

# Testing the Waters

by Greg Phillips

## • FOREWORD •

The following represents something of a pet project; it began as an attempt to create a cohesive and integrated magic system (to allow the inclusion of so-called ‘Colour’ magic) and expanded somewhat to include a revised creation myth (since I don’t like the Slann). Originally, I was going to follow this up with a completely new set of rules for magic. This is no longer the case as I am currently working on alternate ideas much closer to the original ideas of WFRP magic, which came about as a result of writing the following. So I suppose you could say that I’ve changed my mind. Regardless, I hope that the following might be able to provide some inspiration, or at least an entertaining yarn...

Greg.

## • THE WARHAMMER UNIVERSE •

The Warhammer universe is much the same as our own, for it is governed by the same fundamental laws of physics. In fact, there is but one difference between the two, and it is sometimes known as ‘Warp space’. Other names for this phenomenon include ‘the Warp’, ‘the Sea of Souls’, ‘the Ether’ and ‘the Spiritual Plane’. But these are by no means exhaustive, for there are (and have been) many terms used to describe what is not only the source of great and wondrous magicks and beings, but is also the greatest threat to the world, if not the universe.

In essence, Warp space is an additional dimension, which seems to exist as distinct from the material universe and yet occupies the same space. Unlike its material counterpart, Warp space consists of pure energy that flows in eddies and currents. It has oft been likened to an ocean or sea, for it can be calm in places and stormy in others. But crucially, Warp space is inextricably linked to the material plane, in that the movement and action of the former shadows that of the latter - or perhaps vice versa.

Experiments have shown that all matter exerts an attractive force in the Warp, and that Warp energies are consequently densest around planets. It has also been shown that matter shapes the Warp energies that are drawn to its ‘anchor’ (or ‘shadow’) in the void. As a result, all physical matter exists (to some degree) in the Warp in the form of specific energy patterns, and these patterns may be placed into one of eight groups.

The first four of these groups are known collectively, as **Elemental**. They are **Earth, Fire, Air and Water**, and they make up all of what we know to be tangible and material. It is perhaps obvious to note that these four states are generic and consist of many components. For example, Earth consists (amongst others things) of various types of rock or metal that exist in a solid state, whilst Air encompasses all gaseous forms.

The remaining four of these groups are termed **Metaphysical**, as they are intangible and yet make up all of what we know to be ‘life’. They are often referred to as the following: **Life, Death, Spirit, and Body**. Life is the vivifying and animating force behind all forms of flora and fauna, just as Death is the inevitable end to the cycle. On the other hand, Spirit represents rationality and thought, whereas Body refers to the primal and carnal impulses. A fuller explanation of these may be found below under *Magick*.

It is important to note that there is balance in all of these things; i.e. Earth vs. Air, Fire vs. Water, Life vs. Death and Spirit vs. Body. And the same applies to two further types of energy – Light and Dark. Light does not exist normally within the Warp, and is described below under *Magick*. On the other hand, Dark appears to be the foundation of all Warp energies. It is the raw essence of Warp space unshaped by the material world. Again, more on this may be found below.

## • OF THE ANCIENTS AND THEIR FALL •

It is said that in the time before time the Warhammer was a very different place, for there were no monsters or mutants or magicks, or even gods. That was before the time of the Ancients. The Ancients, it is said, were beings

with powers of magick before such a thing was known. They appeared from nowhere and instructed the Elves in many things, all the while wearing Elven forms as we would our garments. Ancient Elven writings say that the Ancients were aware of the Warp and could manipulate it with the strength of their minds, and that they recognised such potential in the Elves. It is from this time that the Elves gained their deep knowledge of the world (although the Ancients were largely silent of the Warp) in addition to the lore of metals and runes. Elven tales from this time mention how the Ancients were for their part enamoured of the Elves' art and music. However, this all ended with their departure and the subsequent calamity.

'The Time of Woes' and the changes wrought upon the world at that time seem to be due to the magicks of the Ancients and, specifically, their control over the Warp. The Ancients travelled to the world using dimensional portals, which they created at each pole. These were great gates; the bounds of which were marked by powerful runic symbols, which ripped a hole in the fabric of reality and created a tunnel to another place. The causes of the catastrophe to follow are unknown, although it appears that the Ancients' civilisation was at stake for accounts tell of their bidding the Elves farewell, saying that they had grave matters to attend to but that they would return. They did not return, and soon after, the Warp-gates collapsed and spilled the fabric of the Warp into the world. Tides of Dark magick flowed across the land, causing change and upheaval upon all it touched. The Elves were little affected thanks to the fortuitous position of their home, but many animals and plants were sorely tried. From the fall there arose many monsters and mutants, and some even say that Humanity was the product of the warping effects of the void.

