to completely change a subject's life... improving or destroying it, depending on intent. For this purpose, a strength of 10 is sufficient to significantly alter the course of the target's life – treat as Serendipity (or an evil version of it), but on a grand scale!

The exact effects of this are at the GM's discretion, as they need to be balanced more with campaign concerns than with specific game system elements.

Lucky Month

A *lucky month* is a longterm luck ritual which improves the results of a project the subject is working on. It isn't necessarily exactly a month, although that is a common time frame. Lucky month rituals do not weaken over time – they have a set duration.

On *one roll*, a critical failure becomes a failure; a failure becomes a success; and a success becomes a critical success. This is commonly used in conjunction with Job Table rolls and attempts to get pregnant.

This ritual can be reversed! In this case a critical success becomes a success; a success becomes a failure; and a failure becomes a critical failure.

Duration: *Active, Escapable*. Lucky month rituals may be of any duration, decided by the magician. They do not degrade hourly, like most luck rituals. See Difficulty, below.

Difficulty: Once the magician has decided on a duration, look up the duration on the ritual difficulty chart (p.11) and use the difficulty which is equal to or harder than the duration. Thus, a lucky month which is actually intended to last a month will be a *very hard* ritual.

Lucky Miss

A *lucky miss* ritual improves the chances of the subject resisting something. What the ritual protects against must be defined at the time of the casting, but it can be as general as magical curses, diseases, toxins or even getting hit in combat. The ritual then adds *one quarter* its strength to active defenses or *half* its strength to other rolls to evade or resist the thing protected against.

This ritual can be reversed, and gives a *penalty* in the same fashion. Most curses take this form.

Note that lucky miss spells do not have any effect on effects which are already in place – only on avoiding new effects.

Duration: In addition to the normal duration limits for a luck ritual, a lucky miss ritual loses one point of strength each time the subject makes the appropriate resistance roll.

Difficulty: The default difficulty is *very unfavorable*.

Visualization

A *visualization* ritual improves the chances of success for a single, specific action.

The action must be described in as much detail as possible. If the situation is as described when the action takes place, add the strength of the ritual to any skill rolls made. If the situation is slightly different, *halve* the bonus; very different, *quarter* it or eliminate it entirely.

Difficulty: The default difficulty is *very favorable*. If the subject is not the magician, the difficulty is one step harder. If the subject is not paying attention during the ritual, the difficulty is two steps harder.

Blessing

Instead of affecting all rolls in a single situation, a broad spectrum of situations can be visualized, with the subject performing well at a particular aspect of the situations. This grants a bonus equal to half the strength of the spell to a *single skill*, but this bonus applies in any situations in which it occurs.

Passion

An *passion* ritual attempts to modify the subject's emotions in some way, sometimes subtle, sometimes not. Passions are very similar to bindings in many ways, although binding forces a spirit to perform a particular action, and passions cause the spirit to *want* to perform a particular action.

Duration: *Active, Escapable*. Passions may be of any duration, decided by the magician. See Difficulty, below.

Difficulty: Once the magician has decided on a duration, look up the duration on the ritual difficulty chart (p.11) and use the difficulty which is equal to or harder than the duration. Thus, a passion which is intended to last a month will be a *very hard* ritual.

If the magician wishes to specify a *focus* for the emotion (such as “get angry at Mr. Schumacker” or “lust after the woman in red”), the ritual is one step harder.

Targets: One or more spirits within an object, area or person. Note that *new* spirits entering an area after the spell was cast are not affected.

When casting on a large area of spirits, the magician takes a penalty on the speed/range chart according to the farthest distance from himself (so a magician attempting to cover an area 10 yards across, who was standing in the center, would take a -2 for 5 yards).

Self Control Rolls: Most emotions allow a self control roll. For purposes of this ritual, the self control number is the subject's Will or normal self control roll, minus half the strength of the spell.

Subtlety: If the magician wishes, he may stage the strength of the ritual over time. This can be at any rate desired (within the limits of the duration). For example, he could specify that the strength of the ritual will increase by +1 per hour until it reaches its full strength.

Strengthening

A *strengthening* ritual improves the ability of the subject to resist his own weaknesses. Add *one quarter* the strength of the

ritual to the subject's self control rolls (all of them). Alternately, this can add *half* the strength to the self control roll for a *single* disadvantage.

Suggestion

A *suggestion* ritual increases the subject's desire to believe or agree to something. Instead of working the usual way, it adds *half* its strength to any social manipulation skills or reaction checks made against the subject.

A focused version of this ritual gives this bonus only to the social manipulation skills and reaction checks for a particular person (such as the magician).

A different kind of focus would make the subject suggestible to only a *particular suggestion*. This is an *additional* step harder, but can be used to generate posthypnotic commands and similar.

Unease

An *unease* ritual causes the subject to feel unwelcome, uneasy, or unsafe where he is. This can be limited to a particular area, or it can be anywhere the subject is. Unlike most passions, an *unease* ritual is at normal difficulty when focused, and two steps harder when it *doesn't* have a focus.

Focused: Treat as a phobia of the focus, but on a failure the subject simply attempts to leave line of sight of the focus (no Fright check is made) as quickly as possible.

Unfocused: As for a focused *unease*, but the subject is unable to leave line of sight because the *unease* follows him... after a few attempts at leaving, make a Fright check any time he fails the self control roll, as he realizes that nowhere is safe!

Weakening

A *weakening* ritual targets a known disadvantage of the target, or attempts to expand a minor emotion into a full-blown disadvantage.

Difficulty: In addition to the normal modifiers, each 5 points of disadvantage that the victim did not already makes the ritual one step harder.

If the subject has no tendencies in the appropriate direction (GM's discretion), then there is nothing to be amplified and the ritual fails. In general, an opposing disadvantage (such as trying to make someone with Truthfulness become a Compulsive Liar) also causes the ritual to automatically fail.

Some unusual disadvantages that this can grant are Absent-Mindedness (loses interest in things not immediately fascinating), Easy to Read (intensifies all emotions slightly, pushing them closer to the surface), Short Attention Span (as for Absent-Mindedness).

Some specific examples follow:

Compulsion

A *compulsion* ritual causes the subject to crave an activity of some sort which he normally only likes, such as gambling or partying. Typical disadvantages include Bully, Charitable, Chummy, Compulsive Behavior, Curious, Gluttony, Impulsiveness, Kleptomania, Pyromania, Sadism, Trickster, Workaholic, Xenophilia.

Depress

A *depress* ritual causes the subject to collapse into a fit of sadness or simply reduced desire to be active. Typical disadvantages include Chronic Depression, Guilt Complex, Incurious, Laziness, Sleepy, Slow Riser.

Enrage

An *enrage* ritual causes the subject to become hostile and angry. Typical disadvantages include Bad Temper, Berserk, Bloodlust, or Loner.

Lust

A *lust* ritual increases the subject's desire for something, typically money, possession of things, sex, status / temporal power, or something similarly broad. Typical disadvantages include Addiction (subject must have had the drug at some point in his life), Alcoholism (subject must have had a drink of alcohol at some point in his life), Gluttony, Greed, Jealousy, Kleptomania, Lecherousness, Sadism, Selfish, Xenophilia.

