# The Conjuror

*Wielders of free-form magic for use in old-school games*

This class takes a different approach to magic than most in OSR games, using free-form effects rather than codified spells. In the forums I post on a lot, the question of how to run free-form magic (like that seen in Mage: the Ascension or Ars Magica) in OSR is a common one, and not one with a solution that I've encountered. So, here's my attempt at writing one.

Most magicians treat magic as a set of individual spells. Wizards and their suborders (such as necromancers and illusionists) are best known for this, but clerics likewise practice specific holy rites that manifest as spells. Each spell creates a single defined result, potentially very potent. The Conjurer, meanwhile, approaches things very differently. Rather than learning specific tricks by rote, the conjurer learns to control aspects of reality instinctively, performing a broad variety of creative magic, each effect improvised on the spot rather than codified ahead of time. As a Conjurer becomes more skilled, they will expand their influence to more areas of reality, and learn more ways to alter and control their chosen areas, leading to more complex and sophisticated works of magic being possible.



Mechanically, a Conjurer functions like a Magic User (or wizard or magician or whatever) in the system you're using. **Experience costs, hit-dice, saves, equipment restrictions and so forth are all exactly like a Magic User.**

Where the Conjurer differs is in their supernatural abilities; rather than learning and preparing specific spells, the Conjurer improvises free-form magical effects based on their limited spheres of influence. While they lack the focussed power of a Magic User, the Conjurer has a great deal of flexibility and can use their magic in any number of creative ways.

The magic a Conjurer uses is made up of Aspects and Processes; Aspects cover what the Conjurer can perform magic on, and Processes cover what the magic can be made to do. The Conjurer combines Aspects and Processes to create Effects, defining the targets of the magic and what the magic does. Each effect requires at least 1 Aspect and 1 Process, but for complex magic more might be required.

**A first level Conjurer knows a single Aspect and a single Process.** If Magic Users in your game get to pick their spells, then the Conjurer's player gets to pick the Aspect and Process they know. If a Magic-User's spells are random, then the Conjurer rolls too.

Each time they gain a level, they get another Aspect of Process; they can choose which. Again, the Aspect or Process learned is random if Magic Users in your game learn random spells when they level up, and can be chosen if Magic Users get to choose their new spells. If a Conjurer would randomly generate an Aspect or Process they already have, then they instead take the next available one down the list (looping back to the first result if they reach the end).

Each day, they can safely create as many effects as their level. Thereafter, they can continue creating effects: each such effect they create permanently reduces their lowest attribute by 1.

# *Aspects*

Aspects are the areas of the world that the Conjurer can influence through magic; things like 'fire' or 'writing'. A Conjurer can only affect something directly if they have the relevant aspect. For example, a mystic with the 'wood' aspect cannot throw people about to damage them, but they can throw wooden objects at them to damage them. The full list of Aspects is:

1) Fire (the flames themselves, the things that are on fire require the aspect of whatever is burning).

2) Emotions (the basic feelings people have such as fear or greed. The emotions can be directed towards a particular focus, such as causing a fear of spiders, by combining with a second aspect for whatever the emotion is about, such as Animals when creating arachnophobia. More complex sentiments cannot be created).

3) Metal (metal objects, either raw ores or worked items such as locks and chain-mail).

4) Wood (either still in a tree, or worked into objects such as a boat).

5) Writing (which covers diagrams and illustrations in written works as well as text itself).

6) Flesh (including meat, and the living flesh and bones of animal life. It can, only affect the biological body of the subject. It does not cover plant life, fungi and so on).

7) Water (including ice and mist).

8) Darkness (lack of light, shadows and supernatural gloom. Nothing metaphorical).

9) Animals (natural animals like wolves, not supernatural monsters like dragons. Whether things like hydras are covered is down to GM discretion).

10) Treasure (gold, gems, works of art and anything else where the most important thing about it is how much money it's worth).

11) Stone (including worked stone - even cement - and rock in its natural environment).

12) Senses (the five senses, and any esoteric senses monsters might have such as echolocation. Only raw sensory input can be affected).

13) Weather (including fog, rain, lightning strikes and so on).

14) Plants (including living and dead ones, but not those worked into something else such as a rope made of hemp. Fungi and so forth are also covered; the distinction is conceptual rather than scientific).

15) Clothing (anything worn, including armour, jewellery, clothes etc.).

