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Hey folks. Aaron "wasn't available" to write his column this week (contrary to all the rumors, it's nothing to be concerned about—as soon as Brian Schneider brings back the piñata, we'll be ready to start the intervention), so he asked me, as a beloved website alumnus, to fill in for him. What Aaron was going to do, and what I'll be doing instead, is talk to the **Magic** Rules Manager about the rules changes implemented with *Ninth Edition*.

As soon as the Rules Manager shows up, of course.

Any minute now.

Getting kinda awkward. How are y'all doing out there? Still good? Good.

Never was much good at small talk.

I'm starting to get a bad feeling about this...

I don't think anyone else is showing up...

Which means...

I'M the **Magic** Rules Manager!!! NOOOOOOOOOO!!!!!!!!!!!!

## The Reign of Terror Begins



And when I say "NOOOOOOOOOO!!!!!!!!!!!!" I really mean "Yes." My supervillainous tendencies must've been looked upon favorably by my corporate masters, because they appointed me to the most evil position imaginable. It's like how the girl who loves to dance in her spare time winds up as the head cheerleader in high school... not that I'm still bitter about *that*... but that's a story for a different time. Or never. Yeah, let's go with never.

As should be apparent, I just recently became the Rules Manager, so I had very little to do with the *Ninth Edition* changes. Or did I? In fact, the biggest change to the cards this time out was a revision I had been championing for years. Back when I was a **Magic** editor, I tried to get this revision pushed through for *Eighth Edition* but failed. This time, two years later—thanks to the precedent set by Equipment and the "equip" keyword—my initiative succeeded. That change, of course, is the Auras.

## Aura Borealis

If you haven't looked at the *Ninth Edition* card file yet, you're probably asking "What Auras?" or "What's an Aura?" or some other question that involves the words "what" and "Aura." Aura is the new enchantment subtype that encompasses all local enchantments: creature enchantments, land enchantments, everything. In fact, the term "local enchantment" no longer exists—it's been replaced by the word "Aura." And so has "creature enchantments." And "land enchantments." They're all grouped together under one subtype. Any enchantment that gets attached to some kind of permanent is an Aura, just like any artifact that gets attached to some kind of creature is an Equipment.

Here's the deal: Enchantments that get attached to other stuff now all say "Enchantment — Aura" in their type lines instead of "Enchant [whatever]." That line still exists, but it's been moved to the text box where it belongs. It's now rules text. The word "enchant" is now a keyword like "equip" is (though they work pretty differently).

### What was wrong with the old system?

Four main things that drove me nuts and probably didn't bother anyone else.

#### 1. The type line didn't say what the card's type was.

Since *Sixth Edition*, all the other cards said what they were. Creatures said "Creature" on the type line, lands said "Land," and so on. Global enchantments said "Enchantment," which was good... but local enchantments said "Enchant permanent" or the like. *These cards were enchantments that didn't say "Enchantment" on them!* A card that said "Artifact Creature" on its type line was both an artifact and a creature. A card that said "Enchant creature" on its type line was neither an enchant nor a creature. It made no sense. For most of the history of **Magic**, "enchant creature," "enchant land," etc. were enchantment subtypes, but they were never referred to as such. In the most recent version of the rulebook, those terms weren't even subtypes; they were just categories. Shouldn't the type line list the type of the card?



#### 2. Local enchantments were the only targeted spells that didn't say "target" on them.

Targets are an important basic concept in **Magic**, but it's a concept that's pretty easy to grasp. All you have to remember is that every spell or ability that has a target explicitly says the word "target" right in the text! Oh, well, except for creature enchantments and their ilk. Shhh! Don't confuse the newbies! (Just change the target of one of their local enchantment spells later.)

#### 3. Rules text was contained in the type line.

**Magic** has been moving away from this (see—or, rather, don't see—Walls). The *targeting conditions* of these enchantments were buried in the type line where they didn't belong.

#### 4. Spells that referred to "enchant creatures," like **Piety Charm**, couldn't affect "enchant permanents" that were attached to creatures.

**Piety Charm** said "Destroy target enchant creature," so although I could use it to destroy a **Persuasion** sitting on a creature, I couldn't use it to destroy a **Confiscate** sitting on a creature. Yeah. Naturally.

### What's good about the new system?

#### 1. All enchantments say "enchantment" on the type line.

This is about the point when you should be wondering, "Hey... When's MaGo going to be funny? Where are all the wacky decks? Wait—He's become a corporate tool! MaGo sold out!" No, no. I was never funny. I *told* you my chimpanzee wrote all my House of Cards columns. That you didn't believe me until now is your own fault.