Pride

A *pride* ritual increases the subject's conviction, either in himself or in any causes or countries he believes in. Typical disadvantages include Fanaticism, Intolerance, Megalomania, Overconfidence, Selfish, Stubborn.

Terror

A *terror* ritual causes fears to flare up, sometimes going so far as to paralyze the subject. A terror ritual is *always* focused, and so always has a -4 to skill. Typical disadvantages include Combat Paralysis, Cowardice, Dread, Fearfulness, Honesty (fear of the law), Miserliness, Nightmares, Paranoia, Phobias, Shyness, Squeamish.

Raising Power

A *raising power* ritual pulls energy into the magician (or his circle in Circle Magic, p.13) for purposes of casting spells. On a success, the power is gained and the magician can use it for whatever he wishes. On a failure, the magician was unable to draw in and hold the power, and it releases back to where ever it came from.

Different traditions view this step in different ways. It may be described as tapping one's higher self, calling down the moon, tapping ley lines, or simply praying... the net result is the same.

Duration: *Instant.*

Difficulty: This ritual has the same difficulty as the ritual it is intended to enhance. In addition, the difficulty is one step harder for a Non-Initiate (p.6).

Note that a raising power ritual can *not* be enhanced by a raising power ritual!

Combining Rituals: When combining Raising Power with the ritual it is intended to enhance, *roll raising power first.* Although normally, combining rituals results in a single roll, Raising Power is an exception to this, since it modifies the second roll.

Charms: A raising power ritual can be bound into an activation charm, which will then release the power at a time that the magician needs it. A spirit who manages to break the charm (via the Breaking ritual, p.16) gains the power for itself.

Complementary Skills: Some traditions raise power using a method of breathing exercises, dancing, erotic arts, musical instruments, singing, or similar activities. Several examples are given in the skills section, but a tradition could have almost any skill as a primary method of raising power. One such skill may be used in a complementary fashion with raising power; a successful roll grants a +2 bonus to skill for raising power.

Sacrifice

A *sacrifice* ritual gives power to a spirit. Most religious ceremonies include some form of this, using the power granted by helpers as the base, although a magician can also raise power and then use that.

This is usually used as a payment for services or similar, although magicians could theoretically use it to channel energy to another magician, without actually using Circle Magic (p.13).

Duration: *Instant.*

Difficulty: A sacrifice ritual is the same difficulty as the raise power ritual it is intended to gift to the spirit.

Sacraments

A *sacraments* ritual fulfills basic religious functions, such as baptisms, consecrating temples, weddings, and so on. In general, sacraments have no direct game effect, but establish relationships between mortals and the gods.

In settings where having (or not having) certain sacraments has a supernatural significance that spills over into the game mechanics, the exact effects are at the GM's discretion.

Duration: Variable, depending on the setting.

Difficulty: Variable, depending on the setting.

Summoning

A *summoning* ritual calls a spirit to the magician. This does not compel the spirit in any way (although a binding ritual can be sent along the thread of the summoning ritual).

To call a specific spirit, the magician must know the name of the spirit or have dealt with the spirit before. Each time the ritual is completed, the spell conveys a sense of where the magician is and that the magician wants the spirit to come – the spirit does not have to answer, although most non-deific ones do if entreated enough.

The summoning spell itself is a thread between the magician and the spirit, and some magicians will use the summoning to allow them to target the spirit with another spell. Distance applies normally in this case, of course, and a spirit who has been targeted by a spell using a summoning thread is *always* considered aware of it for purposes of barrier.

Duration: *Instant*.

Difficulty: The default difficulty is *easy*.

Range: Summoning rituals do *not* take penalties for range, although they do take penalties normally if they cross a ward.

Channeling

A *channeling* ritual allows spirits to temporarily possess the magician. While channeling, any spirit may enter the magician's body, so this is rarely performed outside of a good set of wards.

The magician typically loses consciousness during the channeling, but remaining conscious is possible for a skilled magician.

When casting the ritual, the magician sets the rules of the channeling, and any spirits who break those rules must make a contested Will roll with the magician or be kicked out (this occurs whether the magician is conscious or not). If the spirit attempts to use a Possession ability, the magician is considered wary.

Rules can include things like “do nothing but speak through me” or “Susan enters first for one minute, then Sam, and then Sally.”

When the spell ends, the magician takes 1 FP damage per minute spent channeling.

Duration: *Active*. A ritual of channeling loses -1 strength per minute after the ritual is cast. When it drops below 0 strength, it ends.

Difficulty: The default is an *very favorable* ritual. A magician who wishes to remain conscious changes the default to an *unfavorable* ritual.

Warding

A *warding* ritual is similar to a binding ritual, in that it restricts the behavior of others. However, unlike a binding ritual, it does not target specific spirits but instead any spirit that interacts with it. Wardings can be placed on an area, object or person, and affect even new spirits who come near.

In some campaigns, certain abstract concepts may have their own “spirit” which can be warded: marriages, kingships, and the dreams of a child, for example.

Duration: *Active*. Wardings may be of any base duration, decided by the magician. See Difficulty, below.

Difficulty: Once the magician has decided on a base duration, look up the duration on the ritual difficulty chart (p.11) and use the difficulty which is equal to or harder than the duration. Thus, a warding which is intended to last on a monthly basis will be a *very hard* ritual. At the end of that time, the warding loses -1 strength. When it drops to -10 strength, it ends (unlike most spells, a warding can remain in place even when it is extremely weak).

When cast as an easier ward, reduce the strength of the ward by the amount of the skill bonus (so a *very easy* warding ritual would subtract -6 from the strength). When cast as a harder ward, increase the strength of the ward by the amount of the penalty (so a *very hard* warding ritual would add +6 to the strength). A failure is still a failure in either case.

Barrier: Wardings do not allow a barrier roll – they are not targeting a spirit.

Will Roll: In order to bypass the ward, a spirit must make a Will roll, modified by the difficulty of the ward (so a *very unfavorable* warding would give a -2 to the Will roll).

If the spirit fails, it can not try again until the ward's strength has dropped or one full day has passed. A success does not weaken the ward, but does allow the spirit to cross the warding threshold for that day.

Targets: The magician may specify spirits who the warding will not affect; or specify spirits that it *will* affect; or even specify a *type* of spirit that will be affected or not affected. However, these are not the targets – the warded area, object or person is the target.

A very common limitation on the type of spirit is “those who intend me or mine harm”.

Basic Warding

A *basic warding* simply prevents spirits from approaching the ward's threshold. This includes *leaving* a warded area!

In addition, any attempt to cast spells into the warded area, from outside the warded area, suffer a penalty to Path skill equal to the strength of the ward (a negative strength has no effect in this case), and if a spell penetrates the ward, the magician who owns the ward immediately knows a spell got through (though not what the spell is).

Obscurity

An *obscurity warding* is a special warding that affects the perceptions of spirits, causing them to avoid *perceiving* the subject of the ward, rather than to avoid approaching.

Subtract the strength of the warding from any perception or sensory rolls the spirit makes to spot the subject (including Divination (p.18) rituals).

Will Roll: By its very nature, this warding is fairly subtle. Unless the spirit is specifically attempting to overcome the obscurity ward, there is no Will roll (other than being highly perceptive). On a successful Will roll, the spirit bypasses the penalty until the subject is out of its sight again.