But after the initial tumult, when the tide of Dark magick finally began to slow, the material world finally began to exert itself and started to shape the Dark magick just as it had in the Warp. And so the Dark tide began to split into the above eight forms, which gathered about their constituent parts. Thus, the earth drew the magicks of Earth to itself, and the deserts and volcanoes drew Fire magicks. To the oceans and seas went Water, and to the skies, Air. The base, primal magicks of the Body were drawn to the animals, plants, and sentient races. However, these races' psyches were also empowered, as their minds became the focus for Spiritual magicks. And amidst all of this, the material plane and that of the Warp began to overlap. This was the birth of magick in the world.

But there was a final effect to the cataclysm. And that was the creation of the gods.

## • THE GODS AND THEIR NATURE •

To many, the Ancients will seem to have been the true masters of the world and, in many senses, they were themselves gods. They are not, however, the gods that you and I know today. For they arose unnoticed amid the chaos and destruction.

So it came to pass that as the Warp spilled across the lands, so the planes converged and magick became medium. Know then that the inhabitants of the world had long known of their spiritual selves and yet could not perform the magicks of the Ancients. However, as the planes converged the Elves too gained a spiritual awareness alike that of the Ancients, as did many of the sentient beings of the world. Still today the Elves remain the most developed of the races, for only they have a developed psychic connection with the world around them, and this gives them a closeness to nature that men have yet to touch the edges of - and perhaps never will.

But not only did the sentient races become aware of their shadow-selves, so too did the world around them. And think not that the world sprang to life, or that the gods leapt upon the earth clad in their known guises, for it was not so. Instead, I shall tell you of the childhood of the gods and of how they came to be full-grown. Indeed, I shall tell you of how they still grow today. Let us begin.

The first lesson in the lore of the divine is to know that the gods are not equal in stature, for there are those that are greater, and those that are lesser. So some of the divine pantheon are known as the Elder Gods, and some as the Younger Gods. The difference is this: the Elder Gods are the incarnations of the world and each represents one of its constituents (i.e. Fire, Air, Water, Earth, Life, Death and Body). But note that they number seven and not eight. The last group – Spirit – is not represented by a single deity. Rather, it consists of many deities, and they are known as the Younger Gods. The younger gods represent the complex array of emotions felt by the sentient beings of the world.

With this in mind, know that the gods began as murmurs in the Warp – echoes of their constituent parts. Thus, for a while each acted only as the sum of their constituents but it was not long before the gods came to take a physical form according to their nature. And so the Elves began to hear rumours of wondrous sights. One of the first of the

Elder Gods encountered by the Elves was Manann (or Mathlann, as they knew him) for he had taken the form of a great whale and tossed their ships upon the waves (as was his wont). But this was only true of the Elder Gods. Ironically, it was the so-called Younger Gods that grew apace. The reason for this is because they are formed from a part of every individual's psyche (although some more, some less) and so grew to include traits common to the Elves. And so it was the Younger Gods that were first encountered by the Elves for at that time they frequently took mortal form. The Younger Gods are Verena, Ranald, Shallya and Myrmidia. Verena was loved best by the Elves as she came to them first under the stars clad as a beautiful and tall Elf. She called her 'the Lady of the Stars' and to this day, that is the most popular image of Verena, although she (like all the gods) may assume any form or gender.

The Elder Gods only began to assume the form that we know today after the Elves and Humans had taken to worshipping them, and here the relationship between the gods and their worshippers becomes clear. It also becomes apparent how and why the gods develop over the ages. A good example is that of Taal, God of Animals, the Wilds and the Hunt. It was soon after their first encounter with Verena, some two hundred years after the Time of Woes, that the Elves began to see a great stag in the depths of the woods though each time it fled from them. The Elves recognised Taal as the spirit of the forest and paid their respects to him. At that time he was a frightening apparition that would on occasion attack Human and Elf alike, hunting them as a great bear. Yet he would occasionally approach in the form of a stag and merely observe with curiosity. Most of the time, he would just retreat into the forest if encountered. Over the ages, Taal began to appear to the Elves as a tall and bearded Human who carried a great spear. Primitive Humans had given him the name Taal in their ancient tongue and had worshipped him as a great god, though the Elves knew him as Karnos. Over the many millennia, Taal has come to represent the great hunter, and no longer attacks the inhabitants of the woods. For he has lost some of his animalistic ferocity and it is believed that the increasing civilisation of the Humans that worshipped him had some impact upon Taal. Now it is easy to see how the gods represent not only their material constituents, but the sum of their worshippers. Thus Mórr has the coldness and darkness of death combined with the sombreness that is present in the majority of his worshippers (i.e. the bereaved). On the other hand, Manann is still the fickle and elemental god of the oceans but he has changed in some ways over the ages. For example, Manann may be appeased by following certain traditions known to most sailors, but the only reason for this is because his worshippers believe in these superstitious rites.