#### 2. All targeted spells say "target" in the text box.

At least they do in the Core Set, where new players should see them. The keyword "enchant" won't have reminder text in expert-level sets. That's both good for the Core Set and good for the expert-level sets.

#### 3. All type lines across all cards finally—for the first time ever—work the same way.

In the beginning, the type lines looked like this:

Artifact: [Mono/Poly] Artifact (it had that whole mono/poly thing going on; no subtypes existed)

Creature: Summon [Subtype] ("summon" was there instead of the type)

Global enchantment: Enchantment (no subtypes existed)

Local enchantment: [Subtype] (the type wasn't listed)  
Instant: Instant (no subtypes existed)  
Interrupt: Interrupt (what the heck is an interrupt?)  
Land: Land (the subtype wasn't listed)  
Sorcery: Sorcery (no subtypes existed)

Over time, the system evolved (and I guarantee I'm getting this out of order): "Mono" and "poly" were dropped from artifacts. Supertypes like legendary started showing up. Creatures started getting multiple subtypes, meaning some appeared in the text box (see Crovax the Cursed, for example) before they migrated up to the type line. The same thing happened later for lands (see Crisis's Catacombs). Creatures changed from saying "summon" to saying "creature." The rule that a land's subtype was the same as its name was dropped. Land subtypes started following the creature model. Artifacts started getting subtypes, which followed the creature model. Instants and sorceries started getting subtypes, which followed the creature model. Finally, enchantments got on board. Now every card's type line looks like this:



[Supertype(s)] [Type(s)] — [Subtype(s)]

Neat!

#### 4. It opens up design space.

Do you know the last time a card was printed that said "global enchantment" on it? *Urza's Destiny*. How about "local enchantment"? *Mercadian Masques*, in reminder text on Thieves' Auction. Why? Because those are ugly vocabulary words. "Global" and "local" don't ever appear as identifiers on cards, so without learning them specially, there's no way to know what they refer to. (It was this line of thinking that finally got the word "basic" onto basic lands.) But now, it's easy to refer to Auras. Do you want to destroy target Aura? Search your deck for an Aura card? Put an Aura card from your graveyard into play? Easy. Destroy all non-Aura enchantments? Sure. Expect some fun in this vein in the not-too-distant future.

### Time to Ask Myself the Tough Questions

#### Do Auras work differently than they used to?

NO. Not even a little. The "enchant" keyword tells you what kind of permanent an Aura can target as you play it, and what kind of permanent it can be attached to in play. If the permanent changes (for example, an Aura with "enchant creature" finds itself on a non-creature artifact), the Aura falls off, just like before. If you put an Aura directly into play, like with Replenish, it doesn't target anything (it only has a target when it's a spell), so you can slip it onto an untargetable permanent as long as that permanent matches what the "enchant" ability says. Again, this is just like they always worked.

#### But some things changed, right?

Well, if you count Oracle, hundreds of cards changed. The first task I had as Rules Manager was to errata hundreds of cards in Oracle. Every Aura was changed, obviously, but also every card that referenced them. *Most cards didn't change functionally*. The Brute is still The Brute. Even a card like Coral Net didn't functionally change.

#### Coral Net before

Enchant creature

Coral Net can enchant only a green or white creature.

#### Coral Net after

Enchantment — Aura

Enchant green or white creature

The Licids have a whole new groove going on, but those were the work of Paul Barclay, not me, and you shouldn't find them behaving any more weirdly than they already did.

Some cards did change functionally... but nearly all of them got better! Piety Charm, for example, now says "Destroy target Aura attached to a creature." It can finally hit Confiscate! Most tweaks were along those lines.

### Come on. What got worse?

Two cards come to mind: Tallowisp and Rootwater Shaman. There was no way to concisely and abstractly refer to the exact set of cards that used to be known as "enchant creature cards." When talking about putting an "enchant creature card" into play, like Nomad Mythmaker does, it's easy—go ahead and target any Aura card in your graveyard you want! If that Aura can enchant one of your creatures, it comes into play. If it can't enchant any of your creatures, it stays in the graveyard.

We don't have to specify "enchant creature card" because the rules narrow down the category for us—and yes, Nomad Mythmaker is better than before. Now, for example, it can grab an Aura with "enchant artifact" and slap it onto an artifact creature.

