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The grand unified theory of WOT

Submitted by [Dedric](#)

Posted on 1/31/2002 2:27:26 PM

I know that this is out there, but I am proposing an alternate theory on why Aes Sedai don't know as much about channeling anymore, and wrapping that around to get a picture of how to win Tarmon Gaidin.

Could the cause be mental?

Let me explain. This may be lengthy. First, it is necessary to remember how Robert Jordan describes the AOL: "There was a time, before the Breaking, when men and women wielded the One Power side by side with no fear of any taint on saidin...and all matters of wonders were commonplace." (WoWot) He goes on to describe a society where everything was nurtured to its full potential, including channeling. Love was diffused through the society (like veins of gold?). People existed to benefit others, and worked together on everything. The greatest people, of course, were Aes Sedai, who existed only to benefit humankind (which leads to research). Also, the society was full of confidence and a certain naivete. People didn't believe that they could fail.

Now, All research was done by those who had the greatest skill in the power. These people built the Sharom, the great floating sphere over the research college, Collam Daan (which was the sphere dropping and exploding in Rand's last flashback experience in Rhuidean). RJ states the reason behind the Sharom as "the designers of Collam Daan did it simply because they could". From a psychological standpoint, that is illustrating a society with no fears, and no acknowledged limitations. Supreme confidence, in other words. The Aes Sedai had mastered all science, they had jo-cars and sho-wings, comparable to our automobiles and airplanes. Pollution free, also.

Then the DO's prison is opened, and the war that follows destroys that confidence, shattering the "American bubble" type of naivete that the world had. Everything is not just flowers and singing anymore. There is no more certainty in the world.

Men and women Aes Sedai are separated, and the list goes on as to the detrimental effects of the DO.

Now, fast forward to the present and we see a world that is medieval in comparison. (Forsaken repeatedly refer to these people as barbarians or something to that effect) Why the devolution?

What if the taint caused this in an indirect way?

Quote of the Moment

Blood and bloody ashes!

-Royal Malkeri Oath

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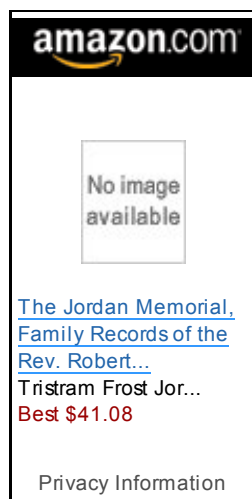
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After the Breaking, everybody was recovering from basic shock. Imagine waking up in a world totally different, mountains where the sea used to be, etc. Pretty much starting from scratch. Everybody started bickering over land, and they had no common cause except to fight for power. There was no unity in the world. Twice before the present, Westland almost united, and twice that unification was thwarted by Ishamael (I will get to that shortly).

This is how I see all of this relating to Aes Sedai. First of all, these Aes Sedai after the breaking were very wary, hence the need for the three oaths at all, the displacement of things having to do with the power to the Aiel to hide and protect, and the division into Ajahs.

These Aes Sedai slowly start losing years on their lives (oath rod) and begin to weaken in strength (weeding out ability to channel by gentling all men, due to the taint). They go from a world where the power was the answer to every question, to a world where the power is regulated and distrusted. So, Aes Sedai focus more on manipulation through power, and lose the feeling that the One Power is the most important. I know this sounds a little contrary, however, think about everything we have heard about Aes Sedai (except in battle, where they are only creating weapons). The OP is not used that often, in research or anything like that, only for the most practical things.