16) Decay (the processes of rot, entropy and degradation. Only applies to those processes which occur naturally as a function of time).

17) The Dead (dead people; corpses, their spirits, and the aftereffects of their death).

18) Memories (things people know or remember, but not physical recordings; only those stored in somebody's mind).

19) Connections (the conceptual links between things, perhaps emotional, legal or causal. This will inevitably get a bit metaphorical).

20) Devices (complex objects such as locks, crossbows and so on; things with several interdependent moving parts).

# Processes

Processes are what the Gifted can do with their magic; the verbs to an aspect's noun. The processes available are:

1) Manipulate (cause fine movements, adjustments and re-positioning in: the kind of thing done with tweezers, probes, needles and scalpels).

2) Hurl (dramatically and potentially violently move something about, such as throwing it across the room. Delicate manipulation is not possible).

3) Create (cause a sample of it in its raw for to spring up from nowhere).

4) Grow (cause it to become bigger, more potent or more active for a duration)

5) Reduce (cause it to become smaller, less potent, or less active for a duration).

6) Ward (requires two targets, and the aspect to affect each. The first target cannot affect, harm or influence the second for a duration).

7) Detect (become aware of examples of the aspect, even hidden ones).

8) Hide (remove it from perceptions or awareness, for a duration).

9) Summon (bring it to the Conjurer from a distant place).

10) Shape (make broad changes to its form, direction and function. Delicate manipulation is not possible).

11) Damage (harm, break or injure the subject).

12) Halt (slow, freeze, hold in place, or pause the subject).

13) Disguise (make the subject seem like something else, although its actual nature or functions are not changed. The relevant aspect is needed for both the thing being disguised and the thing it is to be disguised as).

14) Awaken (grant the subject awareness and intelligence, or increases what awareness there already is; the personality granted will be appropriate to the thing awakened, reflecting its physical or metaphorical nature).

15) Purify (removes impurities, cleans, clarifies, burns away dross, reduces to its base form).

16) Mend (repair damage and harm done, return to its original or proper form).

17) Adjust (make minor and subtle - although potentially important - alterations to its form, direction and function; broad or dramatic changes are not possible).

18) Separate (split two entangled, connected, fused or merged things into separate entities. The proper Aspect must be used for both things to be separated).

19) Understand (gain greater knowledge of something that the Conjurer is already aware of).

20) Fuse (combine two things into a single whole; the Conjurer must have the appropriate aspect for each).

## Creating Effects

To create an effect, the Conjurer simply states what they want to achieve, and which Aspect and Process they want to use to do it. For example, in order to summon a firebolt, the Conjurer simply states that they wish to use Create and Fire to do so.

The GM determines if the effect is possible and makes sense. They may wish to clarify the player's intent, or suggest a modification if the effect doesn't make sense. Once this is done, they choose any mechanical effects the Effect has, and apply it just like if a spell had been cast.

If the Effect does not work, then the player's action is wasted, but it doesn't use up any effects-per-day.

The GM's decision is, of course, final. After the intended effect has been stated, the player has little to no control over how it manifests. The mechanics need not be consistent with previous effects created; after all, the Conjurer has little formal training with their powers, and is operating on instinct rather than study.

## Complex Effects

It is possible to combine more than one Aspect or more than one Process in order to create more subtle and complex effects. For example, suppose the Conjurer wishes to create spendable coins using the Metal aspect. They would need both the Create process (to make raw gold) and the Shape process (to sculpt it into coins rather than bland lumps). Similarly, they might want to make a victim scared of being alone in the dark: they would need both the Emotions aspect (for the basic fear created) and the Darkness aspect (to focus the fear on a single subject).

## Mechanics

The specific mechanics for different types of effect are given in the following pages. It is up to the GM which, if any, they apply to a given effect.

# Damage

The amount of damage dealt by an Effect depends on the Conjurer's level, as given on the table below.

1) a d4
2) a d4
3) a d6
4) a d6
5) a d8
6) a d8
7) a d10
8) a d10
9) a d12
10) a d12
11) a d12
12) a d20

After level 12, the damage dice remains a d20. The dice size cannot be greater than a d20. The dice size below d4 is d3, then d2, then 1 damage, and the dice cannot go lower than this.

