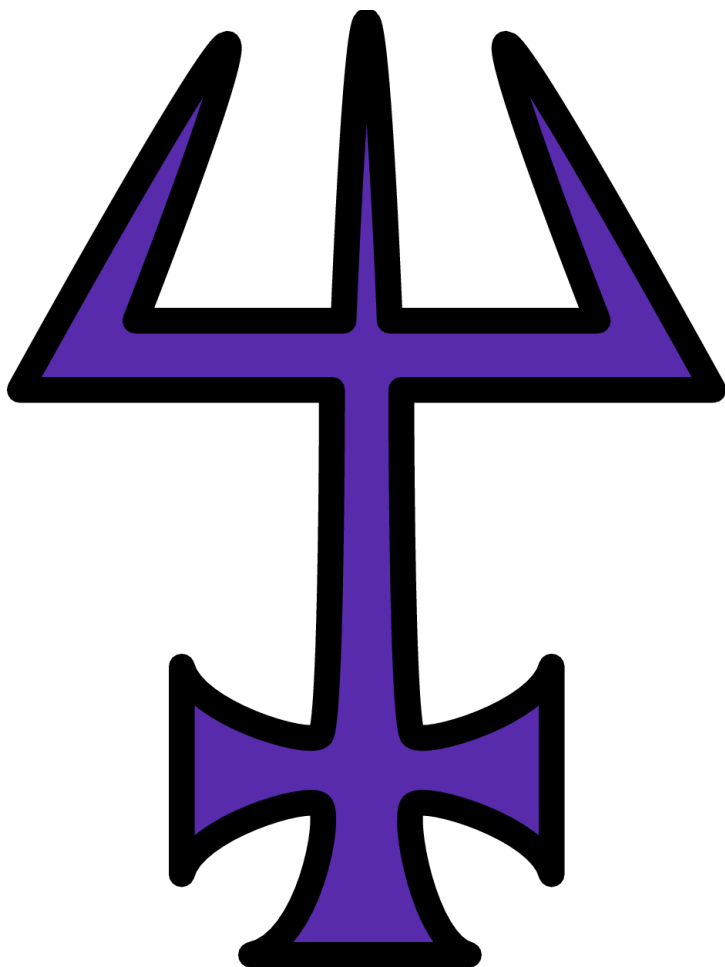


MAGE: THE ASCENSION

for

RISUS: The Anything RPG



Written by Timothy Groves

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The World of Darkness

The World of Darkness is a complete role-playing environment, created by White Wolf. Up until about 2003, it was quite nice. Thereafter, it kind of backslid. In particular, Mage: The Ascension got hosed. My best guess is that this was largely due to the re-emergence of **Ars Magica**, from which large portions of M:TA seemed to have been “researched” from.

Largely, the World of Darkness is the world as we know it; just darker, more grimy, and with vampires and werewolves running about. Oh, and magic works. That sort of stuff. So you can basically use what you know about the world today as your background. If you want a more in-depth look at the World of Darkness, acquire some White Wolf books; my budget for this book is 24 pages.

Character Creation

Characters in **RISUS** Mage are created using ten six-sided dice, with no more than four dice in any one cliché. Both Hooks and Tales are permitted, granting one bonus die each if used. Clichés may be double-pumped, and certain clichés *must* be purchased double-pumpable.

One cliché in particular is *required* to be a Mage, and that cliché is **Arete**. Without Arete, it is impossible to wield Magick! However, there is certainly room in a game of Mage for a non-Mage. Consors are non-spellcasting buddies of Mages; Consors who serve as bodyguards are known as *Grogs*.

If a character is to be a Mage, he will gain one free die of Arete. Since Arete is double-pumpable, this means that a Mage will technically start with two bonus dice, just for being a Mage. What a deal! Consors do not gain this bonus die, but neither do they suffer from Paradox.

Suggested Hooks include the following:

- Physical or Mental defects, such as missing limbs, blindness, or insanity;
- Unique Focus: an item that is Required Gear to create any Effect;
- Rotes Only: The Mage may not do “Free Magick”, but must instead create all his Effects as Rotes;
- Wierdness: The Mage “leaks” magick, and strange things tend to happen around him;
- Sphere Blind: The Mage can never access one Sphere of Magick, except through Talismans;
- Cursed: The Mage just happens to have bad luck, and once per game session, the GM can hose him for no apparent reason;
- Chantry Survivor: The Mage survived the destruction of his Chantry, but is viewed as a bringer of bad luck by other Mages.

Special Clichés

Certain clichés have special uses or purchase costs. They are mostly specific to Mages, though other character types may have a rank or two of Followers, Willpower or Talisman.

Arete. Arete measures a character's understanding of how the universe works. Arete is required in order to perform Magick. Arete *must* be purchased double-pumpable, at two dice per rank. When creating a Static Magick effect, the character rolls his Arete. All Mage characters start with one free die of Arete. For more, refer to the section on Magick, page 13.

Followers. Each die put into Followers allows you to place three dice worth of clichés into various Followers. The only limit on the number of Followers a character may have is the practical limit: Each Follower needs at least one die in at least one cliché. Followers may not have Arete, Spheres, Traditions or Willpower, nor may they have Followers of their own. Followers may have double-pumpable clichés, at a cost of two of their dice per rank.

Spheres. Spheres may be purchased at one die per rank, or double-pumpable at *three* dice per rank. No more than one Sphere may be purchased double-pumpable. No Sphere may *ever* have more ranks than the character has ranks of Arete. For more, see the section on Magick, page 13.

Sanctum. The Mage has a hideaway where he defines the rules of reality! In this Sanctum, he can get away with more Vulgar Magicks. See page 26 for details on Sanctums.

Talisman. This is a Magickal item. Ranks may be purchased at a cost of one per die, and are never purchased double-pumpable. Each rank earns the Talisman dice to spend on Cliches. Talismans can gain all normal clichés, plus the special clichés of Arete and Spheres. For more on Talismans, see page 25.

Traditions. Tradition clichés may be purchased at one die per rank. They may *not* be purchased double-pumpable. No character may have more than one Tradition cliché. Orphans may not choose to start with this cliché.

Wealth. A Wealth roll is required only if the Mage wishes to buy something quite expensive. Examples include: A computer (5), a good-quality firearm (10), a car (15), a solid silver sword (20), or a house (25). Unlike other rolls, failure does not result in the loss of a die. Rather, success causes the *permanent* loss of one die in Wealth. This loss can be recovered through character advancement.

Willpower. Willpower may be purchased at one die per rank, or double-pumpable at two dice per rank. The only real use for Willpower is to boost dice pools. A die of Willpower may be 'burned' to add one die to any other cliché before the roll is made. One die of Willpower may be recovered at the end of each session. The condition under which this recovery is possible is covered in the Tradition description. Orphans just need to survive the session to recover their die of Willpower.

The Traditions

Mages typically belong to one of nine Traditions. To be part of a Tradition, the character must purchase at least one die in a Tradition cliché. Each Tradition has its own flavour, and its preferred style of Magick; however, for game purposes, all Traditions use the same rules for Magick.

Each Tradition is associated with a specific Sphere. The Traditional Sphere is the Sphere in which the Tradition focuses; it also helps define the nature of the Tradition in question. Or vice versa. No-one is completely certain which way it goes. But either way, Tradition members gain a special bonus of +1 point to any magic roll that involves their Traditional Sphere, per die in the Tradition. So an Order of Hermes (3) that throws a fireball using Forces (4) would roll 4d6+3.

