

Theoretical Magic Terminology

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The definitions below form the fundamentals of Magical Theory. They describe the common concepts, in an exact fashion.

Though based on and incorporating Torg concepts (such as "Living or "tool"), it is intended for use in describing spell effects.

By describing spell effects with precision, arguments over their intent or exact meaning can be avoided.

The concepts below are from or implied by Torg's metaphysics or magic system. Many are extensions, but all partake of the spirit of Torg magic.

The definitions below have not been factored according to what would be considered scientific. In fact, great effort has been made to avoid scientific or scientific-sounding terminology. This helps reinforce the feel of magic, while also emphasizing its independence from scientific concepts like physics, chemistry, and so forth.

What is Magic?

Magic is the use of symbols to create results, the symbols resembling the desired result. Magic possesses certain inherent properties that define its character and laws (or Principles) that govern its behavior. The properties of Magic can be discovered, codified and understood.

Magic: Creating results in the natural world through symbolic manipulation.

Principles: The Principles are the laws that govern and define magic. Examples: the Principle of Definition.

Natural World: The sphere of existence which proceeds according to natural laws. How the world works without the interference of magic, miracles, or psionics.

Synonym: nature.

Natural Laws: The physical laws of the natural world. Includes causality, the laws of physics, heredity, and other "scientific" laws. Technology (i.e. tools of the Tech axiom) proceeds according to the dictates of natural laws.

All dimensions have natural laws. Natural laws can vary between dimensions, but are assumed to be invariant throughout the same dimension, unless specified otherwise. By default, the natural laws of a given dimension are assumed to match those of the "real world," unless otherwise specified (such as in Aysle, where gravity forms planes).

Synonym: physical laws; the laws of nature.

Supernatural: Denotes something magical that exists outside or alongside the natural world.

Examples: Magic is a supernatural force. Elementals are supernatural beings.

Synonym: magical.

Supernatural World: Includes all things magical, such as superstitions, spells, magical creatures, hexes, wishes, and so forth.

Synonym: magical world.

The Living and the Unliving

The difference between Living and Unliving is an important distinction in magic and in Torg as a whole. In the metaphysics of Torg, the Living can make and use tools, while the Unliving can be made into or used as tools. The Living can create contradictions, while the Unliving cannot use tools so cannot create contradictions.

The following definitions encapsulate these concepts.

Alive: The state of being infused with life.

Creature: Something that is suffused with life and hence is alive. Some creatures may have minds, some may not. Humans, dogs, insects, bacteria, trees and so forth are all creatures.

Being: Creatures that have a mind. The Living, also known as Kindred.

Mind: That capacity or quality of a being that enables them to be aware of the world and their experiences, to think and feel, and to make choices. Possessing a mind is what allows beings to create and use tools.

Living: Creatures with minds and hence consciousness. Living beings can create and use tools. Even the "undead" are Living beings, though they are inherently unnatural and may not be alive. Living beings are also known as Kindred. Each type of Kindred has its own associated Arcane Knowledge.

Non-living: Of the Living. This includes cast off parts of the Living (ex.: a dead body, hair, and horns), products of the Living (ex.: spittle, solid and

liquid waste, ambergris, and milk) and that which has been refined from either of the previous (ex.: glue, leather, and ivory). The Non-living are affected by the same Arcane Knowledge as the Living being the Non-living came from (or the Material Arcane Knowledge).

Unliving: Anything that isn't Living or Non-living. Most of the Unliving are not and have never been alive. Ex.: rocks, swords, electricity.

Some creatures are mindless and hence Unliving. Ex.: plants, lichen, viruses, bacteria. Unliving creatures are governed by the Plant Arcane Knowledge or Life.

Tool: Anything Living beings use to accomplish tasks, excluding inherent abilities that are not governed by an axiom. Tools (and the manufacture, use, and existence of same) are governed by axioms. Ex.: an adze, democracy, a spell.

Most tools are created by the Living, some are naturally occurring (such as a branch). Naturally occurring items are considered to be tools only while being used (otherwise they are implements, see below), and their existence is not governed by an axiom (only their use). The manufacture of such tools is only governed by axioms if it is a deliberate act of the Living.