There is one final and very important aspect to this relationship between deity and worshipper. It is a little-known phenomenon, but the consciousness of a god may actually be divided. This occurs where there is a great disparity between the emotions of that god's worshippers. The prime example of this is the tale of Mórr. Mórr is the god of death. He is the inevitable decline and end to all things. But he is also the protector of the souls of the departed – a role imparted upon him by the grieving. There is, however, a rather different group of worshippers of death, and they are those that celebrate in it. They comprise of the murderous and the cruel, and they delight in blood and death and torture. In response to this disparity, part of Mórr's realm broke away (as described below under *Religion*) and came to be he who is known as Kháine, the Lord of Murder. This has also happened to a couple of the other Elder Gods, namely Rhya and Manann. Rhya lost a portion of herself to form a deity called Ecate (see *Religion*), whilst Manann has an alter ego as Stromfels, the God of Predators and Reefs.

## • OF THE DWARFS •

The Elves have always maintained that they are the oldest of the races, and this is why the Ancients chose to impart them with some of their knowledge. This is true, although it was the deep empathy that the Elves possessed which impressed and endeared them to the Ancients. However, not all of the Ancients chose to abide with the Elves. Some wished to explore the earth, its plants and animals. So it came to pass that soon after their appearance, one of the Ancients came across another race living far to the south of what is now the Old World. They were a short and stocky people of great endurance, who were able to withstand the extremes of heat and cold in their environment. Such were the ancestors of the race now known as Dwarfs.

The Dwarfs were an old race, although their slow reproduction and harsh environment had hindered their development to a greater degree than the Elves. They were, however, by no means uncivilised despite their numbering few. In fact, they possessed an advanced social structure based on bloodline, which comprised a number of clans, each led by the oldest male in the clan. As today, the Dwarfs (or 'Khazad' as they called themselves) respected age and wisdom, and the length and colour of a Dwarf's beard was a measure of this. Unlike the Elves, the Dwarfs had very specific gender roles and this seems to have been due to a natural feature of the Dwarf race – that approximately two-thirds of all births were male. The result of this was that the role of the female Dwarfs came to be childbearing and housekeeping<sup>1</sup>, for there were more than enough males to forage and hunt, and because Dwarf children were comparatively slow to mature.

The Dwarfs were at that time living in small villages, each a collection of sturdy cabins around which they grew some few crops. The majority of their food was obtained by hunting, for even then the Dwarfs were ingenious craftsmen and they could create not only excellent stone tools, but also cunning traps for their prey. But above all the Dwarfs displayed a natural artistic flair in their craftsmanship, which was applied to anything from weapons to domestic items.

Now the Ancient (whose name is not recorded) spied upon the Dwarfs for many seasons, and came to love them for their hardiness, pragmatism and honour. And so he decided that he would go among them and teach them, as he had taught many of the Elves. Therefore he assumed the visage of an ancient Dwarf with a magnificent long white beard (which would be the envy of any Dwarf) and took the name of Grungni. Upon entering the Dwarf village, he was greeted warmly in the way of the Dwarfs, and offered a place at the clan chief's table. So it was that he began to instruct the Dwarfs in the lore of metals and smithing (and many other things besides). In all the things, the Dwarfs were eager pupils, though especially in the crafts, and it was not long before they began to express their artistry in their new-found lore. Now it soon became apparent to the Dwarfs that their arid environment was far from being rich in the necessary mineral resources, and so they asked Grungni where they might find more. In reply, he told them of the mountains to the north and of the plentiful supply of ores and gemstones that lay at their heart. So it came to pass that following a meeting of the clan the Dwarfs abandoned their village and followed Grungni northwards. For nigh upon a year they travelled and although some hardships did before them, they finally stood before a great peak, which rose from the jungles. "This" said Grungni, "is Karaz-Zorn, and here we shall make our homes".

So the Dwarfs created a settlement upon the shoulders of the great mountain and began to mine it. Ever they delved deeper, seeking out the riches that Grungni had told them of. Indeed, their mines became so deep that they began to construct their smithies and later their homes, within the mountain. Over time, the village was abandoned as the Dwarfs discovered how to subsist underground. It was about this time that the old clan chief died, and Grungni was appointed as his successor and accepted into the clan (an action that had been unheard of previously). Grungni's first act as clan chief was to send out messengers to gather the clans and bring them to reside within the mountain. Within two generations, all of the clans had settled at Karaz-Zorn and, being awed by Grungni's wisdom and venerability and by the beauty of their new home, they appointed him Overlord of Dwarfkind. Thus was the first of the Dwarf cities built.

Under Grungni's lordship, the Dwarfs prospered, and grew in numbers in the security of the hold. They also continued to learn and invent. It was around the hundredth year of Grungni's lordship that it became apparent that the population was growing too large for the hold and so, one by one, the clans began to migrate northwards to the Worlds Edge Mountains. From there, they spread up the spine of the world, to reach even the far north by the time of the Cataclysm (of around -4500 I.C.). Obviously, by this time, Grungni had lived among the Dwarfs for over a thousand years and they had come to believe that he was the father of the Dwarfs, who had returned to guide them. They did not, however, ever ask him whether this was in fact the case.