But Tallowisp just wants to find an "enchant creature card" in your deck. What it now does is search for an Aura with the "enchant creature" ability—it's close, but the functionality has been slightly narrowed. For example, it used to be able to get Coral Net, but now it can't because Coral Net has the "enchant green or white creature" ability, not the "enchant creature" ability. If an Aura with "enchant Goblin" is ever printed, Tallowisp won't be able to fetch that either. Sorry, Tallowisp fans, but the card can still do upwards of 90% of what it used to.



### A Little Love for the Multiheaded Among Us

Enough jibber-jabber about Auras. There are some other new bits in the *Ninth Edition* Comp Rules, the biggest and most exciting of which is the Multiplayer Rules. Unlike Auras, I had nearly nothing to do with these; all the credit here goes to Rules Manager Emeriti Paul Barclay and John Carter. The superfun simultaneous Two-Headed Giant variant will be John Carter's legacy, I expect. The digital ink is still wet on the virtual pages for this section, so there may be issues or discrepancies that crop up as players (that means *you*) put them to the test. I expect a Multiplayer FAQ will be a project I'll be working on in the near future, so let me know about any problems that need addressing.

### Mother, May Can I?

There were two other significant wording changes to common templates. One is the Giant Spider template. It used to say "Giant Spider may block as though it had flying." Now it says "Giant Spider can block as though it had flying."

I know. You totally can't believe it either. Sit down, take some deep breaths. The shock will wear off in a minute or two.

Better? Good. I'll try not to throw bombshells like that at you without a little warning first.

The old wording literally meant "Giant Spider can choose to block as though it had flying," which was just silly. Spiders have tiny little brains and can scarcely be relied upon to make the correct choice with the game on the line. Under the theory that cards making choices for themselves = bad, these were changed to a wording that means "Giant Spider has the capability to block as though it had



flying." Much better.

This also cleared up an ugly ruling that said that in the face of a potential blocking assignment (such as an incoming Sengir Vampire enchanted with Lure), Giant Spider's controller could choose whether it would block as though it had flying or not. Up in the air or down on the ground? No more of that hogwash. Giant Spider now jumps in front of that Lured Vampire whether it wants to or not.

The other change is that the phrase "may play that card as though it were in your hand," as seen on cards like Elkin Bottle and Future Sight, is now "may play that card." Period. The "as though it were in your hand" bit was initially put there to avoid confusion—it let you know that you played the card it was referring to (which was in some weird, non-"your hand" game zone) in the same way you played that Giant Growth in your hand. It's just like a normal spell! (Psst: It *is* a normal spell.)

Of course, the actual result of the "as though it were in your hand" bit was to vastly increase confusion instead:

"So I can discard that card to Wild Mongrel?"

"No. You can only *play* that card as though it were in your hand."

"So I can cycle it?"

"No. It's not actually in your hand. You just pretend it is when you're playing it."

"Ohhhhh. So I can discard it to Wild Mongrel?"

Yeah. No more of that. This doesn't actually affect any *Ninth Edition* cards. It was just a convenient time to monkey with Oracle.

## Speaking of Future Sight

So what will I be doing next as Rules Manager? Making the rules wackier, no doubt? Making combos unstoppable?

Nope.

My job is to make the rules clearer. Simpler. Easier to deal with. Over the next few months, I'll be looking at reforming the rules governing phasing, shapeshifters, and power- and toughness-setting abilities (such as the ones on the *Mirage* cards—gee, I wonder why that's relevant all of a sudden—Chariot of the Sun and Cycle of Life). Nothing earth-shattering, but I will almost certainly make them less fun in an effort to make them more intuitive. That's a tradeoff I'll take.

My other job, of course, is to expand the rules to bring to life all the new stuff the designers come up with.

And my most important job of all is to be Mark Rosewater's archenemy. That's the real reason I wound up with this gig—it was inconceivable that Rosewater's archenemy *not* be the Rules Manager. He certainly can't have *two* archenemies. Some consolidations had to be made.

Basically, the way this works is that whenever Mark comes up with a new idea, a new card, a new mechanic, I say "No!" It doesn't matter what it is. It doesn't matter how reasonable it is. I immediately profess that it's impossible and will break the rules. Then we argue about it for the next few months. I put up as staunch a defense as I can muster: hyperbole, paranoia, panic, threats, lies, extortion (all the stuff they teach us in corporate training). Any shred of innovation that makes it through me probably—*probably*—won't break the game. And that, my friends, is how new **Magic** sets are made.

Until next time, have fun with Auras!

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**Magic** Rules Manager

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