Sanctity

A *sanctity warding* is a special warding that causes spirits to avoid attacking the subject, rather than to avoid approaching. Subtract the strength of the warding from any *attack* made against the subject (including hostile spells).

Will Roll: Once the spirit is aware that his attacks are being interfered with, he may attempt a Will roll at the beginning of each turn. If he succeeds, his attacks are unaffected for the turn; if he fails, they are affected normally. Three successes in a row or a critical success renders the spirit immune to that particular obscurity warding.

Weatherworking

A *weatherworking* attempts to control or modify the weather in some fashion. If successful, the GM decides what the chance of the weather changing to your desired state is (for example, the chance of rain in a tropical rainforest might be a 14-; the chance of snow in a temperate forest during the summer might be a 3-). Add the strength of the ritual to that, plus the other modifiers given below, and roll. If successful, the weather begins shifting towards the desired state at its natural rate of change (but see the modifiers). If unsuccessful, nothing happens and the

magician can not try that particular change again until sufficient time has passed for the change *or* one full day, whichever is more.

If the spell succeeds, but the strength of the spell is negative (due to the area and time modifiers), reduce the chance appropriately. If this reduces the chance below 3, the spell fails.

Duration: *Instant*. The effects may take a while to show, however.

Difficulty: The default is an *trivial* ritual. However, see *Area Modifier*, below.

Area Modifier: The larger an area the magician affects, the harder the ritual is, but the more likely that he will get his desired effect if successful! Different weather effects have a different base radius needed, as decided by the GM.

A range of 1,000 yards is good for most precipitation, temperature rise or fall, fogs, winds and similar; a tornado or hurricane, however, needs a comparatively vast air pressure system to support it, and has a base distance of 10,000 yards; and a mist forming over a lake or lightning striking out of already angry thunderclouds might only need 100 yards.

For each doubling of the base radius, the final strength of the spell is improved by +4. For each *halving* of the base radius, the final strength is reduced by -4.

Time Modifier: The magician can attempt to hurry the weather. For each halving of the amount of time that will be required, he reduces the final strength by -4.

Wrack

A *wrack* ritual deals 1d injury to a spirit (rather than any material body it might or might not be in). In living creatures, this usually manifests as headaches and chest pains.

A wrack can be bound into an activation charm, typically a melee weapon or piece of ammunition.

Duration: *Instant*.

Difficulty: The default is a *very favorable* ritual. A wrack which only deals 1d fatigue damage is an *easy* ritual.

A magician can attempt to deal more damage in a single wrack, at a -2 penalty to skill for each additional 1d of damage.

Barrier: A wrack ritual is *not* subtle, nor is it intended to be. The subject is always considered aware of the attack, and so gets a barrier roll.

Building A World

There are numerous considerations when building a world, and the following only touches on a few of them. Still, the seed ideas and rules options presented here should get you started.

Parameters of Magic

This section discusses adapting *Libere Rituum Magorum* to a particular setting, defining what magicians believe they are doing (and what they *are* doing), and optional rules you can use to control and modify the core system.

Defining Magic

Libere Rituum Magorum purposefully avoids defining the paradigm that allows ritual magic to work, but some common belief systems and traditions are outlined below. Some, all, or none of them may be true in any given setting. A tradition which espouses a different belief system than the “correct” one can still have functional magic, but may be treated as a delusional tradition at the GM's discretion.

Consensual Reality

Ideas of consensual or illusory reality stretch back to the Greeks, but it has become particularly common in the modern world. The essential idea is that the world (or a significant portion of it) is illusory, created either by a powerful, universal will, or by our own belief in it. A strong enough will combined with a certain amount of reality detachment can be used to change local reality for the magician.

Exterior Powers

Whether it is by divine will and the invoking of angels, or simply a belief in totem spirits who perform actions for those who follow their rules, this is the primary tenet of religious magic – that humans have no power unto themselves, but can entreat or bribe powerful spirits to do things for them.

Internal Powers

This is similar to the exterior powers paradigm, and many who believe in internal powers also believe that there are powerful spirits who also have them... and that some of those spirits are powerful enough to be called “gods”. This paradigm is most closely associated with psionic phenomena and paganism. Magical rituals are merely ways of bolstering these natural abilities of the spirit, whether by boosting morale (a placebo effect) or by actually reprogramming and exercising the mind in the tasks desired.

Natural Laws

Similar to oracular patterns (below), there comes a point where the system is internally consistent, or at least can be boiled down to a few rules. Rather than having a vast body of knowledge of what things cause what, the magician can now apply a few rules to most situations, to derive the end results. Laws of Sympathy and Contagion are an example of such, as are the alchemical beliefs in the four elements and the Sulfur and Mercury proportions.

Oracular Patterns

Opening an umbrella indoors brings bad luck. Folding a thousand origami cranes brings about the heart's desire. These actions are *themselves* believed to bring about certain events, by interacting with a complex system of seemingly arbitrary rules. There may be some guiding principles (such as sympathetic magic), but the essence of the idea is that symbols have power unto themselves, and everything is a symbol. By drawing the right symbols together, repetitively, the natural symbolism can be magnified and powerful magics occur.

In this kind of belief system, there may be a Path which commonfolk learn, which has relatively easy and minor rituals (such as attracting brownies to care for the crops), and more powerful Paths that real magicians learn.

In oracular systems, raising power is meaningless – everything is done by the manipulation of symbols.

Probabilistic Mechanics

A very modern tradition, this is essentially a strong and extended belief in the *observer effect* of quantum mechanics. In this system, the likelihood of an event (any event) is affected on a quantum level by the observer. By extension, a highly trained observer (a magician) can influence events to an extent which is outside the realm of the plausible.

To the probabilistic magician, all ritual and symbolism is a means to manipulate his own perceptions. By creating a drama in the ritual, he seeks to align his perceptions of a similar drama unfolding in real life, so that his observations cause the two to resemble one another.

Will is Magic

Another somewhat modern tradition, theorized to explain the spirit/body dichotomy. In this paradigm, the physical world is relatively mundane, but can be affected by the magical (which is Will).

By this paradigm, moving one's own limbs is an act of the Spirit influencing the neural signals in the brain. However, a trained

Will can exert influence on the physical world even without that weak, neural link... and it is this which is classically referred to as magic.

Places of Power; Aura

“Aura” denotes locations which help or hinder magic cast in their vicinity. These locations may be the result of magical flows or ley lines, a balanced arrangement of the four elements, certain mystic symbols woven in the landscape, the influence of a powerful spirit who resides there, or hundreds of other possibilities.

The following section provides some of those possibilities, but from a system standpoint, the primary thing the GM needs to know is which auras *stack* and which ones do not.

For example, in a setting where feng shui exists, natural places might have a beneficent aura because they are already in graceful positions. You could then do landscaping and architecture to balance the aspects better than nature provided, but a natural place that was already perfect could not be improved on. In this case, you would use the best bonus (or the smallest penalty), rather than adding them together.

On the other hand, if the alignment of the planets causes intersecting energies on Earth (as astrology sometimes postulates), and certain types of earth-aspected structures (such as stone pyramids and circles) act as amplifiers for those influences, then certain planetary events would stack with the effects of those structures... although those structures would not necessarily stack with mountains or stone lakes.

Auras that stack are added together. For auras which do not stack, use the best number.