Now, it was around one hundred and fifty years before the cataclysm when most of the Ancients left. Grungni had not, for he was loath to leave his children (as he saw them). And it was due to his isolation from the other Ancients that the collapse of the Warp gates took him completely unawares and it was all that the Dwarfs could do to seal their gates against the monstrosities without. It was at this time that Grungni began to teach the Dwarfs of the lore of runes, so that they might defend themselves against the vile magicks that had been unleashed upon the earth. In this, Grungni was wise, for he recognised the dangers of manipulating magick directly and in any case, runes, to the Dwarfs, seemed to be the pinnacle of craftsmanship. And then, in his last act as their Lord, Grungni passed the mantle of Overlord onto a Dwarf named Morgrim Forkbeard, who he regarded as strong and wise. This was to be the start of Kingship among Dwarfs, for they recognised Grungni's nominated successor and his children after him (for no normal Dwarf is immortal). Grungni left Karaz-Zorn and headed north, never to appear openly again.

The truth of it was that he was overcome with guilt because of what he saw as his failing in not following the other Ancients. His mission was to find out what had happened to the gates and establish whether it could be reversed, and his journey took him deep into the chaos wastes. Whether he found the answers he was looking for is unknown, but I will divulge to you, gentle readers, that Grungni did return from the chaos wastes only to make another grim discovery on his way south. For Grungni did come upon the hold of Karak-Vlag, which lay at the northern tip of the Worlds Edge Mountains, only to find its gates open and its inhabitants gone. Whatever Grungni saw within its empty halls led to him masking the hold within a powerful illusion that remains to this day. More information regarding Karak-Vlag may be found below under *The Chaos Dwarfs*.

I shall end my story of the being known as Grungni by saying that according to legend, Grungni returned to Karaz-Zorn some fifty years later, and instructed Morgrim Forkbeard to leave the city and take his people north. Morgrim

and his people eventually founded the greatest known Dwarf city, called Karaz-a-Karak (or ‘Everpeak’ in the tongue of men). It is not known why he did this, and no one has ever managed to locate the legendary hold to search for clues. However, some few Dwarfs believe that Grungni lives on today, and that Karaz-Zorn somehow holds the key to the mystery.

<sup>1</sup> This has a different meaning in Dwarf society, where women were responsible for every aspect of the home, or ‘hearth’ as they called it.

## • THE BIRTH OF MAN AND THE RISE OF CHAOS •

The origin of Man has long been a matter of intense speculation among Old World scholars. The common opinion is that Humans have always existed and were created by the gods and this, for certain, is the line adopted by the Church of Sigmar. More radical theories include the belief that we are descended from Dwarfs, whilst others say Elves. The Elves have slightly more to say on the matter, and if one could persuade them to speak they might say that Man, like most of the races, was created by nature and his environment. A cryptic reply, you might say, but such is the way of Elves. But let me disclose to you the truth of the matter, as has been revealed to me.

Men are products of natural selection, just like Elves and Dwarfs. For countless ages they dwelt east of the World’s Edge Mountains in what is now the Dark Lands and the Steppes. Here they lived as nomadic hunters upon the plains, in ignorance of the Elves and the Dwarfs. It is said that the Ancients knew of Men soon after they arrived on this world and yet did not approach them as they did the Elves and later the Dwarfs. Perhaps this was due to Mankind’s level of civilisation, or its nomadic nature. But whatever the reasons, when the Cataclysm occurred Men were wholly unprepared for what fate dealt them. Whereas the Dwarfs had been shielded by their mountain fastnesses, and the Elves by the mountains of Ulthuan, the Humans were afforded no such protection. Instead, they were overcome by a tide of Dark Magick that few escaped. Those that were affected most severely were horribly warped, becoming unspeakable monstrosities or writhing pools of flesh. Thankfully, many such individuals died instantly, or soon after. Some however turned upon their kin, sparking desperate fights for survival among the remaining Men. From this event were born many of the foul creatures that still plague the world today, including the Beastmen.

Thus was lost over a quarter of Mankind, and more still fell at the hands of the newborn fiends. Those Men that survived were not unchanged. Some displayed mutations and others went mad. The majority suffered more subtle changes, but nevertheless the seeds of Chaos had been planted within them. And this could occasionally manifest itself in a new generation or later in life, especially when Chaos was strong in the world. Typically, the taint would be either physical mutation or madness, and this is still the case today.

But by far the most important change was to Men’s psyches, for Chaos expanded and heightened the range of emotions felt by Men. Hatred, fear, anger and lust were to name but a few of the powerful impulses that Men began to feel. But they were not all negative. Indeed, Men became passionate, driven and curious, among other things. It was these traits that lifted Men from their primordial tribal and nomadic existences and pushed them forwards. Not only that, but they had become psychically self aware to some degree, which would later allow them to master the magicks that had become part of the world. Yet it is important to know that the minds of Men had been set against themselves, for many of the emotions were conflicting, and conspired to make Men unpredictable. For example, whilst they desired change, so were they also fearful of it; whilst they felt anger, so they feared the wrath of others; and so on. Thus the Elven adage: Trust not the motivations of Men, for they too know not what they want.