If the source of damage allows a save to resist or avoid it, then the dice size is one higher.
If the source of damage requires a roll to hit, then the dice size is one higher.
If the damage is 'tacked on' to an existing attack (such as an arrow that is on fire), then it happens if and only if the original attack succeeds, and the dice size is one higher.
These effects stack; an attack which both requires a roll to hit and allows the target a save to resist, then the damage dice is two sizes bigger.
If the damage is to effect multiple individuals, then the dice size is one lower per additional target.

# Healing

Healing damage is treated just like dealing it (healing a dice's worth of damage, and able to be split among multiple targets). For normal living people, it probably requires the Flesh aspect and the Mend process, unless the player is very creative.

Curing poisons, sicknesses and so on is more complicated. The Conjurer must understand how the problem works (so, for example, that a paralyzing poison works by causing all the muscles to tighten at once), and create an Effect to counteract that. This may require magic (spells or effects) or close examination of the patient. The GM may need to suddenly come up with exactly how the problem functions.

# Mind-Control

A victim can never be forcibly compelled to do or think a particular thing, although their emotions, perceptions or memories might be affected to push them in a certain direction. The upshot of this is that the victim always gets a roll (perhaps a save, or perhaps roll-under-intelligence, or whatever seems appropriate) to resist, wriggle out of, ignore or suppress any attempt to mind-control them into performing a particular action.
This only applies to what they do; they still feel, perceive or remember what the Conjurer wants automatically, they just manage to grit their teeth and ignore it rather than being compelled.
If you want to puppet a victim completely, it might be more effective to seize control of their body with the Flesh aspect.
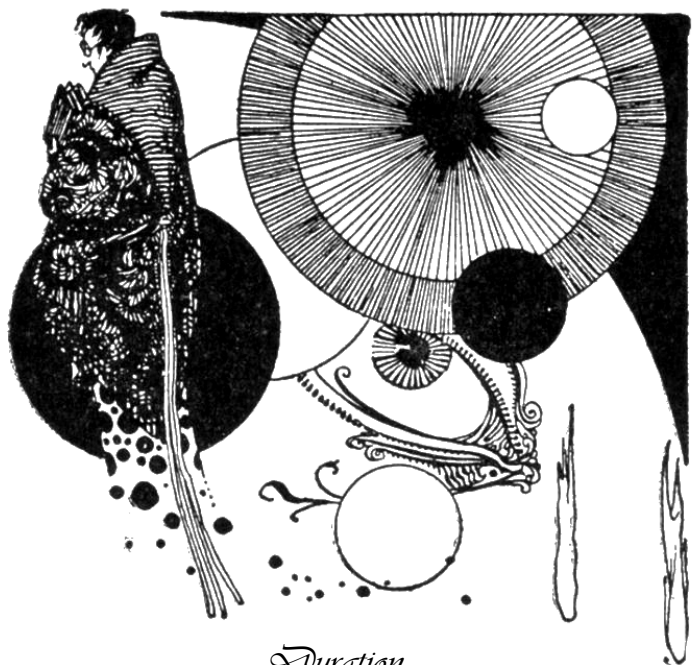
## Range

Range is how far away the target can be. For fine manipulation, the range is five feet per level. For rough manipulation, the range is five yards per level. For broad cross-country effects, the range is one mile per level.

## Areas of Effect

An Effect cannot target particularly large areas or things. If the GM wishes to restrict the size of the effect or thing affected, then they can do so, but they don't have to.

When Area of Effect is limited in combat situations, the area can be as many yards across as the Conjurer's level.

## Duration

Duration is applied where a temporary modification is made. Duration lasts in rounds (for combat and similar high-speed situations), turns (for effects relevant to room-by-room exploration), days (for things relevant to travel or interacting with society) or years (for the longest durations). Which to apply is a matter of the GM's whim. The effect lasts as many rounds/turns/days/years as the Conjurer's level.

Where an effect is being used to attack, an ongoing effect allows an attack to be made each round for its duration. For example, an effect that heats metal red-hot will deal damage to any viable victims each round.

Sometimes, the results of an effect continue when the effect's duration ends. For example, a building collapsed by an effect does not re-build itself when the effect ends. Only the direct results of the effect cease when the duration ends.

# Beneficial Transformation

If turned into something specific (an animal, say), the subject has all the stats associated with that thing, and none of their own. For the duration of the effect, they are treated as that thing in all regards.

Otherwise, any relevant modifications from those given below apply for the transformation's duration.