Auspicious Times

Planetary alignments, birthdays of famous people, the start and end of a season, midnight and dawn, and similar things may be beneficial to particular types of magic.

In the case of planetary alignments, this could be caused by energies intersecting the Earth from the positions of various planets; or it could simply be that any planet, sun or moon, when *directly* overhead of a particular location, lends some strength to rituals associated with the sun, moon or planet. In the latter case, you could tie this to ley lines (which may be caused by the revolving passage of the planet) or monuments (which amplify the influence of a particular planet).

For dates, this may be caused by favorable spirits at that time, or simply be symbolic in origin (much like terrain symbology, further down).

Ley Lines

In the real world, this theory was caused by the presence of monuments, megaliths, and similar structures which form lines

with 3 or more on any given line. Theories for why these monuments line up range from sheer chance to magnetic anomalies to psychic energy flows.

In a magical setting, magic may be easier along ley lines... and easiest where the ley lines *cross*. This would result in powerful groups of magicians laying claim to the best spots and building their ceremonial structures there, thus resulting in the observations of modern geographers.

A positive modifier might be due to a thinning veil between the spirit and corporeal realities, the ambient presence of easy-to-use energy (perhaps energy predigested by the Earth itself), or simply by the fact that the ley lines have worn down the resistance of the corporeal world like a river forming its groove. A negative modifier could be described as “casting in a flood,” power fluctuations, or a “tainted” ley line.

Ley lines could also give benefits to one type of magic and penalties to another. Ley lines may give bonuses to Healing and Raise Power rituals, for example, but distract from all other spells.

Spiritual Centers

A city is just a graduated, swift increase in population density from the rural spaces, but most cities have a *boundary* established by law, across which the rules change. Similarly, holy ground, red carpets for honored guests, and similar things have an abstract boundary associated with them, which may be exploitable by magicians.

Depending on the setting, the *boundary* may have a good aura for spells of transformation; and the spiritual *center* may have a good aura for spells which attack or bolster the community.

Terrain Symbology

Pyramids, cross roads, sacred architecture, feng shui, stone circles, and similar things bear certain similarities in theory: the shape of the land (or structure) determines its magical energies or resonances. Certain types of magic are favored by certain symbols written into the shape of the land itself (and architecture may enhance or build on that).

Druid groves may be chosen for their shape or proportion of hill, tree, open sky and nearby water. Megaliths and pyramids may be imitations of mountains, raised to connect the earth and sky for magical purposes.

Low places in the land may be beneficial for summoning rituals, while high places are good for wardings. Lakes and rivers may improve the casting of luck and weather rituals, but wear away at bindings.

For different settings, artificial structures may enhance natural symbols, or constrict them. In the latter case, magicians may have to live away from civilized regions to perform their art!

In the former case, skills such as Architecture or Landscaping (specialized in magical results) may be complementary to the more usual magical skills, allowing magicians to construct physical locations where the aura is favorable to them.

Spirit Worlds

Akasha

The Akasha is a spiritual substrate to reality, which all of reality passes through, leaving a record of its occurrence. It has been described as a wax tablet, an ether or atmosphere, and more. The essential property, however, is that it serves as reality's memory and vision into the future.

Memories are stored in the Akasha, because the memories happened within its substrate and left their mark. Powerful magicians can project themselves back into the Akasha and search for insights into what happened.

Spirits are uncommon in the Akasha – most beliefs in the Akasha place it as the highest reality, with a lower spiritual reality being part of the physical world. This lower spirit world may consist of one of the other types of spirit world!

In the Akasha, only Projection (p.19) is possible; the Akashic record can not be changed by magic in most beliefs.

Astral Plane

In alchemy, the idea that matter had various layers, and that some of those layers were purely mental or spiritual, gradually developed into the concept of the etheric body, a second body which existed on a higher layer of existence than the crude physical body.

Although higher layers existed in alchemical theory (the divine layers were topmost), the astral plane was believed to be where most of a person's spiritual development occurred.

In modern versions, this has been refined to a higher *frequency* of matter, and the etheric body is composed of this matter. The astral plane itself is seen as the plane of emotions, thoughts, and dreams, and many fantastical things can be found there. However, in both alchemical and modern versions, most of the things that are found are aspects of oneself. In alchemical belief, for example, the *anima* (soul sister) and *doppelganger* (higher self) could be met, but rarely other magicians or non-divine spirits. In New Age beliefs, one may meet one's inner totem animal, guide spirits, and similar... but random meetings of spirits not directly related to the magician are rare or non-existent.

Coupled with the astral plane is the idea of out of body experiences, where the magician's etheric body leaves his corporeal body, but does not quite perceive the astral plane. In such cases, the magician can see into the physical world, but not the astral world.

In many modern beliefs, performing a ritual in the astral plane improves the chances of the ritual working in real life. Use the Visualization ritual (p.21), with the prerequisite that the magician be on the astral plane.

Domains & Heavens

This is an idea which can be added to some of the other spirit worlds: the concept of domains created within the larger spirit world which are owned by powerful spirits (or gods).

With a few centuries, and appropriate Path skills at 21-, a spirit worshipped by a tribe of 2,000+ and could do the following:

Raise Power (p.23), *impossible 4* ritual (-16 skill, 10 centuries), spend only 1 century on it (-2 skill), fine equipment (+2 skill), strong aura (take some time to find, +2 skill), Autohypnosis (+2 skill), Symbol Drawing (+2 skill). Net skill 11-. If successful, combine with fatigue from the tribe for a +2 skill to next ritual.

Basic Warding (p.25) and Hallucination (p.19), *impossible 4* ritual (-16 skill, 10 centuries), spend only 1 century on it (-2 skill), fine equipment (+2 skill), strong aura (take some time to find, +2 skill), Autohypnosis (+2 skill), Symbol Drawing (+2 skill), radius of 500 yards (-14 skill, reduced to -4 skill with powerful symbolic representation provided by the tribe), raised power (+2 skill), combined ritual (-1 skill). Net skill 10-.

A few tries may be necessary to get it built, and it is recommended that a slightly weaker Heaven be constructed *first*, so that the spirit has the time to try this. The result, however, is quite impressive.

Also note that the spirit will want to hand off the *maintainence* of Heaven to lesser spirits, who can take turns concentrating to maintain the Hallucination.

The spirit/god allows in the souls of believers when they die (and the Hallucination ensures that Heaven is attractive to them), and it requires a Will-16 roll to force a way in or out. The Warding will have a strength of (margin of success + 16), and the would-be diety can continue to reinforce it over time.

Note: The above assumes that the spirit is attempting to do most of the work on its own! A few powerful priests who make it their life's work to construct a heavenly afterlife, combined with any number of individual priests using the Sacrifice ritual (p.23) to replace the raising of power can cut the time required in half or more!

World Dream

In many beliefs, dreams are each their own, distinct spirit world. When a person dreams, he is still inside his head, but has created a sub-world in which his soul temporarily resides.

However, it is *also* possible to enter the dreams of others, to dream and leave one's own head. The most common form of this is entering the dreams of the World spirit. The World

Dream is filled with the dreams of animals, trees, and other nature spirits.

Each spirit within the World Dream has its own dream as well, and a magician can often travel in the World Dream to the physical location of a person, and then enter that person's dreams directly. Alternately, magicians can simply meet in pre-designated places in the World Dream.