The importance of the above was not only in that it marked the dawn of Humanity – it also marked the rise of the Gods of Chaos (so-called because they arose from influx of Dark Magick). They were created by the minds of Men and the various monstrosities that the cataclysm had brought. So from rage arose Khorne the Blood God, from despair and fear of death came Nurgle the Lord of Decay, from lust came Slaanesh the Lord of Pleasure, and from ambition and inventiveness rose Tzeentch the Lord of Change. Others included Alluminas the Lord of Light, who desires stasis and fears change. There also came Solkan the Avenger, who is righteous and conceited. The final two are little known today; they are Malal and Arianka, and more on them may be found under *Religion* below.

All of the gods that arose at that time have subsequently become known as either Gods of Chaos or Gods of Law. There is little practical difference between the two groups (as both seek dominion over the world) except for the way that they operate in current society - the Gods of Chaos work (generally) without the laws of current society, whilst the Gods of Law work within them. Obviously, what is Law and what is Chaos are relative concepts and may vary

between countries and individuals, and so many prefer to label all such gods as Gods of Chaos. Although it is open to much debate, the Gods of Chaos are thought to be Khorne, Nurgle, Slaanesh and Tzeentch; whilst the Gods of Law are thought to be Alluminas, Solkan, Arianka and Malal. More about these gods may be found in the section on *Religion* although suffice it to say that there is little love lost between any of these gods, not just between Law and Chaos.

And so it was that Humanity entered its darkest hour. For hundreds of years whilst Elves and Dwarfs battled Chaos to the west, Men fought as best they could against the various horrors and even against themselves. And so finally it came to pass that Chaos was driven northwards and the Warp gates began to shrink. Now many of the Human tribes had long worshipped the earth and its various constituent gods (even before they actually existed) and there existed among some of the tribes of Men a priestly class known as the Druids. They maintained the various shrines and crude temples, and made offerings up to the gods. So it came to pass that shortly after Chaos had been vanquished one appeared among the druids. Ancient druidic inscriptions describe him as a venerable Man with a strange manner of speaking. It is said that he taught them of nature and the earth but also that he taught them a form of magick based upon their own tongue, for they were to be protectors of nature and guides of men. And then, after instructing the druids to travel west across the World's Edge Mountains, he vanished. The druids obeyed his command, and took their tribes westwards.

Thus was born one of the most ancient of the magickal arts and the most ancient of religions. It is not known whether this mysterious figure was indeed one of the Ancients or an Elven mage of the day. Either way, he saw the need to teach the early Humans in the ways of magick so that they might protect themselves and the world from Chaos. More on this form of magick may be found under *Druidic Magick*.

Thus ends my account of the ancient days.

## • THE NATURE OF MAGICK •

It is important to remember that all forms of magick stem from the Warp. As it enters the material plane, magick is the raw stuff of chaos and just as matter affects the Warp, so this warpstuff affects matter that it comes into contact with – twisting and rearranging it into new forms. The result of this is that the areas around the Warp gates have been altered beyond all recognition and have become known as the Chaos Wastes. This warping effect is ongoing however, and so not only is the landscape in constant change, but also any beings entering the Wastes are subjected to Chaos and its mutating effects. This is also true of wizards who attempt to harness this magick, for they too find themselves altering (see below under *Dark Magick*). This pure stuff of Chaos is known as Dark Magick, and just as it alters the world, so is it altered by the world. For Dark Magick does not remain for long in its pure form. Instead, it is forged (some would say purified) into a new form by the matter that it comes into contact with, as is the case in the Warp.

Thus, Dark Magick when exposed to water becomes so-called Water Magick, and Dark Magick that moves high into the sky takes the aspect of the air and becomes Air Magick. And so, Dark Magick becomes either one of the four Elemental forms, or one of the four Metaphysical forms (as outlined below). This transformation is by no means permanent, and the nature of any magick will be dictated by its surroundings at any one time. Regardless, once magick has been changed by the material world, it loses its warping effect. As a result, those drawing upon one of these eight magicks are a lot safer than those who use Dark Magick. That is not to say that there are no adverse consequences to the use of these so-called 'Colour' magicks, for there are, and the consequences can in some cases be just as dangerous.

The fundamental difficulty which can arise from the use of 'Colour' magicks stems from the fact that each of them has the properties of the element (or meta-element) that they represent. As a result, where a wizard predominantly uses one of the 'Colours', without reference to its opposing (and balancing) twin, he begins to take upon himself some of the attributes of that 'Colour'. For instance, Necromancers specialise in death magicks and therefore over time, they start to suffer certain afflictions associated with death, such as an increasingly cadaverous appearance (as their skin undergoes a process similar to decay) or developing an unwholesome stench. Not only that, but such wizards are also affected mentally, and a growing obsession with the 'element' (e.g. death) in question is usually the first of many symptoms.