For example, a branch fallen from a tree is not a tool until the Living attempt to use it. Its use is governed by axioms, its existence is not, and the manufacture of the branch is governed by axioms only if the Living being is doing it deliberately (by breaking the branch off). Some branches fall on their own, this occurrence is not governed by an axiom.

Implement: A natural or manufactured item that can potentially be used as a tool, but which is not being used as one at the moment. Any potential contradiction is so insignificant, the Everlaw of One will not act to disconnect the owner.

Inherent abilities: An organic capability or the function of an organic capability. Both the Living and Unliving have certain inherent abilities, such as sight, the ability to obtain nourishment through photosynthesis, or the ability to fly.

Most inherent abilities are not tools. For example, the eyes of a person allow it to see and sight is an inherent ability of a person. Neither the person's sight, nor their eyes are tools. The use of most inherent abilities is not governed by any axiom.

Some inherent abilities cannot exist without a sufficiently high axiom level. Ex.: the ability of a dragon to breathe fire (which requires Magic), the genetic enhancements common to Akashan client races (which depend on

Tech), the heightened ability scores of elves (which also rely on Magic). Inherent abilities with an axiom requirement are considered to be tools, those without an axiom requirement are not tools.

Most inherent abilities function according to natural laws; such inherent abilities usually do not have an axiom requirement, and these inherent abilities comprise the majority of those abilities that do not have an axiom requirement.

Corporeality

When dealing with magic, the state of a target is significant. Some targets are corporeal (like a rock) while others are intangible (like a ghost). In many cases it is easier or simpler to affect corporeal targets rather than incorporeal targets.

The state of a target is determined by what it is made up of. A rock is composed of stone, while a ghost is composed of unnatural magical energies.

The definitions below are used to describe the state of something as well as what it is made up of.

Material: That which something is composed of, like stone, water, or light. All materials are either concrete ("physical") or insubstantial ("intangible"). Stone is physical, light is intangible.

The Physical: That which is composed of concrete material(s). Ex.: rocks, clocks, dogs, people, water, air. Can be Living, Non-living, or Unliving.

The Intangible: That which is composed of non-tangible material(s). Usually Unliving. Ex.: spell effects, magnetism, electricity, flames, light, ghosts.

The Immaterial: That which is not composed of any material and itself is not a material. The immaterial cannot exist on its own, but must be attached to other things to exist (these other things being the "context"). This includes emotions, memories, information, and so forth.

Spell Terminology

Spells themselves have several different aspects (or "characteristics", see below). When discussing the characteristics of a spell, the following terms are used.

Spell: An specific evocation of magical energy. When enacted (or "cast"), it creates a spell effect.

Cast: To enact a spell by manipulating symbols ("components").

Component: The symbols used to cast a spell.

Purpose: What a spell is intended to do. Is considered to be one of the spell's extents (see "Extents" below).

Spell Effect: The actual magical field created by a spell that enacts its purpose. (Also just "effect.")

Backlash: Mental stun damage mages's take when casting a spell.

Extents: The boundaries on a spell effect, they determine the extent of the spell. Spells only have an effect within their extents, they cannot affect anything outside them.

Duration: The extent of time- how long the spell lasts.

Range: The extent of space- how far away an object can be. (See "object", below.

Area of effect: A specific zone, the spell affects all valid objects within the zone.

Aspect: A additional element of the spell that modifies the spell effect.

Spell Manipulation: Temporarily altering a spell as it is cast, to extend the range, etc.

Expire: To end a spell, usually by its duration elapsing.

Types of Spells

Impressed: A spell that doesn't release its effect immediately; it only takes effect when triggered by its owner.

Focused: A spell effect that is attached to an object. It can either affect the object ("is focused on") or the effect can radiate from the object ("is anchored on").

Charge: One spell effect that can release multiple instances of the effect.
Ex: A spell that shoots three lightning bolts.

Contingency Spell: A spell that can sense objects (via a Divination Aspect) and can react based on chosen criteria: causing the spell to expire, to release a charge, to change targets, etc.