The Orphans

A Mage with no dice in any of the Traditional clichés is called an Orphan; they gain no bonus points to magic rolls of any sort. They also tend to feel rather lonely. On the plus side, they are unfettered by any pre-existing belief system. If a character is an Orphan, they may select this as a Hook, above and beyond any other Hook they may have. The bonus die they gain for being an Orphan, however, must be spent on Arete. (Which means they also need to spend another die on Arete, since it must be purchased double-pumpable.)

It is possible for an Orphan to join a Tradition. To do so, the Orphan merely need purchase one die in a Tradition cliché.

The Akashic Brotherhood

The Akashic Brotherhood is on a road to perfection. They follow a path they call *do*, supposedly the ultimate philosophy and martial art. Of course, *do* is highly subjective, and means different things to different people. They don't believe that they do Magick; to them, Magick is merely *do*.

It is because of this belief that the average Akashic can get away with more vulgar Magicks than is typical for other Mages. Body-boosting effects, ludicrous jumps, unerring strikes, even throwing fireballs – all are easily swallowed by Sleepers. After all, everyone knows that martial artists can do this sort of thing...just watch the latest Jet Li film.

The Akashic cliché may be used for injuring combat, meditation, or learning *do*. Akashics recover Willpower at the end of any session in which they take a step towards perfection, no matter how small. They favour the Spheres of Life, Entropy, Correspondence, and Mind.

Traditional Sphere: Mind

Typical Clichés: Martial Artist, Monk, Warrior, Student of Theology, Buddhist, Acrobat, Athlete

The Celestial Chorus

The Celestial Chorus believe that all power in the universe flows from one source, which they (in a fit of originality) call The One. They don't believe in Magick; they believe in the power of One.

Many Celestial Chorus members are Christians, Jews or Muslims; they see no reason why The One might not be their God. Surprisingly, the Celestial Chorus is free of internecine tension. Moreso than their Sleeper counterparts, the religious members of the Celestial Chorus understand that, regardless of their individual beliefs, the God they serve is still The One.

Celestial Chorus members care for the welfare of the Sleepers more than any other Tradition, and can often be found in soup kitchens and shelters, aiding the poor...possibly with some Magickal intervention. And since they are often religious, the laying on of hands and shouting, "Heal!", can turn the most Vulgar Life effect Coincidental.

The Celestial Chorus cliché may be used in debates, especially theological debates, or when doing something beneficial. A Celestial Chorus member will regain Willpower if they do something charitable. They favour the Spheres of Life, Time, Spirit, and their Traditional Sphere of Prime.

Traditional Sphere: Prime

Typical Clichés: Faith Healer, Social Worker, Priest, Student of Theology, Minister, Freemason

The Cult Of Ecstasy

The Cultists believe that life is a party...or if it isn't, it really should be. They take as much as possible to excess, but in particular, they love music, dance, drugs and sex. They don't believe in Magick, other than that you can find in pure, simple enjoyment.

Despite this mindset, the Cult of Ecstasy remains well-respected among the Traditions. This is mostly due to the fact that they ably defend their viewpoint. In the words of one Cultist, "The freedom to seek pleasure is the first freedom curtailed by the small-minded." Many Cultists take this to heart.

The very name of the Cult gives a clue to their viewpoint: Ecstasy, from the Latin: *ex stasis*: out of stasis.

The Cult of Ecstasy cliché can be used for entertainment, seduction or distraction attempts. A Cultist recovers Willpower at the end of any session in which they did something for sheer fun. They favour the Spheres of Time, being their Traditional Sphere, but also make use of Entropy, Forces and Mind.

Traditional Sphere: Time

Typical Clichés: Musician, Novelist, Hairdresser, Dancer, Public Speaker, Hedonist, Beatnik, Hippie

The Dreamspeakers

Dreamspeakers are shamans, mediums and others who try to bridge the gap between our world and the spirit world. They don't believe that they are doing Magick; they believe that the Spirits are doing the Magick.

These Spirits make for very powerful allies. Possessed of their own magicks, the Spirits can interact with our world to a limited degree, and with the aid of a Dreamspeaker, that interaction can be made more direct. It is not unusual for a Dreamspeaker to have some dice allocated to the Followers cliché, gaining one or more Spirits as companions.

The Dreamspeakers also have a good rapport with the Lupines. A few Dreamspeakers are Garou Kinfolk, non-Garou but blood relatives to a Werewolf. Should a Chantry need an envoy to the Garou, a Dreamspeaker is the logical choice.

The Dreamspeaker cliché can be used for ceremonies or for dealing with Spirits. Dreamspeakers recover Willpower after any session in which they had a spiritual encounter. Aside from their Traditional Sphere of Spirit, the Dreamspeakers also favour Mind, Entropy and Time.

Traditional Sphere: Spirit

Typical Clichés: Medicine Man, Tribal Elder, Garou Kinfolk, Ghost Hunter, Shaman, Faith Healer, Medium

The Euthanatos

The Euthanatos are creepy. They have an unhealthy fascination with death and decay. Many worship Death Gods, while others are just strange. They don't believe in Magick; some believe that random chance just happens to favour them, whereas others believe it is the will of their Deity.

But they're not just wierdos. Most Euthanatos firmly believe in a cycle of life: Birth, death and rebirth. It's just that they're most concerned with death. For all Euthanatos, however, the central belief is that everything must die; everything must end. Despite their love of wearing black and looking creepy, they have the greatest hatred of all the Traditions for the Undead.

The Euthanatos believe that a good death is as important as a good life. And they are prepared to help others towards both. Faced with a person living in pain, no Euthanatos would hesitate to end the sufferer's pain. They firmly believe that every person has the right to choose death.

The Euthanatos cliché can be used in personal combat, or for leading death cultists. Euthanatos regain Willpower after any session in which they kill or destroy anything. The Spheres of Life, Forces and Matter are just as useful for destroying things as their Traditional Sphere of Entropy.

Traditional Sphere: Entropy

Typical Clichés: Death-Cultist, Nihilist, Surgeon, Undertaker, Statistician, Social Scientist, Gambler

The Order of Hermes

The Order of Hermes are traditional wizards, Harry Potter and Merlin types. They believe in Magick, but they think they need magic circles, star charts, wands, potions or other such to make it happen.

The Order of Hermes is one of the oldest of Traditions, tracing its origins back to the Ancient Egyptians. They take their name from the Greek messenger God, said to be the one who taught Humans the secrets of Magick. Though firm believers in the freedom of choice espoused by the Traditions, many Hermetic Mages feel themselves above the Sleepers, and feel they must act as the caretakers of those poor innocent souls.

The Order is divided into ten Houses. These Houses have seen change over time. Each House concentrates on one particular Sphere, in addition to the Traditional Sphere of Forces.

The Order of Hermes cliché can be used when trying to solve puzzles, especially arcane puzzles, or for doing math or reading ancient languages. Hermetics regain Willpower after any session in which they use Vulgar Magick (which can get dangerous...) Besides Forces, they also favour the Spheres of Time, Correspondence, and Matter, believing that these are most amenable to their potions, magic circles, incantations, wands, formulae...

Traditional Sphere: Forces

Typical Clichés: Freemason, Student of the Occult, Librarian, Archaeologist, Linguist, Mathematician

The Sons of Ether

The Sons of Ether are mad scientists, a breakaway group of the Technocracy that joined the Traditions. They are tinkerers and engineers, crackpots who scoff at the laws of reality. They don't believe in Magick; it's all just high-tech.