In summary, Aes Sedai are knowingly weaker in the power, and are forced to focus on other things not having to do with the power because of worldly strife. So, no unity with the men combined with the extenuating circumstances around them, and Aes Sedai could be said to be supplying a self-fulfilling mental block. I know, this sounds random and obscure, but Robert Jordan has focused a lot on mental blocks in this series. If they are there (the mental blocks), it is almost impossible to supersede them. How are they broken? Every example of a broken block in channeling has been shown to involve some kind of heavy stress or need. Nynaeve's example fits here. She surrendered because she thought she was going to die and wanted to live so badly (for Lan) that she saved herself. Subsequently, she blew a hole in the boat. However, RJ never mentioned her channeling consciously, it just happened. Now, think about how wilders start channeling. Need. They have a conscious (and emotional) need and perform a "miracle" subconsciously. RJ in the BWW states that wilders who go through the entire process from touching the source to breaking their block are usually stronger and accomplish more with the power.

What made me think of all of this was the theory post about how Rand healed Bela. I don't think we have been shown how he did it by another example. I think that his need forced him subconsciously to perform a miracle, for lack of a better word. It may be as simple as "he desperately did not want Bela to get left behind, so she didn't get left behind". Where else have we seen this? Egwene being healed by

Nynaeve, Rand's trolloc-killing tornado in tSR, Rand's battle's with Ishamael, Rand's battle with just about any forsaken, for that matter. These seemingly impossible events happen, and the doer has no idea what they are doing. Now, let's analyze from a perspective of need. What does intense need do to somebody? It replaces rationality with panic. Panic takes away those preconceived notions that a person has about causal relationships, forcing them to try to will something to happen even though rationally they would think it was impossible. Now in real life we would call this desperate hope, because we don't have a way to make things happen. However, the characters in these books do have a way: The One Power. What if there were no limitations with the power? What if the One Power was really what it says it is: the one and only power to do anything). I believe that RJ has shown us something important. The only limitation in these books is human limitation. Human limitation is mental combined with ability, just like everything in our world. However, Westland has been gifted with no limitation on ability (linking and sa'angreal, for example), so that just leaves mental. Examples of how this applies to the books are as follows:

1. Aviendha's subconscious rendering of a gateway to get away from Rand. He appeared when she was naked, which instigated an extreme, emotional reaction from Aviendha and she fled. How did she flee? She reached for the power and made it happen.
2. Rand rescued his Keri, his quasi-mother from Ishamael. How? He just made it happen because the alternative was unthinkable for him.
3. Nynaeve healing Logain and Flinn healing the Aes Sedai. Both refused to believe that something could not be done, taking away their mental limitation. Combine that with a frustration on societal limitations, people telling you that you can't do something, and it happens. (Also, remember that Nynaeve uses all 5 subsections of the power to heal, as opposed to just a few like the yellows. She just thinks it "feels right" to do this, and we can assume that Flinn does the same thing. In other words, she just uses the power as a whole to accomplish something that she sincerely believes she can do.)
4. Rand acting with any of the sa'angreal. He just does things because he feels he can, and doesn't accept the possibility of failure.
5. Aviendha's undoing a weave. Aes Sedai thought it was impossible so they couldn't do it. Wise Women were never taught it was impossible, so they discovered it.
6. Nynaeve channeling in the ter'angreal when being raised to accepted. She did something thought impossible because she was emotionally involved, and she doesn't believe anything to be impossible (she has been quoted quite a few times saying that the Power should have no limitations).

...And many more.

Aes Sedai have doomed themselves to being less strong (as shown above), which takes away their ability somewhat. I am not saying knowledge is obsolete, but I am saying that Aes Sedai can't perform on a superior level because of their self imposed limitations (oath rod) and their mental limitations (believing something to be impossible, therefore never striving for it.)

Ishamael might have figured this out, being that he is the philosopher. Why is it that the greatest heroes are those that do not accept limitation? Because, (and this is very Nietzsche) the human will to act supersedes everything else. If you can believe it can be done, it can be done. What is Ishamael called? The Betrayer of Hope. I believe this to be of the utmost significance. He comes in and creates doubt and dissention. He sent the Trollocs down to destroy the complacency of the world once. He turned Hawkwing against the Aes Sedai to destroy it again, convincing AH to send his army abroad. What are the two dooms that were sealed? One in the past and one in the future (this comment was stated early in the series, so the future doom may have already culminated.) The past doom was the dissolution of Hawkwing's unified world, and the present doom is a huge, powerful army that arrives just at the wrong time to throw a wrench into Rand's plans to unify the world.