Ward: A common type of spell that is most often used to guard ("ward") or trap an area. Though common, it is very sophisticated: It is focused on an area, has an impressed effect, and a contingency that releases the effect.

Summoning: Bringing an object here from somewhere else. Usually involves apportionment magic.

The Objects of Spells

Magic can affect a great many things. When selecting or identifying the target of a spell or describing the potential targets an Arcane Knowledge could affect, the following categories are used.

Object: All things that are potential targets for spells. Everything any magical effect could act upon. In general, all objects can be targets of a spell and anything that isn't an object cannot be directly targeted by a spell (see below). The following definitions describe categories of objects.

Item: An Unliving or Non-living article with a specific, persistent form. Can be physical or intangible. Includes a rock, a leaf, a rainbow, a thigh bone, a piece of leather, etc. The component(s) of an item are the material(s) out of which it is formed.

Device: An Unliving or Non-living item used by the Living. Devices are used as tools and are most often manufactured or refined by the Living. Ex.: a belt, a sword, an arch, a wagon, a staff.

The components of a device are smaller devices, items, and substances. In the case of a unitary device, such as a staff, the piece of wood it was fashioned out of is the component.

In the case of unrefined or unmanufactured devices, its current use determines its classification. A branch fallen from a tree is an item, when picked up and used by the Living as a club, it is a device.

Being: Living creatures (that is, creatures with a mind). Usually physical, but can be intangible (ghosts, for example). Ex.: ants, dogs, humans, giants. Kindred. The components of a creature are various items and substances (such as bodily organs and blood, for humans).

Substance: That which lacks definite form. Ex.: flames, water, dirt, gasses, metal shavings, mercury. Can be physical or intangible. The components of a substance are undifferentiated individual particles, the smallest possible division of the substance.

Compound: A mixture or combination of more than one substance. Compounds are almost always created by the Living.

Force: Forces emanate throughout a defined area and exert influence to affect objects (that is potential targets of spells). Ex.: magic, electricity, wind, tides, heat, gravity, darkness, active spell effects, emotions.

Forces can arise out of the concerted movement of substances, such as the force of a wave on the ocean, but not all do. Flames are fire as a substance, but an explosion is fire as a force. Forces are usually intangible, although waves and sound are examples of physical forces, while emotions and information are examples of immaterial forces.

Information: Information is knowledge about anything. Information is immaterial, and must be contained within a record, such as a memory, a letter, and so forth.

Information can only be directly targeted by divination effects. Other types of effects can target records, but not the information itself.

Subject: the exact target (or potential target) of a specific spell. That which the effect of a specific spell is intended to affect. Ex.: the subject of a Strength spell is a Folk. The subject of a spell almost always determines the Arcane Knowledge of the spell.

The Nature of Objects

The nature of an object is determined by its characteristics. Many spells are designed to affect the characteristics of an object, such as a spell which increases the strength of a person. Spells that affect an object's characteristics must target the object as a whole. Mages divide the characteristics of objects into three broad categories: properties, components, and conditions.

Characteristic: An innate quality of an object that determines its nature. Ex.: what the object is made of, how big it is, or what state it is in. A generic or collective term for any and all of the below.

Most characteristics of an object can be discerned by using True Knowledge.

Property: Properties are intrinsic attributes of an object. In general, properties are persistent- they remain the same until acted upon by something else. Ex.: volume, mass, weight, name, color, attributes, skills. Discerning properties is a function of True Knowledge, as they are essential attributes of an object.

Components: Factors that comprise the form of some objects. Blood, bone, muscle and so forth are components of humans. Gears, springs and axles are components of a clock. All Non-living objects were once components of a creature.

Condition: Conditions affect objects. They involve a distinct change

from the default nature of the affected. Conditions tend to change naturally over time. Ex.: sickness, rust, damage, insanity.

Conditions can be physical, intangible, or immaterial. Most immaterial things are conditions. Negative or harmful conditions are known as maladies.

Discerning conditions is a function of the Time Arcane Knowledge, as conditions are temporary and changeable. (Divining what conditions can affect a given object is a function of True Knowledge, as that is a property of the object.)