Despite their less than auspicious origins, no member of the other Traditions feels any distrust towards the Etherians. Their break with the Technocracy was based upon that group's static attitude towards science. Feeling that the freedom to explore unconventional paths of science was more important than rules and regulations, they turned their back on the New World Order and signed on, with no regrets, with the Traditions. And despite some rather spectacular failures, the Traditions have felt no reason to regret the Etherians' defection.

The Son of Ether cliché can be used for almost anything related to science, math or engineering. Etherians regain Willpower after any session in which they broke a law of physics. Etherians favour the Spheres of Forces, Life, Prime, and their Traditional Sphere.

Traditional Sphere: Matter

Typical Clichés: Mad Scientist, Researcher, Mad Scientist, Gadgeteer, Mad Scientist, Engineer, Mad Scientist (well, it *is* a cliché...)

The Verbena

Verbena are traditional witches, of the blood magic style. They use herbs, stir cauldrons and sacrifice small animals for personal gain. They believe in Magick, provided it has ten centuries of tradition behind it.

Verbena are often found in rural areas, rather than the cities. They often care for Sleepers in their area. Since their specialty is Life Magick, they can heal wounds, improve crops, or cure disease in either Humans or livestock. Some Verbena have braved the cities, and are often found practising medicine in hospitals or clinics.

As one of the oldest Traditions, the Verbena have opposed the Technocracy since its inception. They are among the most highly respected of the Traditions. But this age and respect often bring them at loggerheads with the Order of Hermes. Both Traditions view themselves as the heart of the Traditions.

The Verbena cliché can be used for medicine, for determining the properties of animals or plants, or for using a knife. They like knives. A Verbena recovers Willpower after any session in which they demonstrate knowledge of the Old Ways of Witchcraft. Aside from Life, they also favour the Spheres of Prime, Mind and Entropy.

Traditional Sphere: Life

Typical Clichés: Witch, Healer, Surgeon, Historian, Nurse, Occult Bookstore Owner

The Virtual Adepts

Another breakaway group of Technomancers, the Virtual Adepts are a bunch of computer nerds. They don't believe in Magick; however, with a really good computer and access to the Net, you can do just about anything.

Originally members of Iteration X, the Virtual Adepts were, as a group, too chaotic to remain within the Technocracy. Often hunted by Sleeper authorities as well as the Pogrom, the Adepts rebel against conformity and yearn for information to be free.

The development of FidoNet, ARPANet, and the Internet, and the resulting explosion of information, worked as well for the Adepts as it did for the Pogrom. Adepts view the Net as a natural extension of their Correspondence. Or the other way around. Not that it matters to them.

The Virtual Adept cliché can be used for anything computer related. Adepts regain one Willpower at the end of any session in which they "jack in" and do something cool on the computer. They favour the Spheres of Matter, Mind, Forces, and their Traditional Sphere of Correspondence.

Traditional Sphere: Correspondence

Typical Clichés: Computer hacker, Electronics Engineer, Social Scientist, Social Engineer

The Awakened

Of the four primary factions of Mages, the nine Traditions stand opposed to the other three. But they certainly do not stand united! Often, Mages will find themselves in closer agreement with their foes than they are with their allies.

Organization

There are those Mages who sneer at the concept of organization within the Traditions. Indeed, it was hard enough to get all nine Traditions to agree to the Protocols – not because of objections to the Protocols, but simply because certain Traditions lack any form of hierarchy. When every member has a veto, very little gets done.

Cabals

A small group of Mages, of similar or dissimilar Traditions, may band together to work towards a common goal. Such a group is known as a Cabal. Some Chantries will demand that Cabals must register with the Chantry, stating their purpose and their leader; other Chantries hold that the business of the Cabal is its own, not that of the Chantry.

Acolytes

Most Mages have some unAwakened companions, known as Acolytes. Sometimes, it is possible for an Acolyte to become Awakened, and some even prove to have the gift of Magick.

Consors

Consors are similar to Acolytes, but are often Awakened. However, being Awakened does not mean that they can practice Magick! Consors are, by definition, Awakened non-Mages. Consors can still have supernatural abilities. A Garou or Vampire who assists a Mage would be a Consor. Consors may also possess Talismans. Some Consors serve as bodyguards or as Chantry guards; they are known as Custos, or, less formally, Grogs. A group of Grogs is called a Turb.

Chantries

Chantries are the great meeting-places of the Mages. Some Chantries are held by only one Tradition, while others are less homogenous. Most Chantries, even the single-Tradition houses, will offer shelter, rest, food and healing to any Mage of the Traditions. But for those who are Fellows within the Chantry, much more is available. Every Chantry has an extensive library, and almost all possess a Node.

Many Chantries have a Head, either a single person or a Council. Deacons are founding members of a Chantry; Fellows are other accepted members.

Status

It should be unsurprising that, among those who prize knowledge, those with more knowledge are more highly prized. This is tracked through the Status system. When resolving a social combat in an all-Mage situation, subtract the lower-ranked Mage's status from the higher-ranked. This is the number of additional dice the lower-ranked Mage loses if he loses a roll.

Orphans are the lowest of the low. Those Mages with no Tradition cliché will always be status 0, regardless of whatever other clichés they have.

Apprentices are those Mages with at least one die in Arete, but no Spheres – they are Awakened, but not yet educated. They are status 1.

Disciples have at least one die in a Sphere, and are status 2.

Adepts have four or five dice in at least one Sphere, and are status 3.

Masters have six dice in at least one Sphere, and are status 4.

Oracles have six double-pumpable dice in at least one Sphere, and six dice in Arete. They are status 6, and considered infallible.

The Protocols

The nine Traditions have many and varied laws between them, but a small subset of laws are agreed upon by all nine, and acts as a standard for all Mages. These laws are known as the Protocols, and are listed below.

- Respect those of greater knowledge.
- Repay those who have increased your knowledge.
- The word of an Oracle must be obeyed.
- Never betray your Cabal or your Chantry.
- Conspire not with the enemies of Ascension.
- Protect the Sleepers, for they know not what they do.

The Protocols are informal, but it is unwise to violate them. Punishments handed down by Chantry Heads and Oracles are usually *not* informal, and rarely pleasant.

Tribunal

Occasionally, a Tradition feels it necessary to call an all-member meeting to discuss matters of import; this is known as a Tribunal. The term is beginning to be used to describe any large gathering of Mages. Tribunals are also used to resolve disputes and mete out punishments.

Mortals

Mages are supernatural by nature, but completely mortal as far as their physical makeup is concerned. Dice lost during injuring combat may be healed at a rate of one per game day.

It is possible to heal physical damage using Magick; rules for doing so are given on page 18. This can be done Coincidentally – the Celestial Chorister shouts “Heal!”, the Verbena knows the right plants to treat the injury, or even so blatant as, “Good thing you had that whiskey flask in that pocket!”

Aggravated Damage

Certain types of damage are harder to recover from; these types of damage are known as Aggravated Damage. For a Mage, such damage is caused by fire, Paradox and by the teeth and claws of a Spirit or other supernatural creature.

Each time a Mage suffers Aggravated Damage, she gains one Aggravated Damage point, rather than losing any cliché dice. For each such point, the Mage may roll one less die on *any* cliché roll.

Aggravated Damage may only be healed at a rate of one per session, and one Willpower die per point healed must be spent.

Life Magick may be used to heal Aggravated damage, in exactly the same manner as it is used to heal regular damage. However, using Life to heal requires burning a die of Arete if successful; this represents expending Quintessence to restore the target's Pattern.

In addition, healing Aggravated damage is always Vulgar Magick. There is a world of difference between a slash “turning out” to be only superficial, and re-growing an arm.