Some belief systems give a dimension of time to the World Dream as well – since it includes the World spirit's memories and knowledge of the future, everything that has ever existed or will ever exist is in the World Dream (this is the approach taken in the Australian dreamtime).

Spirits

A spirit is a non-corporeal entity. No material technology can perceive them, or detect the energy they wield, although some spirits are strong enough to create *effects* which a material item might detect (and in addition, some psychics have been able to recreate what they see into the material of film, but the film did not actually detect the spirit – it was altered). Humans, animals and trees have their own spirits as well, and many believe that the Earth, other planets, and stars have spirits as well. Spirits can see each other just fine, of course, but humans have difficulty with it because they have learned to ignore their spiritual sense in favor of the more immediately gratifying and useful material senses that their bodies provide them.

Theories about what spirits are, and how they work, abound in the form of religious beliefs and parapsychological coffee table discussions. In truth, no one really knows, and material science generally dismisses them as not really existing.

Spirit Template

Spirits are built as characters, but with the following package (181 pts):

Advantages: Darkvision (can see colors +20%) [30], Doesn't Breathe [20], Doesn't Eat or Drink [10], Immunity to Metabolic Hazards [30], Insubstantiality (always on -50%) [40], Invisibility (affects machines +50%, substantial only -10%) [56], Unaging [15].

Disadvantages: Cannot Speak (mute, material only -20%) [-20].

Spirits still have a ST, but it usually only applies to other spirits. In order to affect the material world, a spirit must work through a medium, gain the *possession* ability, learn magic of some sort, or some similar method.

In addition to the above, many (or most or all) spirits will have: Injury Tolerance (diffuse, no eyes, no head, no neck) [117], Detect (other spirits, common, precise +100%, discriminatory +80%) [56], and Detect (magical activity, occasional) [10].

Spirits of the Dead

When a human dies, they become significantly more powerful (+181 points), but they also become significantly limited. They can no longer interact with the material world on their own!

Most spirits choose to pass on to their final reward, although some have to be bound (see the Binding ritual, p.15) in the form of last rites.

Optional Rules

There are a number of things that can be done to simplify or change how ritual magic works.

Bad Juju

This is a rule for representing the belief in some traditions that casting malevolent spells can backfire on the practitioner.

Any time the magician casts a hostile spell (one with a victim), he must make a second Path skill roll immediately after finishing the ritual; if this fails, he is affected by the spell (no resistance roll) just as if he was the target!

It is possible for the magician and the target to both be affected; and in some settings, if the magician was casting the spell on someone's behalf, that someone takes the backfire instead of the magician (or possibly all three people are affected).

Call of Cthulu

This is a method for making magic rare (and possibly oppressed), and for associating a terrible cost with learning it.

A character can only gain magical skills and advantages by roleplaying – finding an ancient tome and reading it, associating with cultists, and so on. As the would-be magician discovers new things, he gains points in Tradition UBs, Path skill, Psychic Gifts, and anything else the GM feels is appropriate for “free.”

However, as he does so, he gains points in appropriate disadvantages at the same rate! Thus, if he gains a 5 point Delusional Tradition, and 5 points total in Circle Magic, Path of Summoning and Path of Binding (all from working within a cult), he will also gain 10 points in disadvantages... such as a phobia or Bad Temper.

GURPS Magic

The core books present another way to use the Ritual Magic *skill* with *Magic* spells (p.B242). This is a way to use the ritual magic *system* with them.

This system can be combined with the spells in *GURPS Magic*, by counting defaults. Each College is a Path in this scheme.

A spell with no defaults whatsoever is a *very easy* ritual. Each default thereafter makes the ritual one step harder. A prerequisite that is not a spell (such as IQ 12+ or Charisma) also requires that prerequisite.

At the GM's discretion, Magery prerequisites can be dropped, and the difficulty made one step harder per level of Magery required.

Energy Cost: This can either be left in place as is (so that physical spells require mana), or replaced with a *requirement* for raising power. If the magician does *not* raise power, give a penalty of -1 if the energy cost was 1; and an additional -1 per doubling thereafter.

Barrier: Many spells affect the target only indirectly, such as missile spells, or spells which turn the ground to quicksand beneath the subject. Against these spells, there is no barrier roll. Only spells which directly affect the subject (such as turning the subject into a newt) allow a barrier roll. On the other hand, the spells in *Magic* are *not* subtle – the subject is always considered aware.

Charms: Because of the short term effects of most *Magic* spells, most magicians will be using activation charms rather than casting anew anytime they need the spell. Rather than have the spells weaken over time (and keeping track of that mess), it may be better to give charms an explicit duration, per the “Simpler Charms” optional rule (p.31).

Regular Spells: Use the range/speed chart (p.B550) instead of the -1 per yard rule.

Missile Spells: Each enlargement is a separate ritual. At the GM's option, these can be handled in a manner similar to blocking spells (below).

Blocking Spells: If the GM decides to allow blocking spells, they are handled normally, but the casting time is always reduced to that of a blocking spell for *no penalty*.

Mana

Some campaign settings will have ambient *mana* (p.B235), an energy that must be present for magic, and different amounts of mana can affect magic as follows.

Very High Mana: Everyone can attempt any magic at a default of IQ-6. In addition, all raise power rituals (p.23) are two steps easier. However, every ordinary failure becomes a critical failure.

High Mana: Everyone can attempt any magic at a default of IQ-6. In addition, all raise power rituals (p.23) are one step easier.

Normal Mana: Use the rules as written.

Low Mana: All magic is at a -5 penalty to skill rolls. However, most places have a neutral (+0) aura, and magical entities and

energies are scarce enough that warding ritual spaces isn't usually necessary. In addition, all raise power rituals (p.23) are one step harder. Low mana will tend to make Circle Magic more popular, although high skill practitioners can overcome the limits.

No Mana: Magic is not possible.

Overcoming Will

Normally, spells which exercise control over a subject's actions are resisted by Will (in *addition* to any barrier roll to avoid the spell latching on). This Will roll is an opposed check against the margin of success of the spell.

The above assumes that the *spell* is what attempts to control the subject. However, in some settings, the spell merely sets up a situation wherein the magician can exercise his Will directly in some fashion. In such cases, it may be worthwhile to use this rule instead:

A spell which is normally resisted by Will instead allows a contest of Will between the magician and the subject.

This has the side effect of requiring magicians to have strong will in addition to being skilled in the art of magic. It may be appropriate to allow a bonus to the magician's Will roll equal to half the strength of the spell.

Ritual Difficulties

The power level of magic, in general, can be significantly altered by modifying the difficulty of rituals by one or more steps. Making rituals a step easier will result in much faster casting times (rituals will tend to hover around 1 second to 10 minutes, instead of 10 minutes to 4 hours); making rituals a step harder will result in considerably slower casting times (sometimes measured in days), and will make Circle Magic the only way to achieve spectacular effects.

Self Sacrifice

A setting can be made a bit darker by the inclusion of scourging rites, self-inflicted scars and injuries, and similar, which provide bonuses to magical activities.