The final form of magick is by far the most esoteric and is not formed by any natural process. It is known as Light Magick, and is created when the eight Colours are reintegrated. The resulting magick is not only pure (being balanced and without the taint of Dark Magick), it is also to some extent the most versatile (being effectively uncharacterised energy). As a result, Light Magick may be used in anything from shielding spells and auras to ground

splitting offensive spells. Unfortunately, the reintegration of the Colours is a most arduous process that only the most capable of Elf mages can hope to master. Note that Light spells are utilised by non-Elven wizards (see below under *Battle Magick* and *The Most Noble Brotherhood of Light*) to a lesser degree.

## • THE COLOURS OF MAGICK •

As stated above, there are ten forms of magick (or ‘Colours’), and these are detailed below:

### THE PRIME FORMS

**Dark Magick** (or Chaos Magick) is the raw Warp energy that flows from the Chaos Gates. It is shapeless, and yet shapes the world through its undirected energies. Exposure to Dark Magick will, sooner or later, mutate anything and anyone (although some races are more resistant to this than others) and therefore it is by far the most dangerous of the Arts. Dark Magick is extremely rare anywhere except for the Chaos Wastes, as it is soon shaped into one of the eight Elemental and Metaphysical forms (below). The little Dark Magick that exists in the Old World is usually found in the presence of powerful chaotic objects or creatures, especially in the presence of Warpstone (a rare materialisation of Dark Magick, prized by the Skaven).

Despite the serious risks associated with the use of Dark Magick, some wizards nevertheless seek to practice it, for it is the most powerful of the magicks. The reason for this lies in its formlessness, for Dark Magick may be used to create a wide variety of magickal effects that other magicks cannot (such as transmutation). Fortunately, Dark Magick is one of the most difficult to harness and master safely, and the lack of Dark Magick in the Old World means that practitioners must use complex rituals, spells and thaumaturgic forms to draw it directly from the Warp (unlike the Skaven, who use Warpstone).

Note that the term Dark Magick is perhaps a misnomer since it tends to imply malevolence where there is none. It is a common error to see Chaos as evil. It is not evil, only alien, and change can be for the better as well as for the worse, as may be seen in its effect upon Mankind. It is true however, that most of those that utilise this Dark Magick are themselves evil, for it serves as a quick path to power. These wizards are known as Daemonologists, Dark Wizards, and Chaos Sorcerers.

**Light Magick** (or High Magick) is formed by the reintegration of all the Colours. As such, each of the Colours balances the other and therefore the risk of mutation or negative side effects are nil. The resulting magick is just as potent and malleable as Dark Magick, but without the risk. Unfortunately, the practice of Light Magick is extraordinarily difficult due to the fact that all ‘Colours’ must be mastered and present. Not only that, the process of reintegration is extremely demanding upon the wizard – so much so that only extremely talented and learned High Elf mages have the ability to master it. Other wizards may utilise Light Magick (in the form of Battle Magick) but it is very limited compared to the magicks of the Elves. In fact, Human wizards who attempt to use any of the more advanced Light Magicks are forced to use groups of acolyte wizards to focus the relevant magicks for them. As stated above, these are part of the *Most Noble Brotherhood of Light*.

As already stated, Light Magick is similar in application to Dark Magick. That is to say, it is pure energy without the form of the Colours. This means that it can be used to create a range of more abstract effects. The most common uses of Light Magick are in the creation of auras, some zone spells (such as *Zone of Magickal Resistance*, *Zone of Sanctuary* and *Zone of Reprisal*), some offensive spells (such as *Light Bolt* and *Banishment*), and in most counter-magics. It should be noted that all Light Magick spells in the Battle Magick repertoire require complex reagents/catalysts and/or the use of thaumaturgic forms (especially in zone type spells).

### THE ELEMENTAL FORMS

**Air Magick** is a light magick, which swirls above the earth according to prevailing winds and weather patterns. Thus it gathers during gales or in the high places of the world, and is sparsest underground. Air Magick is, like its constituent element, fleeting and quick. This is a trait frequently seen in its practitioners, who are usually quick of thought but are also thought of as dilettantish. This is because many such wizards are driven to wandering for much of their time. Indeed, the appearance of such a wizard is frequently taken as a sign of an oncoming storm. Whilst this is not always the case, it is true to say that practitioners of this Art do develop a deep understanding of the weather which allows them oft times to predict storms, etc. When they are not wandering, some practitioners live in the mountains of the Old World, and the rest usually maintain high towers.

Through Air Magick, wizards may exercise a certain amount of control over the weather and the air. For example, they can call up winds to buffet their enemies or cause them to be borne into the air. Or they can command storms, draw in fog banks and even bring on hurricanes. Converse to those studying Earth Magick, Air wizards will over time lose weight little by little (without loss of body mass). Like the element they practice, they may also become faster on their feet. However, they will become increasingly driven to wander, eventually forfeiting a permanent abode altogether. Such wizards are commonly labelled as meddlers and usually end up being as lonely as Earth wizards. Finally, Air wizards also find themselves able to sleep less each night until they require but little sleep. Peace and rest are in the end both denied to them.