Why let the Lord of Chaos rule? To create doubt and dissention. There was a theory about the DO's power coming from chaos. What if that is not the answer. What if the DO's power comes from doubt and limitation, an effect of chaos, and the Light's strength is faith and hope. I believe Ishamael has figured this out, and that is why he is not concerned with killing Rand, he just wants those little statues. He is trying to take away that tool that would give Rand the confidence in his ability to do what must be done.

That is what Cadsuane must teach the Asha'man, by the way. They must learn that if they combine their efforts with the Aes Sedai and work mutually, then there are no limitations, period. (It could have something to do with women leading the circle of a link, being that RJ states that men have the power, and women have the skill with the OP). What does RJ say about links? A link composed of equal numbers of men and women is stronger than anything else, even if the members are weaker. Again, he is showing that if one uses all of the One Power in a type of balance, one can accomplish anything. I think that this was the greatest detrimental effect that the taint had: it took away the ability of channelers to work together and accomplish feats impossible for just men or just women. Remember, it was only men that sealed the Bore, which accounts for its inadequacy.

Going further down this road...

This is how laughter and tears come into play with need. Rand, after

being in the prison in Far Madding, comes out and is noticeable harder, "steel", colder than a winter's heart(which by the way puts a new emphasis on the title). He is described as emotionless and distant. Able to do what he needs to do", able to sacrifice what he needs to sacrifice, which is why he has been trying to steel himself in the first place. He wants to lose his desire for life to save life. That is why love is so important in the series. What's important may not have to do with love itself, but the capacity to love. All of the good characters exhibit a capacity to love, even if they haven't found it yet. Why love? Because it supplies an impetus to act, a reason to keep going. Perrin disallows the option of not finding Faile in TAR (tDR), and he finds her and saves her, driven on by his love, his need.

Cadsuane states that without laughter and tears (which are responses to situations in which you are emotionally involved), victory at Tarmon Gaidin would be as bad as defeat. So, Rand must become emotionally involved. His desire to defeat the DO has to be more than to save the world, which to Rand is some arbitrary reward in his struggle with the DO. He will be victorious when he has some superior need, some emotionally desperate need, to put the DO away forever. And the key to this is him becoming less of a weapon and more of philosopher, in a sense. He must develop faith that he can do it. This has precedent. Luke saved Vader spiritually not by being a badass jedi, but by being his son and sacrificing himself for Darth Vader, fully confident that his father would not let him be destroyed. Rand may just have to want something so bad, so emotionally, that he replaces his pre-conceived doubts with a desperate hope that will supply an irrational faith of success. Combine the ultimate will to act with ultimate ability (he still has to do something badass with a lot of the power), and he wins.

What this situation will be can be argued. It could have something to do with his babies, again the parent/child emotional bond that we see in Star Wars. Or, Rand's trio could perform a Luke Skywalker-type function, with Rand being Vader. (I know this is a little overkill on Star Wars, but it is analogous.) This is the importance of his three women. I think that their perspective of him, which he can feel in his head, will save him and keep him human. Remember Min's ultimate confidence that Rand could cleanse Saidin? Rand looked at her and only felt confidence and love exuding from her through the bond. I think there will come a time when Rand is defeated spiritually and thinks that nothing can be done to defeat the DO. The women through the bond will effuse love and confidence into him, or maybe sadness and despair from a predicament they put themselves into because of Rand, but either way it will make him just "do" what must be done, without thinking about it and rationalizing it. He will need desperate, emotional need...a capacity for laughter and tears.

I know this was long, but I hope you got through the whole thing because I feel that this is a pretty good hypothesis of what could happen.

Dedric, the philosopher.

Burr says: I don't know. I got confused by the part about Darth Vader. Maybe Rand needs to give Ishy a hug.

Agree or Disagree?





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