For *temporary* disadvantages and injuries (such as beating oneself), this can replace raising power (p.23) rituals. A good starting point is for 1 point worth of temporary disadvantage (which is assumed to last for one day) for a +1 to a *very easy* ritual; and doubling the points for each step harder, or for each additional +1.

For *permanent* disadvantages (such as blinding one eye), this is best handled in game by allowing a magician to take the disadvantage voluntarily (and in play), and then spending the points on magical advantages. Psychic Gift (p.7) and Ritual Adept (p.7) are particularly appropriate, but in the right circumstances, this may be a good way to pay for Initiation or

simply a sudden insight (that is, raising the skill level or buying the Talent).

Side Effects

In some campaigns, the very act of using magic may cause some unwanted side effect. This can be as non-threatening as attracting minor, non-malevolent fairies to the site of the magic, to killing plant life in the area (for example, a one yard radius of plant life for an *easy* spell, and twice the radius per step harder).

Simpler Charms

If magicians tend to make a *lot* of charms, rather than enact spells as they need them, it may be worth it to have an explicit duration for charms, rather than a cumulative penalty to the final roll. One month seems to be good in most cases, and will result in roughly the same number of charms as a magician might be expected to have under the default system. To have more charms, lengthen the duration; to discourage them, shorten it.

Witnesses

This option tends to result in more secretive magic, and definitely prohibits casting real spells on national television. It also makes hostile magics against groups *very* difficult.

A witness must be *sapient* and also must either be aware that the spell was cast or be the target of the spell.

A hostile witness is someone who has a vested interest in the spell not working... and non-believers count as having a vested interest! A single hostile witness gives a -1 penalty; each doubling of the number of hostile witnesses gives an additional -1 penalty.

Note: Any spell that *harms* someone automatically has at least one hostile witness!

A favorable witness is someone who strongly believes in and wants the spell to work. Favorable witnesses do not provide a bonus inherently, but they can be included in Circle Magic (p.13) for various purposes.

Neutral witnesses have no effect.

Creating Paths

These Paths are examples of what can be done to build out a specific set of ritual paths for a setting. Most of them are built from the various rituals in the Ritual Taxonomy section (p.15); three are new Paths with *physical* effects, to show some approaches to more flagrant magical effects.

Penalties: Note that the penalties below assume that no effort has been made to counter the penalties. Fine-quality equipment

can provide a +2, time and power can both provide bonuses, as can Autohypnosis, Symbol Drawing, and other sources.

Raising Power: Although raising power (p.23) is listed as a separate Path, *many* traditions include it as part of the basic training in *any* Path. To represent this, instead of a separate Path skill for raising power, use the same Path as the core ritual.

Path of Alchemy

This is a path with physical effects. As such, it will only be appropriate for some campaigns. I have included it as a way of examining physical effects in a ritual magic context. Another way is presented in the optional rules section (*GURPS Magic*, p.29).

Alchemy derived from Aristotle's concept of the four qualities which defined the four elements: cold, hot, moist, and dry. Water is cold and moist; earth is cold and dry; hot and moist is air; hot and dry is fire. This is why water, when heated, boils; and why dry wood can burn.

For example, the metallic theory of transmutation came from a belief that all metals were derived from impure combinations of sulfur (the mineral closest to hot and dry) and mercury (the mineral closest to cold and moist); gold was, in theory, a perfect balance of the two minerals.

Alchemists were primarily interested in transmutation, but not just of base metals to gold... they sought to transmute themselves and their world. They sniffed fumes, saw visions, and sought a way to transmute their souls to the *solificatio* (heavenly fire). This path assumes that they were right.

In addition to the core rituals below (which involves tapping the alchemist's inner intuition, and two types of transmutation), authentic alchemists would have access to the Paths of Breaking, Divination, Dreaming (particularly projection), and Warding.

Anima

The *anima* is the alchemist's inner soul sister, which Carl Jung later took as a tool into the unconscious mind. This ritual summons up visions of the *anima*, which may then counsel the alchemist in his pursuit of truth. The anima is always present in fire (the four stages of fire are the black, white, yellow and red; and she manifests slightly differently in each), and so such manifests require a crucible and method of heating.

favorable ritual

Casting Time: 1 hour

Duration: Instant

Skill: +0

This is a combined Divination (Divine Will, p.18) and Dreaming (Hallucination, subconscious, p.19). The information is almost always complex and cryptic, and reveals the route to take to acquire information, rather than direct answers. Such

visions may seem to last for several minutes, but always occur almost instantaneously.

variable ritual

Casting Time: varies

Duration: Instant

Skill: varies

Calling upon the *anima* can also be used to empower the alchemist's studies. Treat this as a Raising Power (p.23) ritual.

Transmute

The heart of the alchemist's pursuit was the ability to transmute one thing into another, utilizing the principles of the elements and differing impurities.

A *transmute* ritual changes one pure materia into another. Lead into gold is the usual cliché, but almost anything can be attempted.

Duration: *Instant.*

Difficulty: The minimum is a *favorable* ritual, which can transmute very similar substances. To qualify for this, the material must be similar in all of the following: cold/hot, moist/dry, strong/ductile, color, taste, organic/inorganic, and density. Each missing similarity makes the ritual one step harder. For example, lead lacks the color and taste of gold, so it is a *unfavorable* ritual.

In addition, the size of the transmutation is important. To transmute a few grains of the material is the default difficulty; a few ounces is one step harder; a few pounds one step harder still; and each x10 mass is one step harder.

To calcify a human being involves making the human cold and dry, non-ductile, white in color, chalky in taste, inorganic, and slightly heavier by volume. Since every quality is changing, this is an *impossible* ritual; the mass of a human is four steps harder as well, for an *impossible 5* ritual (-18 to skill, and 10 thousand years base casting time). Still... it's at least possible.

Opus Circulatorium

The corruption of one is the generation of another. – Rosarium

The uroboric serpent is representative of many things, but at the heart of its power is that life must die in order to grow. The serpent consumes itself, and thus part of it is always dying, and part of it is always growing.

This power of rebirth, or *opus circulatorium*, can be tapped to grant a kind of immortality against injury and affliction.

dangerous ritual

Casting Time: 3 months

Duration: Instant

Skill: -8

This is a special kind of Cure (p.20) ritual. When it is completed, the subject *dies* and begins to rot rapidly. If the ritual was successful, then from the rotting corpse, the subject is reborn, forming first as a babe, and then growing swiftly into adulthood over a period of time equal to the ritual. At the end of the rebirth, any external flaws (such as the effects of age, disease, or poisons) are removed. If the ritual fails, the subject simply dies and rots.

At the GM's discretion, other forms of flaws may be removed as well.

Path of Demonology

As an example of what can be done to build a Path which includes the effects of *several* entire generic Paths, but sharply restricted in some aspect, a Path of Demonology can be produced.

Demonology includes *all* of the following (three entire Paths, plus three fairly broad rituals from other Paths):

Binding, Banishing (p.15)

Binding, Geas (contract version only, p.16)

Divination, Divine Will (p.18)

Summoning (p.24)

Warding (p.24)

Wrack (p.25)

However, all of the above apply *only* to creatures defined as demons in the campaign. Thus, the magician could create a contractual geas on a demon, acquire information from demonic sources, summon (and channel!) demons, ward against demons in all manner of ways, and cast spells to banish and harm demons... but would be unable to affect humans, angels, earth spirits, and so on.