**Earth Magick** lies in the rocks and deep places of the earth. Its nature is the opposite of that of Air Magick, for it is dense and heavy, and moves but little - if at all. Yet it is strong - if slow to act – and over time it may cause earthquakes or raise mountains. These traits it imparts upon those that utilise it, and Earth wizards therefore tend to be reclusive and passive. They are very slow to anger and usually care little of the world beyond their doorstep. Very rarely will an Earth wizard travel, and rarer still will they move from their chosen home. Those wishing to find an Earth wizard would be advised to look far from civilisation and close to (if not under) the earth from which they draw their power.

The practice of this Art (unsurprisingly) grants control over the earth, with which a wizard might split the ground asunder, raise a wall of stone or start an earthquake. However, those dedicated to the pursuit of this Art will not only change psychologically over time (as above), they will also change physically (albeit at a slower rate). Possible side effects include increasing weight, strength of bone and general toughness through increasing density (as their body becomes alike to stone). At the same time, Earth wizards may also find that they become increasingly languid – sometimes sleeping for days. More on this may be found under *Elementalism*.

**Fire Magick** is rare in comparison to the other elemental magicks. It is born of heat and consequently it exists within every spark or flame, from a cooking fire to a forest fire. However, it only exists with any sort of permanency on the baking plains of Araby or the Badlands, or in volcanoes. The principle property of Fire Magick is obviously heat, but it is also unpredictable, passionate and angry, for it consumes ceaselessly. As a result, Fire wizards are notoriously quick to anger (although they would say that they do not suffer fools) and their wrath is rightly feared by all. Unfortunately, they also inevitably develop a form of pyromania that increases over time. Due to the lack of deserts or volcanoes, Fire wizards in the Old World usually dwell in or around cities or towns like normal wizards although they will tend to furnish their abodes with many braziers and hearths.

Fire Magick is generally thought of as being the most destructive type of magick, and this is probably true, especially since a Fire wizard's repertoire will tend to consist of an unhealthy number of battle-orientated spells. For it is the nature of fire to destroy, and Fire Magick is no different. This has led to many unfortunate incidents involving Fire wizards in the past. Spells include the conjuring of fireballs, heating objects, and creating firestorms. In addition to gaining a bad temper and an unpredictability of emotions, Fire wizards also gain an uncanny mastery of fire over time. Indeed, they are eventually able to walk through flames and even withstand a dragon's breath. True masters of the Art are able to draw sustenance and energy from fire, and have been known to catch another wizard's fireballs and cast them back with twice the strength. It is a well-known fact that Fire wizards should not be fought with fire. The flip side of the coin is that such wizards become less and less resistant to cold, and in fact come to rely upon open fires all year round. They also find it harder to concentrate and dedication becomes an act of true willpower. Finally, there are stories of objects spontaneously combusting in the presence of Fire wizards.

**Water Magick** is found in the streams, rivers, seas and oceans of the world. As such, it is cool and rhythmical – for it moves in patterns according to the moon. Whilst it lacks unpredictability of fire, it may at times be every bit as destructive. And, like the oceans and seas, it is the wont of this form of magick to be calm at times and furious at others. Water wizards will also be to develop these traits over time, along with a growing love of the sea. Their wrath tends to be reserved for those that encroach upon the sea or harm its inhabitants. In this, they become alike to Manann, the God of the Seas. Naturally, such wizards will usually dwell close to, or upon the rivers, seas and oceans.

Water Magick spells grant a wizard mastery over the oceans, rivers, sea, and indeed all water and some liquids. These allow the wizard to (among other things) part rivers, animate waves to attack his enemies, and even cause the seas to rise up. The price of such knowledge consists of some of the following side effects: firstly, the wizard develops a growing thirst, and must consume a sizeable amount of liquid each day or else become dehydrated. Secondly, he becomes more intolerant of hot and arid climates. Thirdly, he gains the ability to survive without oxygen underwater for long periods (eventually he may stay underwater indefinitely). Fourthly, he is able to shape and control water by

touch. Fifthly, and finally, his link to the sea grows until eventually his emotions are influenced by the state of the sea. Eventually, as he grows in power, his emotions in turn have an effect upon the seas and rivers. This is largely unconscious, and such a wizard must learn to control his emotions lest disaster strike those close to him.

## THE METAPHYSICAL FORMS

**Life Magick** (or White Magick) may be found in anything from plants, to animals and people. It is the vivifying and rejuvenating energy of spring, birth and growth. It is health and vitality. Within the Old World, life is all around, even in the cities, though it is strongest in the forests. This is not true of everywhere in the world. For instance, the deserts of Araby and the wasteland that is the Badlands are bereft of life, and the snows and tundra of Kislev are little more hospitable. Those wizards that practice Life Magick therefore tend to reside in the woods and forests, with nature all around. Unsurprisingly, Elves are very talented with this form of magick due to their natural empathy with the living world.