Aggravated wounds caused by a Paradox backlash cannot be healed Magickally.

Magick

Magick is, of course, the heart and focus of this entire game. It is the primary tool of every Mage. It is the means by which they can break, alter or re-write the reality of their universe.

There are nine Spheres of Magick, each with its own Sphere cliché. The Spheres can be used individually, or combined for really neat effects. The Spheres are as follows:

- Correspondence: Control over locations.
- Entropy: Control over decay.
- Forces: Control over energy and forces.
- Life: Control over life forms.
- Matter: Control over inanimate matter.
- Mind: Control over the mind, both the Mage's and others'.
- Prime: Control over Quintessence, the stuff of Magick itself.
- Spirit: Control over Spirits and the Spirit Realms.
- Time: Control over time.

There are rumours of a tenth Sphere, with each Tradition holding out on their own theories on such, but nothing has ever been discovered on that subject.

Static vs. Dynamic Magick

Magickal effects are either Static (Coincidental) or Dynamic (Vulgar). A Static effect could be explained away: A lucky coincidence, stage magic, or so on. A Dynamic effect is something that is obviously impossible.

The classic example of Static vs. Dynamic magick: A Mage decides to use Forces to fry a target with electricity.

- The Vulgar version: the Mage winds up and lets fly with a lightning bolt. All the non-Mages standing around say, "Hey! That's not possible!" Paradox descends on the luckless Mage.
- The Static version: an electrical cable above the target breaks, and falls on his head. "Bad luck for him," say all the non-Mages around. Paradox says, "Huh? Did I miss something?"

The difference between the two is crucial to a Mage. Non-Mages (known as Sleepers) still slightly influence reality, but they all do it in mostly the same way. Trying to fight against the ingrained beliefs of six billion people, so you can impose your own will on the universe, is rather difficult. Therefore, Static Magick is easier to use, and less likely to go catastrophically wrong. Dynamic Magick is much more difficult, especially if there are Sleeper witnesses, and can cause Paradox. There is not a single Mage out there who wants to deal with Paradox.

Creating a Magickal Effect

To create an Effect, the player begins by describing the Effect. The GM decides what Spheres are required to create the Effect, and whether or not the Effect is Static or Dynamic. The GM or player (or both) work out the Difficulty of the effect, using the guidelines found under the Spheres and the table below. If Static, the Mage rolls his Arete; if Dynamic, he rolls his highest Sphere that is used in the effect. If the roll meets or exceeds the Difficulty, the effect goes off. If not, the Mage runs the risk of Paradox, as described on page 25.

Effect Parameter	Difficulty
Effect is Dynamic	+5
Sleepers witness a Dynamic Effect	+5 [†]
Effect requires more than one Sphere	+5
Effect lasts until the end of the current Scene	+5
Effect lasts until the end of the current Session	+10
Effect lasts until the end of the current Story	+15
Effect is permanent	+20 [‡]
Target is within line of sight	+0
Target is very familiar to the Mage	+5
Target is familiar to the Mage	+10
Target is unfamiliar to the Mage	+15
Target is completely unknown to the Mage	+20
Effect is a Rote	-5
Mage spends one full round preparing the Effect	-5
Mage spends one full day preparing the Effect	-10

Regardless of modifiers, the easiest that any Magickal Effect can be is a Difficulty of 10.

The Spheres

The next nine sections detail each of the nine Spheres of Magick. They give a basic idea of what you can do with each Sphere, and also mention some specific examples of such.

It is worth noting that the examples given are in no way exhaustive; almost any Sphere can be used for almost any Effect. All that is required is sufficient imagination on the part of the Mage.

[†] This is in addition to the +5 Difficulty for a Dynamic Effect, for a total of +10.

[‡] All permanent Effects require the use of the Prime Effect, Fuel Pattern, whether or not they are a Pattern Effect.

Correspondence

The Sphere of Correspondence is centered on the belief that all points in space are in fact *one* point. The person who can access that one point can access all points. Simple, yet profound. And since distances and areas are just combinations of single locations, it is even possible to stretch, bend or otherwise mutate such distances and areas.

There are Mages in existence that believe that Correspondence is the heart of all Magick. According to these Mages, all other Magick is just an extension of Correspondence. According to all other Mages, these Correspondence junkies are just plain nuts.

Effect	Difficulty
Get exact distances or measurements, sense distortions in space	+0
Cast one's senses to a different area, teleport anything no larger than a breadbox to oneself	+5
Teleport oneself to a different location, view multiple locations simultaneously	+10
Co-locate oneself in two places at once, teleport others to another location	+15
Alter distances or sizes of objects or locations, co-locate different locations in one place, warp or mutate a location	+20

Special Effects

Correspondence is one of the most powerful tools available for spying; simply cast your vision to another location. All senses are affected evenly, and unfortunately the Mage loses the ability to sense his own surroundings (unless the more difficult Effect, viewing multiple locations at once, is used).

Co-locating oneself can be used to devastating effect in combat, allowing one PC to effectively become a Team. The +15 Difficulty assessed in this effect is per additional Team Member "created" using this Effect.

It is impossible to cause injury with Correspondence directly, though one could co-locate a place with another, very hazardous place. Doing so has a Difficulty of +10 per die of damage inflicted, with a minimum Difficulty of 20 total.

Correspondence can be used to boost another cliché, if that cliché involves measuring or altering distances or locations. For each die added to another cliché, the Difficulty is +5.

Entropy

The Sphere of Entropy is concerned with things that run down, break, decay, and fall to chaos. It is a sphere profoundly centered around the inevitability of destruction.

Those who specialize in this Sphere are an odd lot. They have a preoccupation with death and destruction that seems a bit unhealthy. On the other hand, nobody really wants to bother them over it, lest something unhealthy happen to the one doing the bothering...

Effect	Difficulty
Find the most disorderly point in a system, determine the age of an object or person, learn a person's weak point	+0
Control any purely random system, determine the next result in a random system	+5
Diffuse energy, cause an object to crumble to dust through extreme ageing or rot, spontaneously organize something	+10
Cause a living target to age, cause the destruction of a bodily function in another, cause a random event to inflict severe damage on someone	+15
Destroy an idea, cause someone to be forgotten by everyone, cause a person's mental processes to be suddenly scrambled.	+20

Special Effects

Using Entropy to find a weak spot in a target will grant a bonus in a follow-up combat attack. Bonuses can be added at a rate of +5 per die added. At least a bit of duration is required to manage this, and please note that the Difficulty spent on duration is not added as bonus dice.

An Entropy roll can also be used to counter any attack, by diffusing energy (including kinetic energy), just as though it were a combat cliché.

Actually damaging someone with Entropy is difficult, requiring a +15 Difficulty modifier, but the results are pretty impressive. Not to mention quite gruesome. This use of Entropy causes the loss of three dice if successful, rather than the usual one die. If used in non-damaging combat, at the +20 level, it will cause the loss of four dice to the target, which is usually a knockout punch. Further dice of damage cause a +10 Difficulty to the effect per die. If the caster wishes to make a Difficulty 35(!) roll, she can remove one die from a target's cliché *permanently!*

A target can be deprived of his Tools of the Trade by simply ageing or corroding them to uselessness. The Difficulty for this result is +10.

Forces

The Sphere of Forces involves the control and creation of both Minor Forces (most forms of energy) and Major Forces (gravitation, magnetism, and the strong and weak nuclear forces). It is a flashy, dynamic Sphere, that most often is used in a Vulgar fashion just because it's so much fun.

