The Five Pillars of Everything

Part 4: *Rule*

o. o. o.

*Rule* is considered the catch all Pillar of the five. The place where any trait or focus that hasn’t been neatly identified gets dropped off in without a second thought. It is where every action, reaction, trait, quirk, system, map, gimmick, ability, phenomenon, quality, aspect, nature, and so on, is dictated, found, and organized.

As a result, *Rule* is both the most and least respected of the five pillars when compared to the others by Presence users.

Elemental abilities? *Rule.* Magic abilities? *Rule.* Evolutionary traits and patterns? *Rule.* Devil Fruits? *Rule.* The color purple makes the people of Ankgap 7 break out in hives and start talking to trees? *Rule.* Ki, chakra, mana, magic systems? *Rule…* and *Power,* but still *Rule.* Macro and Micro physics and chemistry that develops technologies of unimaginable influence? *Rule* with probably a mix of the other Pillars as well depending on how it works.

That said, *Rule’s* influence goes a bit deeper than that.

*Rule* dictates the limitations of a reality. Are there powers or not? How the power system established. Its limitations. The natural influence of gravity. How life has evolved. The natural factors that could enable it to interact with other realities. The likelihood of Gods and supervising entities naturally being formed. The constraints on those supervising entities. And so on.

Presence users that specialize in *Rule* tend to come from worlds that have a pre-established power/magic system of some sort. The understanding of said system helps them familiarize themselves with how *Rule* functions and how to adjust their abilities in the process.

That said, *Rule* specialists tend to usually have the hardest times among their peers when initially travelling between realities, as the systems they grew up and are familiar with, alongside the associating foundations, are not omniversal, and as such they are not supported by that system when in different realities. This detrimental effect is present in other Presence users as well when leaving their home realities, but it is exceptionally more prominent in *Rule* focused users.

*Rule* specialists usually come in two varieties, System (external), and Ability (internal).

System specialists tend to be generalists. Jack of all trades that can use their abilities to affect anything and everything around them, but usually lack the focus to be absurd in any one particular field. Ability oriented users are the opposite, usually using exceptionally specific skills or the like they were born with to excel in that one thing to the point that it becomes an irrefutable absolute law of nature that needs to be worked around instead of directly opposed.

Examples of System styled abilities are Wizards from the Harry Potter universe, Gamers, and those that practice Runes and other similar written craft.

It should be noted that in general, while System specialists have a general easier time growing in strength and diversity, they rarely EVER reach levels above the lower God class tiers. This is because they are inherently dependent on the established systems they were born with, and as a result, are dependent on the inherent limitations of those systems as well. They cannot surpass the limitations that their original home world has established, and of the home world itself, and the only way to surpass the limitations is to literally consume resources from other realities, preferably with similar systems.

Another major hurdle that System specialists have issues overcoming is being able to consistently use their abilities in different worlds. Especially ones that their powers aren’t supported in. One is considered a strong System based Presence user when they can personally force said system to work in any world they are in at a moment’s notice if needed.

That said, one is considered a true *Master* System user if they are capable of fabricating their own personal System from scratch.

The few that can surpass these limitations can be considered among the closest to obtaining true omnipotence.

Shadow and Crypt of the Family fall into this category of Presence users. Scabbard is capable of it as well, however he prefers utilizing Ability based applications of *Rule.*

Ability oriented users on the other hand, will have a much more difficult time initially than System level users when it comes to development. Their powers are their own, and can be refined. And they have less issues with utilizing their abilities when travelling to other worlds. But it comes at the cost of overspecialization. It is up to them to diversify their abilities, with *Rule* and with the other Pillars if necessary, however those that do usually end up being the absolute masters in said craft, and it is near impossible to stop or reverse their specialized *Rule* from being enacted once started, akin to an act of an Elder God.

That said, what a Presence user can do with *Rule* absolutely pales in comparison to what mastering the fundamentals enables the user to achieve, and what it says about the user itself.

After all, along with *Will, Rule* is considered one of the two *most* important pillars of the five that any Presence user must adequately master in order to safely traverse the worlds beyond, and the Gods.

Before they can use *Rule* to enhance their abilities, to expand the diversity and certainty of their craft, to mold the world and others around them to their bidding…

The first thing that any Presence user must ensure is that they themselves, their bodies, the very *Rules* that govern themselves are not played and toyed with first. An absolute understanding of the world around them must be known, and an even greater knowledge and control of the *Rules* that govern their own existances must be achieved.

It is what enables Presence users to walk on stars without so much as a burn. Withstand the cold abyss of space and voids without being pulled apart in any direction. Deny the rules, causality, and curses from spirits, Demons, Gods, and magic wielders alike as easily as the rain of a summer shower.

It is one of the main reasons why Presence was dubbed “The Way of Gods”, for who could deny the *Rule* of the world and Gods themselves, than another God?

A person that has mastered *Rule* defensively is near untouchable in terms of special abilities. No curses, elements, powers, skills or the like would be able to affect the user in nearly any way unless they were to also put the might of their very being behind them. One that has mastered the defensive properties of *Rule* and *Space* is downright indestructible in terms of anything physical and conceptual. The only way to *ever* take down those that travel down this path are entities that specialize in the esoteric fields of *Time* or *Will* based combat.

