The Five Pillars of Everything

Part 3: *Time*

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Of the five pillars, *Time* is without question the most ambient, contested, and difficult to grasp of the lot.

When most individuals are questioned about what one can do with *Time*, the most common and uninspiring answers are to speed up and slow down an object or oneself with respect to the outside world.

When most Presence users are questioned about what they could do with *Time*, they would normally answer something along the lines of “throw the established natural universal order into unparalleled chaos within the perceived span of a theoretical instant”… if they were capable of it at least.

*Time* does not merely dictate flow and speed, but procession, pacing, precision, order, intended direction, causal dictation, and internal registration. It is both a single picture, and the movie reel that contains it and infinite more just like it. It is what ensures that “The Past” and “History” are ingrained into “the Present” in some form, as minor as it could be, and not simply irrelevant as soon as they are gone. Likewise, it also ensures that any and all potential “Future” events are dependent on what has been established by “Past” and “Present”, ensuring perpetual stability as “events” and “change” take place.

If *Rule* was the master software code and the operating system that the omniverse ran on, then *Time* is the order of operations it runs on to function properly, lest every line of the code be randomly strewn all over the place and executing all at once. *Time* would also serve the role of the memory drive, saving all the past data and events for future use.

It is a hypocritical omnipotent function that is both “Chaotic” and “Lawful” in nature, disallowing static existences, yet just as unforgiving to maddening irregularities as well.

In some circles, *Time* and *Chaos* are actually interchangeable terms for the same factor, though it is highly contested as *Chaos* is by nature more irregular and irrationally spontaneous than *Time* is, despite the similar roles they play in smaller quantities. It is more accepted that *Time* and *Chaos* are factors of similar origins, but hold inherently different properties. Much like how certain fluids may appear the same but perform completely different under certain conditions.

To put things more simply, *Time* is both the give and leeway for everything to be in motion, AND the proper linear order of things so that beginning-middle-end is consistent and makes sense, else middle-end-beginning could be just as likely.

Actually, one theory goes that *Time* was originally an aspect of *Rule* long before preconception, but developed into such a significant factor in the operation of everything that it broke off into a primary entity in itself that rivaled the entirety of the rest of *Rule*.

*Time* is also the most inherently flexible of the Five next to Power, which in itself is an ambiguous existence with no established form of its own. The phrase “Time heals all wounds” is more apt than one may think, as any disruptions in it will eventually fade away, whereas the other four will either adapt or react to said events and progress in completely different directions, or change irrevocably.

It is not uncommon for Presence users to be held back when it comes to mastering *Time*. It is an extremely difficult and advanced concept to develop a genuine feel and comprehension for compared to the other Pillars. That said, once, IF that initial hurdle is surmounted, advancement in the field, Presence users will enter a completely new tier of possibility and potential with literally no end in sight.

Dedicated *Time* specialists are very few and far in between, be it internal mastery or external mastery, but are all considered among the most dangerous of their kin. Unlike the other factors, *Time* is always and inherently in motion and flowing. Interfering with it to any degree requires exceptional skill or influence to accomplish. Even more so without any repercussions. One of moderate mastery is capable of not only acceleration and deceleration of themselves or other objects, (which in itself is a rather pedestrian trick by their standards), but capable of so much more.

Stuttering time to momentarily remove factors from the timestream, be it to escape an attack or a location all together.

Overlapping phenomena to create multiple copies and instances of oneself, or inducing those overlaps simultaneously to enforce a single event to exceptional magnitudes.

Traversing to and observing past and future events.

Isolating bodies to avoid or render outside interference.

Causality interference, injection, reversal, and extraction.

Destabilizing the flow of other bodies, rendering them violently susceptible to outside influence on a multidimensional scale.

In extreme cases, a true master of the craft can extracting oneself from the flow of time completely, yet still remain in the localized space. From an outside perspective, it would be akin to “stopping time”, however, it would be more accurate to describe it as “inserting oneself into a picture of a film reel and being the only one that can move”.

It must be underscored though, that *Time* is by FAR the most dangerous and difficult of the five to manage and control. So much so that even dedicated practitioners and masters of the craft do not utilize and express their abilities openly or haphazardly, lest they expose themselves and their craft to potential outside interference and leave them open to horrific fates.