Effect	Difficulty
Sense forces or energy in the area, see in the dark or through walls	+0
Control an already existing Minor Force, discharge static in the area on top of someone, cause a computer to go haywire, call a lightning bolt from the heavens	+5
Spawn a Minor Force, toss a lightning bolt at someone, create a visual or auditory illusion ¹	+10
Control a Major Force, telekinetically move something, slow one's rate of fall, walking on water	+15
Spawn a Major Force, toss a fireball at someone, create a gravity well under someone's feet ²	+20

Special Effects

The use of Forces to simply fry a target is commonplace – even stereotypical - among Mages. Any effect above causes one die of damage per +5 Difficulty selected – so, for example, discharging static on top of a target will cause the loss of one die if they fail to resist. This includes the increased Difficulty needed to Fuel Pattern, for both the Fuel Effect and the Conjunctional use of Prime. So tossing a fireball at someone will cause the loss of six dice. Since this is the maximum a character can have in one cliché, said fireball will probably convert the target into fine ash and charred teeth.

The use of Forces to sense energy can grant a bonus to any cliché that would benefit from such. The Difficulty for this sort of Effect is +5 per die granted.

Finally, Forces can cheerfully be used to increase someone else's Difficulty numbers. Whatever the Mage rolls when using Forces to do so is halved, then added to the target's Difficulty (or subtracted from his result) for whatever task seems appropriate. For example, scrambling a computer will make a L33t Hacker (4) much less of a threat. Likewise, a hologram image could be created using Greater Forces and used to distract an attacking foe; the Difficulty modifier would be subtracted from the target's total result.

1 Spawning a Minor Force requires the Prime Effect, Fuel Pattern

2 So does spawning a Major Force

Life

The Sphere of Life concerns itself with control of life forms. Life forms are divided into Lesser Life (plants and invertebrates) and Greater Life (fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals). Some Life Mages hold out that fish are Lesser Life, and since they believe it, so it is. (Of course, believing that a human being is a Lesser Life pattern doesn't work quite so well...too many human beings believe otherwise.)

One rarely enters the home of a Life Mage without invitation. It is a sure bet that he has some nasty mutated Life Pattern standing guard. (Like a guppy, raised to six feet tall, given legs, arms, a lead pipe and a tattoo that says 'Mom'.)

Effect	Difficulty
Learn details of a Life Pattern, scan an area for Life, learn the best way to treat an injury	+0
Heal, alter or kill a Lesser Life Pattern	+5
Create a Lesser Life Pattern ³ , heal oneself, improve one's own Life Pattern	+10
Heal, alter or kill a Greater Life Pattern, control another's emotions by manipulating their hormones	+15
Assume animal form, turn another into an animal, create a Greater Life Pattern ⁴	+20

Special Effects

The uses of Life are many and varied, and one of the most common uses is healing. The Difficulty listed is per die of damage recovered from injuring combat.

Life Magick may also be used to boost another's clichés. Doing so generally requires a duration parameter, from page 14. As with healing, the Difficulty listed is per die added to a cliché. Raising a cliché above six dice is Vulgar Magick!

When assuming animal form, a Mage gains four dice in the cliché appropriate to the beast form, but cannot use any of his other mundane (non-Magickal) clichés. Additional dice may be purchased, to a maximum of six, by increasing the Difficulty by +5 per die.

Created Life Patterns will have their appropriate cliché at one die per +5 Difficulty selected from the table above – so, for example, a stock Lesser Life Pattern will have two dice in its cliché. As above, the Mage may increase this with a Difficulty of +5 per die added.

3 Creating a Lesser Life Pattern requires the Prime Effect, Fuel Pattern

4 So does creating a Greater Life Pattern

Matter

This Sphere deals with the manipulation of unliving patterns. It is quite useful, but not terribly exciting.

Effect	Difficulty
Find hidden compartments or rooms, find secret doors, analyze the makeup of some object	+0
Create an amount of some unified substance in any shape the Mage desires ⁵	+5
Alter or destroy an existing Matter Pattern, change the properties of a substance, cause two Matter Patterns to become disassociate (so they don't affect each other in any way)	+10
Transmute substances in many neat ways without disrupting its shape, create complex objects containing many different materials ⁶	+15
Create new substances with entirely new properties, alter the properties of existing materials beyond recognition, give paper the strength of six inches of steel	+20

Special Effects

Like many other Spheres, Matter can be used to grant a bonus to appropriate clichés. If knowing the exact properties of a substance would help, the Mage can use Matter to grant himself a one-die bonus on his cliché check.

Replacing Tools of the Trade using Matter is a Difficulty +15 Effect; removing someone else's Tools of the Trade is a Difficulty +10. (There's no need to destroy your opponent's sword; you can just turn it into a rubber chicken.)

Turning regular clothing into bulletproof wonder cloth is Difficulty +20, and will give the Mage two free "hits" before he starts losing cliché dice. Further "hits" can be added at a Difficulty of +10 per "hit".

Creating unified substances can be used in combat (summoning an anvil above someone's head will ruin his whole day). However, the best that can be managed is to cause one die of damage. On the other hand, bonus dice can be permanently granted to an object through Matter refinement, at a Difficulty of +20 per die added.

5 Creating a Unified Matter Pattern requires the use of the Prime Effect, Fuel Pattern

6 So does creating a complex Matter Pattern

Mind

This Sphere deals with affecting a target's mind, either for good or ill. Unlike Forces, Life and Matter, Mind is not a true Pattern, and so the effects do not require Fuel Pattern.

Mind Mages are the most subtle of opponents, given their ability to influence another's emotions and reason. Few people care to cross them. Of course, this could simply be because the Mage makes them not want to cross them, but...

Effect	Difficulty
Improve one's own mind	+0
Send a mental impulse to another, read another's emotions or surface thoughts, scan the area for thinking minds	+5
Communicate telepathically, create an illusion in another's mind, probe another's thoughts	+10
Take possession of another's body, manipulate another's memories	+15
Un-link a mind from its body, bind a freed mind to another body	+20

Special Effects

Affecting any mind beyond that of the Mage himself requires a Familiarity parameter, from page 14.

Mind can be used to add bonus dice to any cliché. The Difficulty to do so is +5 per die added, much as with any other Sphere. The effects last but a single roll. Alternately, a mental illusion or thought impulse at just the wrong time can wreck another's concentration. Using Mind in this way will raise the Difficulty of the target's cliché check by half the total amount rolled by the Mage.

Unlinking your mind from your body; unlinking another's mind from his; re-linking your mind to the other's body. Sounds like a recipe for immortality, right? Remember to include the Permanent duration parameter from page 14, and also remember that this sort of thing is always Dynamic Magick. Plus, someone's bound to notice, and try to "correct" the situation. Sometimes the someone is a government official, determined to get to the bottom of an identity official; other times, it is the family and friends of the victim.

Manipulating memories takes as long to do as the memories run – that is, the memories must be replayed or erased in real time. Replacing one memory with a false memory actually takes three times as long – once to scan the original memory, once to erase it, and once to write in the new memory.

Prime

Quintessence is the basic energy of Magick, and also the building blocks of reality. Prime is the Sphere of Quintessence. Students of Prime learn to manipulate Quintessence in several ways. Any Mage that wants to do any serious work had best learn some Prime.

Every Mage believes his own choice of Sphere is the centerpiece of the entire set, the most important Sphere of Magick. Prime Mages are no exception. They just happen to be right...