Path of Fire

This is a path with physical effects. As such, it will only be appropriate for some campaigns. I have included it as an example of the rules for using *GURPS Magic* in the optional rules section (p.29).

Raising Power: A magician does not gain a bonus for raising power. Instead, if he does *not* raise power, he takes a penalty equal to the power penalty of the spell. This Path is used for the Raising Power roll (p.23).

Charms: Charms do not weaken over time. They last one month, and then fail. A magician can increase the amount of time the charm lasts. Each step longer makes the ritual one step harder than a normal charm.

Cold

average ritual

Casting Time: 2 hours (one step shorter)

Duration: Maintained

Power: -2

Skill: -2

This works exactly like Heat (below), but reduces temperature rather than raises it.

Create Fire

easy ritual

Casting Time: 1 minute (two steps shorter)

Duration: Maintained or Active; see text

Power: -2

Skill: +0

This spell creates a fuelless fire, either on or around an object, or floating in midair, for as long as the magician concentrates. If the magician ceases concentration, the fire lasts for one minute before going out (it can not be re-maintained once ceased).

If cast on a creature, the creature receives a Barrier roll to resist the effects. The fire can be extinguished normally – regardless of fuel, it still requires air.

Deflect Energy

very favorable ritual

Casting Time: Blocking

Duration: Instant

Power: can not raise power; included in Skill.

Skill: +1

Prereqs: Magery 1

This spell can be cast as a defense at any time. If cast in this way during a ritual, it causes the ritual being cast to fail automatically.

When cast, the spell causes one energy effect (such as a laser, lightning bolt, or fireball) to miss the magician. If cast to defend someone else, apply range penalties normally.

Extinguish Fire

easy ritual

Casting Time: 1 minute (two steps shorter)

Duration: Instant

Power: -3

Skill: +0

This spell allows the magician to instantly extinguish any fires within range. This does not reduce temperature, it merely snuffs out the actual fire.

Fireball

average ritual

Casting Time: 4 hours

Duration: Instant; activation charm

Power: variable, see text

Skill: +1

This spell creates a small pebble as an activation charm, which creates a fireball when thrown at a target. The fireball has a 1/2D 25, Max 50, Acc 1. The power penalty is -1 for 1d, -2 for 2d, and -3 for 3-4d, -4 for 5-8d, and so on. The magician can not create more dice of damage than he has levels of Magery.

The fireball does this damage to a single target, and then vanishes in a puff.

This ritual may be cast up to three times for the same charm, strengthening the damage it does each time by the same amount as a single casting. Thus, a magician with Magery 2 could create up to a 6d fireball after 3 castings.

The charm is normally good for one month.

Explosive

unfavorable ritual

Casting Time: 1 day

Duration: Instant; activation charm

Power: variable, see text

Skill: -1

This is identical to Fireball, with the following changes:

The power penalty is -2 for 1d, -3 for 2d, -4 for 3-4d, -5 for 5-8d, and so on. The magician can not create more dice of damage than he has levels of Magery. The fireball does damage to an area as an explosion (p.B414).

Heat

favorable ritual

Casting Time: 2 hours

Duration: Maintained

Power: -2

Skill: +1

This spell raises the temperature of a single object of up to one cubic yard by 0.5° F per second. Each doubling of the object's longest dimension gives a -2 penalty; each doubling of the temperature increase gives a -1 penalty.

Ignite Fire

very easy ritual

Casting Time: 1 second (two steps shorter)

Duration: Maintained

Power: Varies, see text.

Skill: +2

This spell creates a point of heat on a non-living object, which, if maintained, will ignite the object. The power penalty varies with the heat of the point. It is -1 for the equivalent to a match; -2 for a torch; -3 for a burning magnesium stick.

Resist Cold

average ritual

Casting Time: 4 hours

Duration: Active

Power: -2

Skill: +0

This spell renders the subject immune to the effects of cold and frostbite. The effects last for 1 minute; each step longer that the spell lasts gives a -1 penalty.

This spell is very commonly produced as a charm, which activates at the point that it is needed.

Resist Fire

very unfavorable ritual

Casting Time: 3 days

Duration: Active

Power: -2

Skill: -2

This spell renders the subject immune to the effects of heat and fire (but not electricity). The effects last for 1 minute; each step longer that the spell lasts gives a -1 penalty.

This spell is very commonly produced as a charm, which activates at the point that it is needed.

Shape Fire

easy ritual

Casting Time: 1 minute (two steps shorter)

Duration: Maintained

Power: -2

Skill: +0

This spell allows the magician to move fires psychokinetically. This has a Move of 5, and can include any fire within range of the spell (determined with the range modifiers normally). Natural fires which are moved away from fuel extinguish; fires generated by *create fire* can be moved anywhere.

Path of Nature

Endure Elements

average ritual

Casting Time: 30 minutes (3 steps shorter)

Duration: See text (instant)

Skill: -6

This is a Healing (Healing Energy, p.20) which gives a bonus to HT for purposes of resisting temperature extremes. It gives a bonus equal to half the strength of the spell; however, each roll reduces the strength by 2, until the spell ends.

Predict Weather

very favorable ritual

Casting Time: 1 hour

Duration: Instant (3 days of prediction)

Skill: -1

This is a Divination (p.18) which predicts the general weather patterns over the next 3 days. It assumes that there are roughly four possibilities; more complex weather possibilities will generate harder rituals, but "hot/humid", "cold/humid", "hot/dry" and "cold/dry" covers most real possibilities.

Seek Beast

very easy ritual

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Duration: Instant

Skill: +6

This is a Divination (p.18) ritual which tells the direction and distance to the nearest animal of the sort described. If the magician makes the roll exactly, only an animal within 100 yards is known; each margin of success increases this distance one step on the range/speed chart (p.B550).

Gentle Beast

very favorable ritual

Casting Time: 30 minutes (one step shorter)

Duration: 30 minutes (active, escapable)

Skill: +1 (-1 per week passed before activating)

This is a Passion (Suggestion, p.22) ritual, that is focused on the user of the charm, and made into an activation charm (p.17). Write down the magician's skill at the time that he made the charm; the one who activates the charm rolls against that, -1 per week that has passed, and gains a bonus equal to half the margin of success on all social manipulation rolls and reaction checks with one animal for 30 minutes.

very easy ritual

Casting Time: 1 second (two steps shorter)

Duration: 10 minutes (active, escapable)

Skill: +2

This is a Passion (Suggestion, p.22) ritual, that is focused on the magician. The magician rolls against his skill, and gains a bonus equal to half the margin of success on all social manipulation rolls and reaction checks with one animal for 10 minutes.

Fertility

average ritual

Casting Time: 4 hours

Duration: See text (instant)

Skill: +0

This is a Healing (Healing Energy, p.20) ritual which gives a bonus to HT for purposes of pregnancy; this both helps ensure that the subject will become pregnant *and* helps the subject with any HT rolls for an easy pregnancy. It gives a bonus equal to half the strength of the spell; however, each roll reduces the strength by 2, until the spell ends.

very favorable ritual

Casting Time: 1 hour

Duration: See text (instant)

Skill: +2

This is a variant of a Healing (reversed Cure, p.20) ritual which *guarantees* a pregnancy the next time the subject has a chance of pregnancy, but provides no other benefits. The subject must attempt to get pregnant within the next day for this ritual to work.