Battles between two *Time* masters are rarely ever heard of and even less frequently witnessed to any degree. It is stated by those that are intimately familiar with the craft that such bouts are less battles of combat and more contests to see who can interfere with the other’s craft and manipulations of *Time* first, which would in turn eventually lead to the death of at least one of the fighters.

And sometimes the realities they were fighting in.

It is for this particular reason that Ghost of the Family has earned himself the crown for the most dangerous *Time* practitioner in the past billion eons. While his abilities are nothing to scoff at, his black flames that can immolate *Time*, in addition to the other pillars*,* enable him to “cheat” his way out of many of the lethal and cataclysmic recoils and aftereffects that restrain the hands of most other *Time* wielders, and thus enable him to use his abilities without restraint or limitation.

The outside of other *Time* specialists, the worst opponents for them are external focused *Rule* and *Space* specialists, the former being vastly more common than the latter. This is because both types of combatants excel in controlling the worlds around them in ways that can interfere with *Time* manipulation, however it must be stated that should a contest between them ever come to pass, then the outcome would be determined by 1) how well the *Time* user can maintain control over their own abilities in this inconvenient setting, and 2) how well their opponents can maintain interfering with their enemy’s powers while mustering up their own offensive.

*Time* and *Space* are integral factors to all of reality and existence. If *Space* is the rigid frame and iron bars that make up its body, then *Time* is the joints, wheels, and grease that allow it to move and how smoothly, and also what governs the rate of wear and growth on the frame as well.

*Time* and *Rule* are just as intricate with one another. Combined, they dictate the order and flow of the natural world. Causality in its purest form. Every beam of light, every sound, every event to be and has been, on top of the scars, flaws, growth, and miracles left behind are products of their influence. It is an incredibly powerful combination, but also vexingly frustrating for those that travel between dimensions. As every reality and world is different, so too are the factors that govern it. As a result, *Time Rule* practitioners must readjust and in some cases relearn how to use their abilities with each jump. It is for this reason that specialists in this field do not like travelling frequently and often have bases set up for them to relax in.

While many in this field claim to have clairvoyance and the ability to see through time and the like, it is more likely that they are just apt at “observing greater causality in motion and foreseeing the most likely outcome”, a trait that many can develop with enough training and experience.

*Time* and *Will* is a very awkward combination, but one with many hidden depths. It dictates and encourages growth, personal development, maturity, metaphysical self-control, evolution, memory, and clairvoyance. Those that excel in this field are incredibly independent and rarely bound by conventional rules. They can often freely change their age, and the personal time of others, and possess innate sensitivity to events long in the past and the future.

Many masquerade as fortune tellers, as unlike *Time Rule* variants, these practitioners are capable of personally seeing through causality to future events instead of using accumulated and calculated logic and variables gained by causality to come to the correct conclusion. In essence, the difference between the two is akin to using the clues in a story to come to the correct conclusion a quarter of the way into the story, as opposed to being able to read the end of the story immediately, if not the whole tale, without even opening the front cover.

It should be noted that while Scabbard of the Family is notably restrained when it comes to *Time* and *Will* manipulation, he is unnaturally and exceptionally gifted in this particular field, giving him a form of clairvoyance and insight that is rarely rivaled.

*Time* and *Power* can be considered the gateway to pure chaos. It is a very unstable combination and all things considered one of THE most dangerous to combine among the Five. It inherently creates flaws and irregularities, eroding at the inherent limitations of all that it comes in contact with. In smaller doses, it creates the cracks and imperfections for evolution and adaptation to take place, but in greater quantities the raw instability created can be equated to interdimensional nuclear radiation that contaminates everything and anything in its wake. Specialists in this field are among the rarest of their kind, and are treated with as much care as caution.

A true *Time Power* specialist (that hasn’t gone insane or killed themselves) is capable of brute forcing the flow of *Time* in any direction and manner they wish to accomplish feats that only the most overwhelming or deranged could imagine possible, though the ramifications of these actions vary wildly depending on many factors. The potential for lethal backlashes are so devastating that it is not uncommon for those that specialize in this field to also be apt in *Rule* as well in order to minimize the risks.

Of course, as stated before, Ghost of the Family is an exception to this rule due to his abnormal black fire, enabling him to brute force many feats of *Time* manipulation with minimal to zero repercussions.

It is little wonder why he is regarded as a monster, even among his kind. To disregard the fundamental rules and dangers of his craft so openly and flagrantly as he has done in the past has sparked terror among friend and foe alike, and has earned him few allies over the expanses and eras…