Effect	Difficulty
Store Quintessence (essentially gaining one free die of Arete), sense for the presence of a Node	+0
Fuel a Pattern Effect (Forces, Life or Matter)	+5
Create a Talisman, “store” or “loan” a die of Arete outside of one’s body	+10
Cause the Quintessence of an existing Pattern to escape, force a Paradox Backlash on a target	+15
Recover a lost die of Arete, remove one die of Paradox	+20

Special Effects

Prime is one of the most important tools in any Mage's toolkit—and one of the most useless on its own. That said, however, it's got some really clever stunts.

One of the low-Difficulty tricks is storing Quintessence⁷. The Difficulty is not high for this, but first the Mage has to find some free Quintessence. This is often found near a Node, and Nodes are often guarded by big nasties. One free “die” of Arete can be gleaned using this power. This die cannot be rolled, but can be used for pumping and such. Using a Difficulty of +20, the free die can be pulled from anywhere.

Another use for Prime is to store a die of Arete elsewhere, or to give it to someone else. If stored, the die of Arete can be recovered later using the Store Quintessence effect, to replace a lost die. This is a complete replacement; the recovered die can be rolled.

Causing the Quintessence of a target to escape usually causes damage to the target; they will lose one die of Arete (or any other cliché, if they don't have Arete) each time this Effect is used on them.

Creating a Talisman is a complex and involved procedure, and if you want the Talisman to be permanent, you have to give up one *permanent* die of Arete for every two dice of clichés granted the Talisman. Of course, this die can be replaced through character advancement, as described on page 27, but it cannot simply be recovered as normal.

7 Quintessence is covered in detail on page 24.

Spirit

The Spirit World is very real; this Sphere allows those with the knowledge to tap into it. The realm of Spirits is known as the Umbra, and the barrier between the Umbra and the real world (known as the Tellurian) is called the Gauntlet. The Umbra mirrors the Tellurian in almost all ways, save that there are no people there other than fellow Umbral travellers. Instead, there are Spirits.

The strength of the Gauntlet is measured in dice, as given in the table at the bottom of the page. Basically, the less natural or spiritual the area, the higher the Gauntlet.

Effect	Difficulty
Sense the presence of a Spirit, test the strength of the Gauntlet, sense if someone is looking across the Gauntlet	+0
Call a Spirit to aid the Mage, look through the Gauntlet to the other side	+0
Cross the Gauntlet	+5
Bind a Spirit to an object, create a Spirit Realm, alter the local Gauntlet by one die	+10
Travel to the Deep Umbra, the Sphere Realms, or Horizon Realms	+20

Special Effects

Calling or binding a Spirit, peering through or crossing the Gauntlet, or creating a Spirit Realm, are all contested rolls. The Spirit or Gauntlet being affected rolls their dice, and their result is added to the Difficulty of the Effect. As an example: A Dreamspeaker (4) with Spirit (2) wants to cross a Gauntlet (3). The Gauntlet rolls a 10, so the Dreamspeaker has a Difficulty of 15 to cross the Gauntlet. Luckily, Spirit is the Traditional Sphere of a Dreamspeaker, so he gains +4 to his two-die roll (+1 per die of Dreamspeaker).

Binding a Spirit to an object creates a Talen or Fetish. A Talen is one-shot, and uses only the listed Difficulty. A Fetish is permanent, with a +20 Duration parameter. Either way, the Talen or Fetish will have one of the summoned Spirit's clichés, at the same level as the Spirit.

Travel to the Deep Umbra, the Sphere Realms, or Horizon Realms is beyond the scope of this book. Let's simply point out that it's weird out there.

Gauntlet Strengths

- 1d Nodes, ley lines or crop circles
- 2d Werewolf lairs or Faerie hangouts
- 3d Unspoiled forest or mountain pools
- 4d Rural areas or small towns
- 5d Cities and large towns
- 6d Downtown, or in a Technocratic lair

Time

If there is a more dangerous Sphere to be mucking about with, this writer could not say. Not only are the effects likely to be earth-shattering, but the most powerful and dangerous Paradox Spirits enforce the use of this Sphere.

Having said that, however, it's worth pointing out that Time can be the most fun Sphere to play with. Nothing makes a Game Master's hair go gray as quickly as time travel...

Effect	Difficulty
Tell the exact time relative to any event, detect an effect in the time flow	+0
See into the past or future	+5
Slow or speed up time	+10
Freeze time, "hang" a spell until a certain time passes	+15
Travel into the future	+20

Special Effects

There are a few instances when having perfect timing will help with another cliché; a Mage can use Time Magick to enhance a cliché. The Difficulty is +10 per one die added to another cliché.

Seeing into the past is relatively straightforward to adjudicate; use Duration Parameters to determine Difficulty based on how far back in time you wish to look. Seeing into the future is more difficult to adjudicate, and requires considerable forethought on the part of the GM; mechanics-wise, however, it is handled identically to looking into the past.

Altering time rate can give a character a remarkable advantage in combat. Two dice can be granted to any non-Magickal cliché when engaging in damaging combat by altering the rate of time.

Freezing a target in time can also be helpful; the Mage can gain three dice to any non-Magickal cliché in damaging combat.

Time can be used to seriously muck with another's ability to carry out tasks. The Mage can add the total result of his Magick roll to a target's Difficulty when using Time against the target.

Travelling into the future is done by shifting the character through a "null time" space, by definition inviolable until the desired time is reached. However, any character who attempts to travel *backward* in time will be immediately, permanently and totally destroyed by the massive Paradox backlash that ensues.

Quintessence

The so-called Fifth Element of the ancient Greeks, Quintessence is the central building block of reality, and the most important substance in the world of the Mage. Existing in a halfway state between matter and energy, Quintessence can be used to fuel a Magickal Effect or to stabilize a Magickal creation.

For the most part, Quintessence is handled as a Tool Of The Trade in **RISUS**: Either you have it, or you don't. A Mage who has lost all of her dice in Arete can be considered to be out of Quintessence. The Sphere of Prime (covered on page 21) is all about manipulating Quintessence.

Tass

On occasion, and usually within Nodes, Quintessence can be found in a semi-solid form. This is known as Tass. The appearance of Tass is subjective, and usually conforms to the viewer's Paradigm. One full measure of Tass (occasionally referred to as a dram) can be absorbed by a Mage to replace a lost die of Arete, or can be burned to add one die to a roll for a Magickal Effect.

Nodes

In many places within the world, the boundary between our world (the Tapestry) and the spirit world (the Umbra) is weak enough for magical energy to leak across. These locations are known to Mages as Nodes. Nodes are often fought over, either by rival factions of Mages, or by Mages and Garou.

Nodes are awash in Quintessence, and usually contain a measure of Tass as well. Nodes are rated in dice. This rating is the total number of dice that may be gleaned from the Node using Prime. Dice gleaned in this manner recover at a rate of one per day.

It is also possible to remove Tass from the Node, though this takes longer to recover. Each dram of Tass removed reduces the Node by one die. These dice recover at a rate of one per week.

Mages creating an Effect within a Node gain a +1 to their roll for every die within the Node.

Countermagick

Of course, Mages do not just stand around and watch each other throw spells; any good Mage worth his salt can countermagick another's spells.

A countermagick roll is made using the same Sphere as the casting Mage, or with Arete if the casting Mage is using a Static Effect. If the countering Mage defeats the casting Mage, it is treated as a normal failure in all ways, including the chance to gain Paradox as listed in the next section.

Paradox

The collective belief in reality can bite the Mage in a really harsh way: Defying it can bring the disbelief of six million people down on the head of one Mage. This is called *Paradox*.