Illness is a condition, and so cannot be directly apported, but can be created or destroyed. Magic can create most conditions, but they fade away after the spell expires.

The Components of Creatures

Much of magic is aimed at affecting creatures (including Living beings). For the purposes of magic, creatures are understood to be made up of the following:

Life Energy: An energy governed by the Life Arcane Knowledge. This energy is what makes something alive, and all creatures are suffused with Life energies.

Body: The form of a creature, the vessel for its mind or spirit. A body is normally physical, but magical or spiritual forces can create and sustain intangible bodies. Ghosts, for example, have spectral bodies composed of unnatural energies that are sustained by magic.

Normally, one mind is housed within one body, however it is possible in extreme conditions to have one mind housed among many bodies or multiple minds in one body. A body without a mind is an inert husk.

Mind: The mental essence of a being. The possession of a mind is what distinguishes beings from creatures. A mind is immaterial- it cannot exist without a body. Minds can be projected beyond their body, but cannot ever leave it. Magical spells (or other effects) can move a mind from one body to another.

In those cosms where spiritual energies allow a mind to exist beyond the death of its body, minds are also known as souls. Such matters are spiritual in nature, the province of priests and shamans, and magical spells, and magic in general, is not concerned with the existence of a soul. Spiritual energies cannot be directly affected by magical spells (and have no

corresponding Arcane Knowledge), so most mages don't spend much time studying the soul.

Miscellaneous Definitions

This is a catch-all category for definitions which do not fit under any other heading. In addition, the definitions from other articles, such as *dimension*, from *Worlds Without End*, are also significant.

Breed: A specific bloodline of creatures. Ex.: fox terriers, humans, willow trees.

Persistent: Something that continues to exist in its current state, until acted upon by something else.

Event: Interaction over time of more than one object. Ex.: a fight, a conversation, a handshake. Events occur over a period of time and within a given space, so require an Area of Effect to affect. (Divination magicians can detect events.)

Unnatural: Something that violates the natural world. Supernatural things are outside of the natural world, unnatural things are oppugnant to nature. They are not meant to exist. Unnatural Living beings are known as Entities.

Particle: The smallest undifferentiated piece of a substance.

Imperative: Similar to a force, but is universal and omnipresent. Imperatives arise from the Essences, and each Essence has an associated imperative. The four imperatives are: creation (Life), destruction (Death), change (Time), and stasis (True Knowledge). Imperatives cannot be affected by spell magic, spell magic instead uses the imperatives to affect the world.

Spirit: A generic term for any "disembodied" being. Ex.: ghosts (incorporeal undead), shades (Living darkness), and possessing spirits (usually of demonic origin). Such creatures have a body, but an intangible one instead of a physical one.

The bodies of spirits are typically formed out of intangible substances. The mind of the spirit gives shape to the substance, and many spirits are shapeless or have shapes that vary randomly or at will. The body of most ghosts, for example, resembles that which they had in life.

Undead spirits are commonly known as spectres.

Projection: The act of extending a mind beyond the limits of its body. Can be within the same dimension or even into other dimensions.

Possession: When one being's mind enters into another's body and

takes control. The original mind might be destroyed, moved into another body, or simply suppressed.

Context: That which supports the existence of something immaterial, such as information.

Record: Something that stores information. The information's context.

Construct: An Unliving device that can perceive and follow instructions. Ex.: Robots, golems, animated items, some skeletons. Constructs mimic some aspects of beings, but do not have minds, and thus lack free will and creativity.

Constructs can use tools, but cannot create contradictions. If the tool use of a construct would be contradictory, the contradiction is supported by the Living being that set the construct in action.

Simulacra: An Unliving creature that simulates the interactions and reactions of a Living being. Simulacra are specific types of constructs. Most mages prefer to conjure simulacra instead of creating a Living being.

Undead: A Living being that is dead. Undead are composed of the mind of a being that was once alive and some kind of body, usually a rotting corpse or spectral form. Undead are suffused with entity energies, and their existence is dependent on magic.

Undead are normally created through a curse, though Death and Entity spells can also create undead.

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