Where the subject is given attacks they don't normally have (such as claws, fangs, poison and so on), then the damage dealt by these attacks is the same as the damage when an effect is used to attack directly. When the subject is given multiple attacks (extra limbs, say), then the damage is lowered just like when making multiple direct attacks.

An effect that grants physical resilience improves the subject's armour class by half the Conjurer's level (round up). An effect that grants additional combat prowess improves the subject's rolls to hit by half the Conjurer's level (round up). The same might apply to things like saving throws.

Other special abilities are up to the GM to determine, at their whim.

# Hostile Transformation

A victim who would be rendered useless, helpless or otherwise utterly disadvantaged by a transformation gets to make a save of some kind to resist it. This only applies to creatures; inanimate objects don't save.

Transformations that merely hinder the foe rather than neutralizing them get no save. Transformations that hinder might have a mechanical component: use whatever is appropriate for the effect created. If your at a loss, a penalty to AC or rolls to hit equal to half the Conjurer's level might be appropriate.
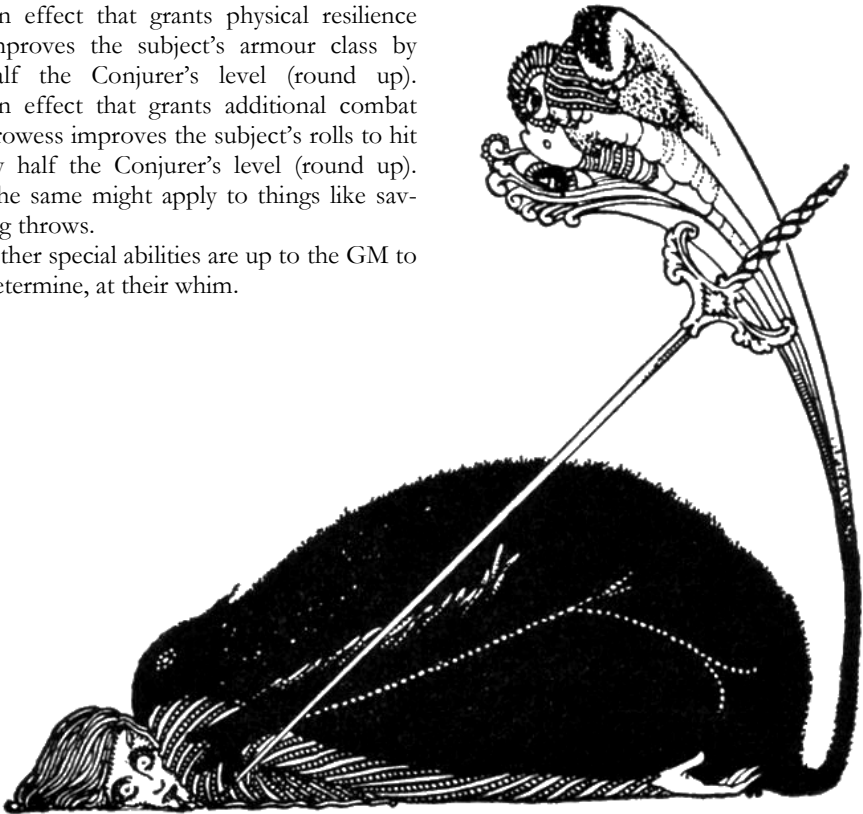
## Divination

Seeing into the past or future are treated the same, except that the future cannot be known for certain, only the most likely outcome.

Specific details such as exact numbers or specific wording can be seen as many turns in the future/past as the Conjurer's level.

Accurate details such as appearances and detailed sequences of events can be see as many days in the future/past as the Conjurer's level.

Rough details, such as betrayals, cause of death and so on can be seen as many years in the future/past as the Conjurer's level.

The Conjurer will only see things directly relating to the aspect they are using to divine. Any other matters will need another Effect (using the appropriate aspect) to look at.

## Summoning and Conjuring

Creatures summoned or conjured by an effect are not under the Conjurer's control (unless another effect is used to gain control, or an appropriate complex effect is used) and act as they naturally would. They are likely to be surprised, confused or angry as a result of suddenly being transported.

A creature summoned from elsewhere using the Summon process remains indefinitely; the summoning is a single teleport. A creature created from nothing with the Create process is limited by the effect duration; which duration to use is up to the GM to determine, based on why the creature was being summoned.