Whenever a Mage attempts Magick, he risks gaining Paradox. The amount gained depends on the Magick being worked. If the effect was Static and the roll a failure, the Mage will gain one Paradox if any of his dice came up ones. If the effect was Dynamic, the Mage will gain one Paradox just for attempting the spell, and if the roll fails, the Mage will gain one Paradox for *each* die that comes up one.

Each time that Paradox is gained, the Mage immediately rolls dice equal to his (newly adjusted) total Paradox. For each six that is rolled, the Mage will lose one point of Paradox, but will also suffer one point of Aggravated Damage!

Paradox Spirits

Rather than cause a Paradox Backlash, the GM may instead decide that the Mage will be visited by a Paradox Spirit. The Mage still loses the indicated Paradox, but the Paradox Spirit will insist that the Mage undo the Effect that caused the Paradox, or else. The “or else” is often not pleasant.

Paradox Spirits will have the following clichés rated to one die per six rolled on the Paradox Backlash roll: Paradox Spirit (good for bashing things), Arete, and the Sphere used that caused the Paradox. Paradox Spirits will either use their personal cliché to pummel the Mage, or, if that isn't working, will use Magick to either erase the Effect, or to erase the Mage.

Talismans

Talismans are magickal artifacts created by Mages. The primary reason to create a Talisman is simple: To allow another Mage to create an Effect that would normally be beyond him. Talismans have their own clichés, usually Arete and Spheres. Arete for Talismans may not be double-pumpable; nor may Spheres. For every die of Arete, a Talisman may also have one Rote. It is important to realize that whenever a Mage uses a Talisman, he rolls only the dice that the Talisman has available!

Where do the dice for Talismans come from? Why, from the Mage! Any dice placed in the Talisman cliché is referred to as a **purchase** die, and will gain the Talisman dice for clichés.

For every purchase die a Mage invests in a Talisman, the Talisman gains two dice to spend on clichés. Some Talismans are created by binding a Spirit to a physical object; these are called Fetishes. Fetishes gain three cliché dice for each purchase die, but require that the Mage attempting to use it roll his Spirit Sphere vs the Fetish's dice (those paid by the Mage) before using it the first time. Talismans or Fetishes that may only be used once gain four dice for clichés for every purchase die.

Gaining Talismans after Character Creation

There are two ways to gain a Talisman. The first is to find it or be given it. Unfortunately, gaining a Talisman in this manner is not permanent; the item will soon leave the Mage's possession. If the Mage wishes to keep the Talisman, he will need to invest Advancement Points (page 27) in it. The Advancement Roll necessary to gain the Talisman is made with the purchase dice of the Talisman. Note that a Mage cannot simply whistle up a new Talisman this way; the opportunity to gain the Talisman must exist.

Alternately, the Mage may *create* a Talisman. In this case, the Mage must permanently expend one die of Arete for each purchase die of Talisman he creates, and succeed in either a Prime Roll at Difficulty 30, or a contested Spirit Roll against the target Spirit's highest cliché + 20!

Losing Talismans

A character may choose to expend a Talisman's dice by "Taking The Hit" with the Talisman. However, should a Talisman be reduced to zero (or fewer) dice through such action, the Talisman is destroyed and erased from the character's sheet.

A Talisman may also be lost as a consequence of a player's action, beyond merely "Taking The Hit". A Talisman lost in such a manner may be replaced by succeeding in one Advancement Roll. No bonus dice are gained for this roll; rather, the Talisman is replaced. The roll is made with the Talisman's purchase dice, not with the dice the Talisman itself possesses.

Sanctum

A Sanctum is an area of altered reality, where the controlling Mage defines the laws of the universe. The obvious advantage of this is that, within a Sanctum, Vulgar Magicks may instead be Static!

Within his own Sanctum, all of the Mage's Effects are considered Coincidental, for both Difficulty and Paradox. Furthermore, Sanctums are stocked with handy bits of equipment and ingredients. Dice in Sanctum may be burned to pump a Magickal Effect roll. Dice so burned are permanently lost, but can be replaced through Character Advancement (page 27). Note that the act of burning dice counts as 'non-trivial successful use'.

Dice in Sanctum may also be rolled as a Team Member when a Mage is hiding something (like himself) within, and rolling to avoid detection.

Character Advancement

Character Advancement in RISUS Mage is tracked using Advancement Points (AP). Each cliché on the character's sheet can gain Advancement Points. In particular, an individual cliché will gain an AP under each of the two circumstances:

- The first time in the session that a Mage successfully uses the cliché at a non-trivial moment; and
- The first time in the session that a Mage rolls all sixes on a cliché roll.

In addition, each character can gain anywhere from one to eight "free" Advancement Points per session. These AP are "free" because they are not automatically assigned to any one cliché; however, before any Advancement Checks are made, the Mage must have no unassigned AP. AP can be assigned to any cliché with five dice or less, or to a new cliché not currently possessed by the character.

"Free" AP can be gained for the following:

- One for participating in the session;
- One for at least attempting to role-play the character;
- One if the character made a significant discovery;
- One if the character displayed heroic behaviour;
- One if the character solved a significant challenge;
- One to three if a Story was completed, based upon the difficulty of the Story.

The Advancement Roll

At the end of any session, a character may attempt an Advancement Roll for any cliché that has Advancement Points invested into it. This includes for new clichés, which are assumed to have one die for purposes of this roll. The character rolls the cliché's dice, and if he matches or goes under the total AP for the cliché, then the cliché increases by one die, and all AP are removed from the cliché. If, however, the Advancement Roll fails, the character will lose a number of AP from the cliché equal to its current number of dice.

Rotes

Once a Mage has successfully created any Magickal Effect, that Effect can be codified into a Rote. This costs one "free" AP and will lower the Difficulty of the Effect by five. Remember, however, that the minimum Difficulty for any Effect, even a Rote, is ten.

Mages may freely trade Rotes, rather like sharing MP3 files. (Heck, given that the Virtual Adepts are certain they're just running shell scripts, maybe there's a Rotes'ter program out there.)

Adversaries

Mages generally work towards the betterment of mankind. However, not every Mage does so; a few work simply for the betterment of themselves. Further, not every Mage agrees on what betters Humanity. Such differences make up all the spice in life, of course, but when you have the power to re-write reality as you see fit...well, debates can sometimes get very spirited.

Mages find themselves divided into four factions. The Traditions are the 'central' faction, being interested in maintaining the balance between the supernatural and the mundane.

The Technocracy

The Progenitors, the Void Engineers, Iteration X, the Syndicate, the New World Order. These five Conventions work to maintain the status quo among the mundane, and hold that unrestrained use of Magick is dangerous to mortals. They seek to stamp out creativity, randomness, and all supernatural activity beyond their own. Each Technocratic Convention has one or more Conventional Spheres:

- Iteration X: Forces and Matter
- New World Order: Mind and Time
- Progenitors: Life and Entropy
- Syndicate: Prime
- Void Engineers: Spirit and Correspondence

Men In Black

These are the enforcers of the New World Order. Whenever a Mythic Remnant (meaning a Dragon, Chimera, or similar) runs amok, or whenever a Mage cuts loose a particularly Vulgar Effect, or whenever their services are needed, the Men In Black arrive in their black limousine, and control the situation. Controlling the situation means modifying memories, removing evidence, and generally making sure anyone in the area does not notice what happened, so they can go about their happy lives. Thanks to the movie Men In Black, starring Will Smith and Tommy Lee Jones, most Sleepers consider the Men In Black to be the good guys...