Life Magicks deal with areas such as the body and healing, and also with plants. Spells include the animating of plants, the strengthening of the body and the curing of injuries, poisons and diseases. Side effects to the use of Life Magick are minimal. Its practitioners develop over time a type of 'health sense'. In essence, this allows them to sense sickness or disease in those close to them. They can with more experience sense unnatural creatures or mutants. Hand in hand with this comes a deeper understanding of the natural world – empathy you might say. In addition, its practitioners tend to enjoy longer lives and sustained vigour. However, a wizard cannot escape death through Life Magicks, only delay it. For it is one of the principles of life that it must end. For this reason, those seeking to thwart death will study the so-called Black Magicks (see below). Ironically, this is one of the least studied magicks. This is because Life Magick is a selfless pursuit, and many wizards study magick only as an occupation or a route to power. The majority of practitioners will therefore be Druids (who strive to live in harmony with the natural world) and those wizards dedicated to Shallya, the Goddess of Healing and Mercy.

**Death Magick** (or Black Magick) is the end of the cycle that begins with life. It is death, decay, and degradation, and all living things eventually feel its touch. For Death Magick lies within every living thing - just as Life Magick does – and its concentration is reflective of the health of the plant or animal in question. Thus, Death Magick may be found in the sick or ill to a greater degree than it would in the healthy and youthful. For this reason, it is said that when there is a catastrophe such as plague or famine, Death Magick is at its strongest. Such places may attract certain practitioners of this Art. But, it is important to note that death does not just relate to the passing of what might be called the soul, but also to the decay of the material form. Consequently, Death Magick is also strong in graveyards and such places. Many have said that Death Magick is cold – a chillness of the soul it might be said – and quiet, almost sombre. What is commonly left unsaid is that it is also peaceful.

Those who choose to specialise in this form of magick are known as Necromancers, and they seek to escape death. Life eternal is their goal but the price that they pay is high. For like all others that specialise in one sphere of magick, Necromancers inevitably become obsessed with (some would say enamoured of) their sphere - death and dead things (see *morbidity*). They also find themselves becoming detached, hollow and emotionless as time passes. Ironically, if they succeed in escaping death, they lose the things that made them alive. Necromancers may also undergo physical changes as well. These include an increasingly deathly (or *cadaverous*) appearance, and a smell of the grave. In addition Necromancers, being foci for death energies, begin to exude a coldness which is perceptible to some animals, which usually flee or become hostile. On the other hand, Necromancers become more resistant to illness, injury, and the passage of time. The final outcome of this is *lichedom* (see below under *Necromancy*). Of all the Magicks (even Dark), Necromancy is regarded as the most repulsive.

**Animal Magick** (or Animalism) is formed from the psyches of wild animals, and from the baser instincts of sentient creatures. It is wild and unrestrained, for all urges, hungers, desires, and fears are part of Animal Magick. Through Animalism, a wizard projects such hungers desires upon himself or others. Using this Art a wizard may, for example, cause panic or hatred in his enemies, pacify wild animals, or throw himself into a berserk frenzy. Unfortunately, whilst Spirit Magick is largely harmless, the practice of Animalism is not. This is because in order to use Animal Magicks, a wizard must bring out and focus his own base emotions, and prolonged use of Animalism accentuates these parts of the wizard's psyche. Consequently, the more powerful such an individual becomes the wilder they become. Eventually these wizards are little more than animals, and may take to living in caves or with packs of wild animals. Those who practice this Art are to be found in the wilds, usually as far from civilisation as possible.

Few examples of such individuals exist although it is believed that some few Druids have taken to the worship of Taal alone, and that their use of druidic magicks without balance has led them to such extremes.

**Spirit Magick** (or Psychical Magick) is the magick of the mind and as such it is found within all sentient beings though the degree depends upon the psychic awareness of the being or race in question. Of all the races, the Elves are the most psychically aware (i.e. aware of their spirit self in the Warp) whilst the Dwarfs are the least, and Humans fall in between the two. As it is the magick of the mind, it is the easiest of the spheres to learn and as a result, many of a wizard's first spells will be drawn from this sphere. In addition, Psychical spells form the core of the Petty and Battle Magick repertoires and the entirety of Illusion spells (along with Animalism - see below *the Magickal Arts*). Like Animalism, Spirit Magick spells *never* require any reagents.

In essence, Spirit Magick is the projection of thoughts, feelings, sights, or sounds onto the minds of others, or the reaching out with one's own mind. Through his psyche, a wizard can 'see' into the Warp, put his enemies to sleep, create illusions and control the minds of others. Unlike the other forms of 'Colour' magick, there are no real negative side effects to the use of Spirit Magick as it is a natural feature of the sentient mind. Instead, prolonged use of Spirit Magick strengthens a wizard's psyche and his self-control. The only possible effect is the repression of basic instincts (used in Animalism).

Figure 1: The Wheel of Magick