Hunter's Blessing

very favorable ritual

Casting Time: 4 hours

Duration: The strength reduces by -1 per day

Skill: -3

This is a Luck (Visualization, p.21) ritual which grants a bonus to skill for purposes of a particular hunt. The ritual above assumes that the magician is one of the hunters, and that the group of hunters can all stand within 3 yards of the magician. The magician must describe the hunt (including the specific species being hunted): if it happens *exactly* as he described it, add the strength of the spell to skill rolls; a slightly different hunt halves this bonus; a very different hunt quarters it or eliminates it entirely.

Mist

trivial ritual

Casting Time: 10 minutes (one step longer)

Duration: instant (15 minutes for the fog to form)

Skill: -4

This is a Weatherworking (p.25) ritual which is highly reliant on the local climate to determine how difficult it will be to pull off. In London, England, the chances of fog can be roughly estimated as an 8-, so a final strength of 4 is sufficient to almost guarantee the fog; in a desert, the chance is around 3-.

In the GM's opinion, a 200 yard radius is sufficient to generate a local fog, but he goes ahead and bumps it up to 1,000 yards. Also in the GM's opinion, fog would normally take an hour to form, but he wants this spell to cut that down to 15 minutes. The strength of the spell is equal to the margin of success (the larger radius grants a +8 bonus to strength, and the shorter time inflicts a -8 penalty).

Summon Beast

easy ritual

Casting Time: 10 minutes (one step shorter)

Duration: 30 minutes (active, escapable)

Skill: +1 (modified by range for purposes of compelling the animal)

This is a Summon (p.24) ritual combined with a Binding (Geas, p.16) ritual, which contacts an animal and compels it to come to the magician. The power of the binding is affected by range penalties normally, and only lasts for 30 minutes. However, even an animal who is not bound to come to the caster may be curious enough to approach the caster's area.

Command Beast

very unfavorable ritual

Casting Time: 1 day (one step shorter)

Duration: 1 day (active, escapable)

Skill: -4 (-1 per week passed before activating)

This is a Binding (p.15) ritual that lasts one full day, with the command "Do what the user commands", and made into an activation charm (p.17). Since the commands will have to be simple (such as "attack that person"), the GM decides that it will be one step easier. Write down the magician's skill at the time that he made the charm; the one who activates the charm rolls against that, -1 per week that has passed. The binding will have a strength equal to the margin of success at that time.

hard ritual

Casting Time: 1 week

Duration: 1 day (active, escapable; and active)

Skill: -5 (-1 per week passed before activating)

This is the above spell, combined with a Divination (Mind Reading, p.18) ritual that provides the animal with an intuitive understanding of what the user of the charm wants. Since this is sending information to the subject, it is one step harder.

Hasten Mount

unfavorable ritual

Casting Time: 1 day

Duration: instant (but see text)

Skill: -1 (-1 per week passed before activating)

This is a Healing Energy (p.20) ritual, made into an activation charm, which grants a bonus to a mount's HT rolls against fatigue. Add half the strength of the spell to the mount's HT for this purpose, and the strength reduces by -2 each time a roll is made.

This is normally used to allow a mount to push further on a long journey, although it can also be used to push for sprinting as well.

Weatherworking

This is handled exactly as the Weatherworking Path (p.25).

Thunderbolt

trivial ritual

Casting Time: 1 hour (three steps longer)

Duration: instant (1d seconds for the lightning bolt to form)

Skill: +1

This is a Weatherworking (p.25) ritual, made into an activation charm. The GM decides that the chances of a lightning bolt striking a particular individual is roughly negative 2 or less. A strength of 5 will be needed to even have a chance. However, a lightning bolt only needs about a 100 yard radius to form.

The activation charm must be placed on the target to be struck by the lightning. The magician may then activate the charm at any time with a brief ritual – however, the distance between the magician and the target applies a penalty as well!

Note: Although this ritual has a +1 to skill, a margin of success of 12 is needed to have a 50% chance of hitting the target. That makes this one of the hardest spells that can be attempted. If successful, however, the results are spectacular.

The typical damage from a lightning bolt is around 10d, but may vary according to the quality of the conditions generating it.

Path of Shapeshifting

This is a path with physical effects. As such, it will only be appropriate for some campaigns. I have included it as a way of examining physical effects in a ritual magic context. Another way is presented in the optional rules section (*GURPS Magic*, p.29).

This Path represents the belief that magicians (and some naturally gifted individuals) can change into the shapes of animals (or possibly a particular animal). Unlike lycanthropy and other changing myths, this is a controlled, deliberate

process with no overt elements of being monstrous. In the modern world, this is sometimes seen as a form of therianthropy.

Although the *effect* of becoming an animal can be achieved via the Dreaming path (p.19), the Shapeshifting path is concerned with the act of *physically* becoming an animal.

To achieve this, the magician mentally reshapes his spiritual form to that of the animal he wishes to become, and then empowers his body to reshape itself to match. The use of disguise and animal skins may be used to aid in the visualization, or may actually help the magician cover his own normal aura.

Some other rituals that can be added to this Path include the Gentle Beast, Seek Beast, Summon Beast, and Command Beast from the Path of Nature (p.34); Projection from Dreaming (p.19) and possibly Hallucination; and some animal-specific Divinations (p.18).

Aura Healing

This works exactly like the Changing ritual (below), but instead of changing the target into an animal, it changes them from their damaged form to a healed form. The active version provides the equivalent of regeneration!

The time normally required for a change is how long the healing takes.

Difficulty: An instant aura healing is one step harder than an equivalent changing; an active aura healing is two steps harder.

Reversing: This type of change can not be reversed. Although the magician can visualize a “damaged” body and change someone into it, the “damage” is actually the natural shape of the new body, and no injury is dealt.

Changing

A *changing* ritual alters the shape of the magician to that of some other living creature. Upon success, the subject changes shape over the course of an hour (but see Difficulty, below).

When the spell is cast, the magician must decide whether to make the effect instant or active. If instant, another changing ritual is required to change the subject *back*. If active, the ritual lasts for a set amount of time and the subject automatically changes back. Whether as a blessing or a curse, there are advantages to each!

Duration: Either *Instant* or *Active*, *Escapable*. If active, the default duration is one day.

Difficulty: If the magician is the subject, the default is an *average* ritual; otherwise the default is an *unfavorable* ritual. An instant spell is one step harder.

The changing normally takes one hour to take effect. For each step shorter (30 minutes, 10 minutes, 1 minute, 1 second), subtract -1 from the Path skill.

An active changing normally lasts for one day. For each step longer (3 days, 1 week, 1 month, etc.), subtract -1 from the Path skill.

Size Modifier: Apply the difference in SM between the old shape and the new shape as a penalty to Path skill.

Animal Type: The types are mammal, reptile, bird, fish, insect, and so on. If the animal type is changed, the ritual is one step harder.

Reversing: An instant changing ends as soon as the subject has finished changing. At that point, the spell does not resist attempts to change the subject, making it relatively easy to reverse!

An active changing *resists* attempts to change the subject into anything else. Subtract the strength of the changing from any attempts to cast another changing on the subject, unless both are cast by the same magician. This does not affect Breaking spells, however.