Men In Black always travel in threes, one of which will have the Sphere of Mind. The other two will be selected to have Spheres likely to be useful in the current situation. When defeated, they melt into puddles of goo, which quickly evaporates, leaving behind no evidence of their own Magickally-created nature.

Man In Black: Arete [2], Sphere [2], Government Official (2)

HIT Mark V

The HIT (Hyperdyne Intelligent Technologies) Mark V, developed by Iteration X, is a robotic chassis with a flesh exterior. The chassis includes a wide variety of weapons, and is well defended against attacks. The HIT Mark's weapons are Magickally enhanced, granting the HIT Mark the ability to roll seven dice on all attacks, regardless of its clichés' levels.

HIT Marks are the special operations soldiers of the Technocracy. Should a Chantry need raiding, or a Mythic Remnant destroyed, the HIT Marks are deployed. While the HIT Mark would seem an outstanding example of Vulgar Magick, it is in fact quite Static. After all, everyone has seen The Terminator...

HIT Mark V: Cybernetic Killing Machine (7), Walking Encyclopedia of Mythic Remnants [2], Willpower (1)

Superiors

The Superiors are genetically-created supermen. Unfortunately, they tend to be psychotic. They were created by the Progenitors as an alternative to the HIT Marks, due to the fact that under most mundane examination, they are merely human. Typically they are trained as assassins or soldiers.

Superior: Assassin (8), Crazy Psycho With No Real Reason To Live (3), Hook: Psychotic

The Marauders

The Marauders wish to re-integrate the supernatural into everyday life. They are also quite insane. However, their insanity gives them one enormous advantage: In effect, they live in a world of their own, a world with a population of one. In such a world, anything they do automatically conforms to consensual reality.

Yep, you guessed it: They don't suffer from Paradox. Or rather, they can gain Paradox, but never suffer from its deleterious effects. Unfortunately, other Mages can and do, and this is the primary reason that the Traditions and the Conventions opposed the Marauders. Paradox Spirits flock around Marauders like flies, and though they cannot touch the Marauder, they will descend without mercy upon any hapless Mage in the Marauder's vicinity.

Marauders are often found in the company of Dragons and other Mythic Remnants. Having such critters running amok also fails to endear the Marauders to their more...conventional brethren.

Marauder: Scholar of the Arcane (3), Arete [2], three Spheres at (1), Follower (Mythic Remnant) (1)

The Nephandi

These Mages seek nothing more or less than the destruction of everything. Why? Because they believe that destruction is why the universe is here! Once it's all gone, the universe can be reborn.

Yep. Just as nuts as the Marauders.

The Nephandi come from the deep Umbra; nobody's really sure exactly where. They arrive in our world, corrupt a few innocents, then perform some horribly cruel atrocity on as many people as they can. Most Nephandi that a Mage will deal with are actually Barabbi: Human Mages that have been corrupted by a Nephandus.

Barabbi: Former Euthanatos (1), Entropy (3), Arete [3]

Werewolves

Werewolves are the ultimate eco-terrorists, fighting to protect the world from corruption. For the most part, Werewolves and Mages do not interfere with each other. The exception is at Nodes (which Werewolves call Caerns). These they have been known to fight over, a lot. On the flip side, frequently Werewolves and Mages will band together against a common enemy.

Werewolves are divided into thirteen Tribes, each with their own personalities and stereotypes. However, one thing is common among Werewolves: They all want to fight. They fight because they believe that they are the last, best hope for the Earth. They particularly hate the Technocracy, the Nephandi and the Vampires.

The most important thing to remember about Werewolves is that they gain three bonus dice, on top of their cliché dice, when in their hybrid, half-man half-wolf form.

Werewolf: Big Hairy Nasty with claws [5]

Vampires

These are the undead, the drinkers of blood. They are generally unpleasant to have around, but Mages and Vampires generally leave each other alone. They can control minds, and use supernatural strength, and move really quick; all that Vampire sort of stuff. If you are not using **RISUS** Vampire: The Masquerade, just assume that Vampiric supernatural powers are lumped into the Vampire cliché.

Vampires are organized into Clans, and each city will have a Prince. A Prince will try to put himself on good terms with the local Mages. Lesser Vampires, often known as Fledgelings, might try to take on a Mage.

Fledgeling Vampire: Vampire [4], Biker Buddy (2)

Vampire Prince: Vampire [6], Well-Respected Businessman (4), Power Behind the Scenes (3), Novelist (1)

Umbrood

The denizens of the Umbra, the Spirits, are referred to as Umbrood by the Awakened. They range in rank from one to six.

Umbrood will always have the Spirit cliché, which is both the Sphere of Spirit and a cliché for just being a Spirit. Even without Arete, an Umbrood can peek across or break the Gauntlet. Magickal Effects created by Umbrood are always Static when performed in the Umbra.

Spirits may have Arete as a cliché, at half the listed value (because it's double-pumpable). They may also have Spheres, or (if you are using RISUS Werewolf or RISUS Vampire) may have Gifts or Disciplines.

Gaffling: Spirit (1)

Jagling: Spirit (2), any other cliché (2)

Perceptor: Spirit (4), any other three clichés (4)

Umbral Lord: Spirit (6), any other five clichés (6)

The Inquisition

“Suffer not a witch to live.” Thanks to that single mistranslated line, hundreds of Sleepers, aware of the presence of Mages, seek them out to persecute and destroy them. And yet the sad joke is that the Inquisition was initially started by the Celestial Chorus and the Order of Hermes.

But it would be a grave mistake to assume that the agents of the Inquisition are fanatical idiots. Most are scholars as well as hunters, making them all the more dangerous in their aims.

Though most Inquisitors are trained in combat, they are more likely to call upon other assets – such as the police, or the Technocrats – to deal with a Mage.

Witch Hunter: Arcane Scholar (3), Priest (5), Swordsman (2)

The Arcanum

Little is known about this shadowy agency, save that they study all supernatural activity – such as Mages. They are believed to be an offshoot of the Inquisition, or possibly a breakaway group of the Rosicrucians or Freemasons.

Unlike the Inquisition, the Arcanum does not seek to destroy; merely to study. The existence of the Arcanum gives many Mages pause; if the Sleepers were to learn of the Ascension War, their reactions, and the effect of this knowledge on their well-being, would be difficult to judge.

Arcanum Scholar: Researcher [3], Cunning Investigator (2), Scholar of the Supernatural (2)

Other Games by the Author

GURPS Caverns and Creatures – a 160-page fantasy role-playing supplement for the Generic Universal Role-Playing System. Just add a copy of GURPS Lite 3rd Edition, and start playing!

RISUS Star Wars – The cinematic feel of Star Wars, and the cinematic play-style of RISUS – a perfect match! Includes rules on The Force, alien races, gadgets and starships, all in only twelve statement-sized pages!

RISUS Vampire: The Masquerade – Everyone's favourite gothic horror game, boiled down to thirty-two statement-sized pages! Playing a Vampire was never this easy.

RISUS Werewolf: The Apocalypse – The **RISUS** guide to being big and furry, in only thirty-two statement-sized pages. Take on the Wyrms, hunt Vampires, and get completely raged out!

All games are completely free to download and play.

Check them all out at:

<http://www.tailkinker.net/rpg.htm>

RISUS was created by S. John Ross, of Cumberland Games (<http://www222.pair.com/sjohn/risus.htm>). This document mentions specific rules from **RISUS**, particularly the Teamwork Rules and elements of the Character Creation system, but does not directly quote from the **RISUS** rulebook. As such, it qualifies as a Type A, or **RISUS** Supplemental, document. The author would like to express his gratitude to Mr. Ross for such a neat game.