*Rule* is also important in that it also has a hand in dictating two important factors that almost all notably powerful Presence users share: their Image and their Path.

The Image of a Presence user is something that still has no true explanation behind, however most will agree that it has to do with their combined *Rule* and *Will.* Their Image is a reflection of their base concept and their growth, who they are as an individual, their intent, and where they are likely to go as time goes on. Every Presence user’s Image is unique to them, and is prone to changing as they change themselves. That said, it is common practice to not reveal said image carelessly, as it is considered rude, immature, and a foolish way to expose oneself.

Experienced dimensional travelers are capable of examining a Presence user’s strength, personality, specialty, and skills from their image, even if it is out for just a flicker of a moment. As such, it is common practice for most Presence users to keep their Image in check whenever possible.

A Presence User’s Path on the other hand, dictates how they will develop their true potential should they “reach their stride”. “Domain” and “Duration”, dubbed the “two D’s” of Presence, are measured by: how old the Image of a Presence is, and how much does the Presence have authority over anything other than the user itself.

In other words, how Old is the Presence’s Image by nature, and how “Kingly/Royal” is the Presence. Quality vs Quantity.

A majority of the time, the Image of a Presence will not possess either of these two factors. They are something that is developed and cultivated for most. However, on the rare occasion, some individuals are born already with these dispositions, leading to them having faster early development than others, though they tend to cap off at the same level as others that develop their own “D”’s in due time.

That said, it should be noted that ANY Presence user that has either of these two factors in their Image should be considered a cut above the norm and should be approached with caution.

“Old” Images could be those that are Old animals or artifacts. Items and existences that resisted the erosion of time and lasted longer than their peers. They are exceptions to the standards, both in durability and in quality, endurance, patience, accumulating experience, wisdom, legacy, and power patiently in a way that cannot be artificially replicated.

“Naturally” Old Images on the other hand are far rarer than ones that come from “achievement”. These Images tend to be in tune with fundamental forces of nature and aspects of reality that can’t normally be reached with hard work or mortal methods. Spiritual beings and Gods tend to gravitate towards individuals with this disposition. Examples of this are “the core of the world”, “the breath of life”, “foundation of causality”, and “Starlight”.

A unique example of an “Old” Image is Waltz of the Family, whose Presence is literally “The Old”, and thus one of the purest forms of quality there is, contributing to his infamously terrifying and overwhelming Presence.

“Domain” based Presences are usually expressed in the user’s image possessing some sort of ruling or controlling factor to it. Just as a God presides over an element or land, so does a King do the same over their lands and people. It is a factor of Authority and control over others rather than themselves, and enables them to influence the outside with greater efficiency than others. Those that display this disposition tend to have a strong affinity with *Will,* though whether or not they actively practice it is up to them.

A notable minor subgenre of this form of Image are the “Alpha” variants. The strongest of their kind, much like leaders of an animal pack. They do not possess the same range of control over others as their “King/Ruler” kin, but they tend to possess a quality that enhances their physical attributes and performance, and are usually more aggressive in disposition.

As with “Old” images, “Rulers” are usually the sort that are cultivated and developed, not naturally born.

Of the Five members of the Family, Waltz, Ghost, and Shadow possess “Old” dispositions, while Scabbard and Crypt possess minor leanings towards being “Rulers”.

Those that practice *Rule* and *Power* are fairly common among Presence users. They are strong combatants and constantly strive to expand and strengthen their abilities as much as they can, though they also tend to just enjoy blowing things up for the sake of it and perpetually testing the limitations of their abilities for much the same reason.

Scabbard of the Family is a famous practitioner of this field of Presence.

*Rule* and *Time* users are a finicky bunch. Meticulous and precise, they have arguably the most diverse and naturally destructive skillsets among all other combination of Presence users. There are few issues that can’t be worked around a single master of this field of study, and it is not uncommon for successful schools and research institutes to be founded behind a gathering of them. That said, they tend to have issues re-adjusting themselves and their abilities when to travelling to new worlds and the accompanying rules there.

*Rule* and *Space* Presence users usually wind up being extremely in tune with the natural world. From elementalists to pure world creation, they are the architects of the established world and are often the most sensitive to their environments, though that does not always extend to other people.

Shadow of the Family falls into this category of Presence user.

*Rule* and *Will* is an exception to general Presence practice, as this is the one combination of the craft that is universally practiced by ALL members. It is an absolute must for anyone that uses Presence to constantly practice and refine this field until the day they die. This combination underscores not only the strongest defensive measure against almost any and all non-physical threats that could be encountered (outside of *Time),* but it is essential if one wants any form mastery in self-control and refinement. A supposed Presence user that is lacking in either *Will, Rule,* or the association between the two will *without question* be an easy target against any God or entity on their level. No exceptions.

On the plus side, it should be noted that mastery of this field of Presence comes with a notably extended lifespan and recovery capabilities.

Addendum: While foundation in this field of mastery is a must, it is inadvisable to delve too far into it, as too deep an understanding may result in the user falling into a state of *LAW,* or in a worst case [Redacted].