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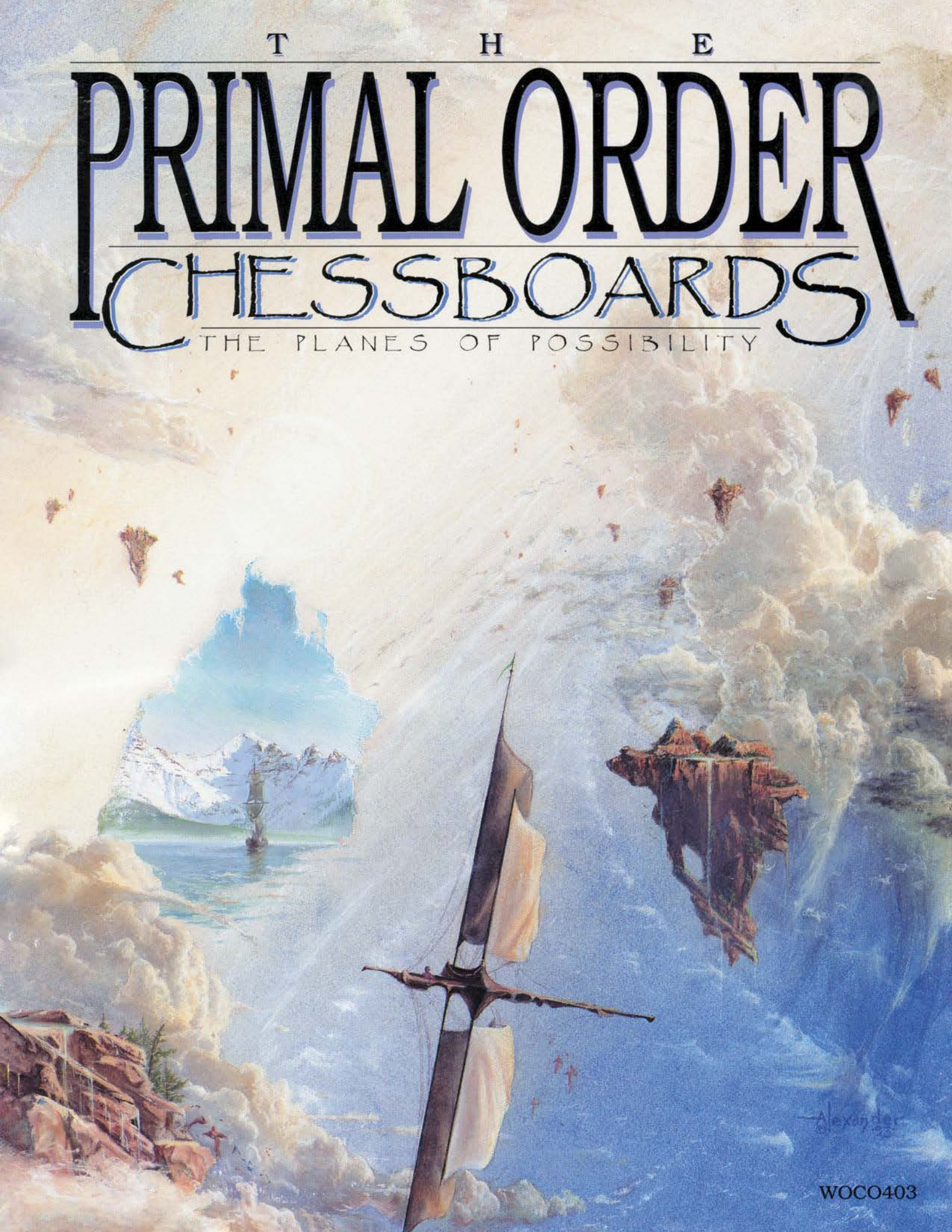
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PRIMAL ORDER

CHESSBOARDS

THE PLANES OF POSSIBILITY

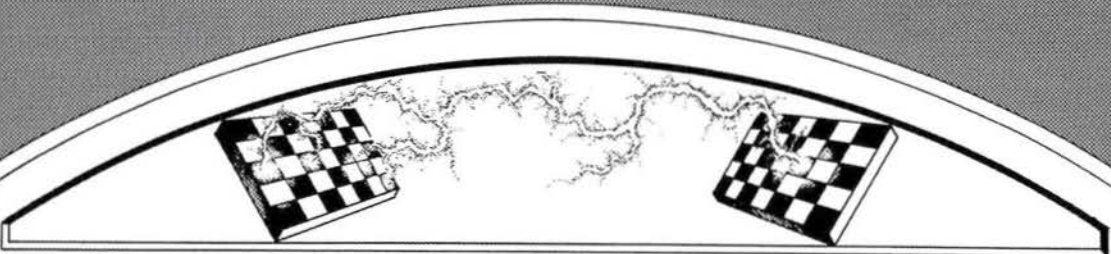


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2023

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CHESSBOARDS

THE PLANES OF POSSIBILITY



CHESSBOARDS

PLANES OF POSSIBILITY



by Dave Howell

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Printed in the United States of America by McNaughton & Gunn

96 95 94 93

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

ISBN 1-880992-12-4

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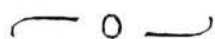
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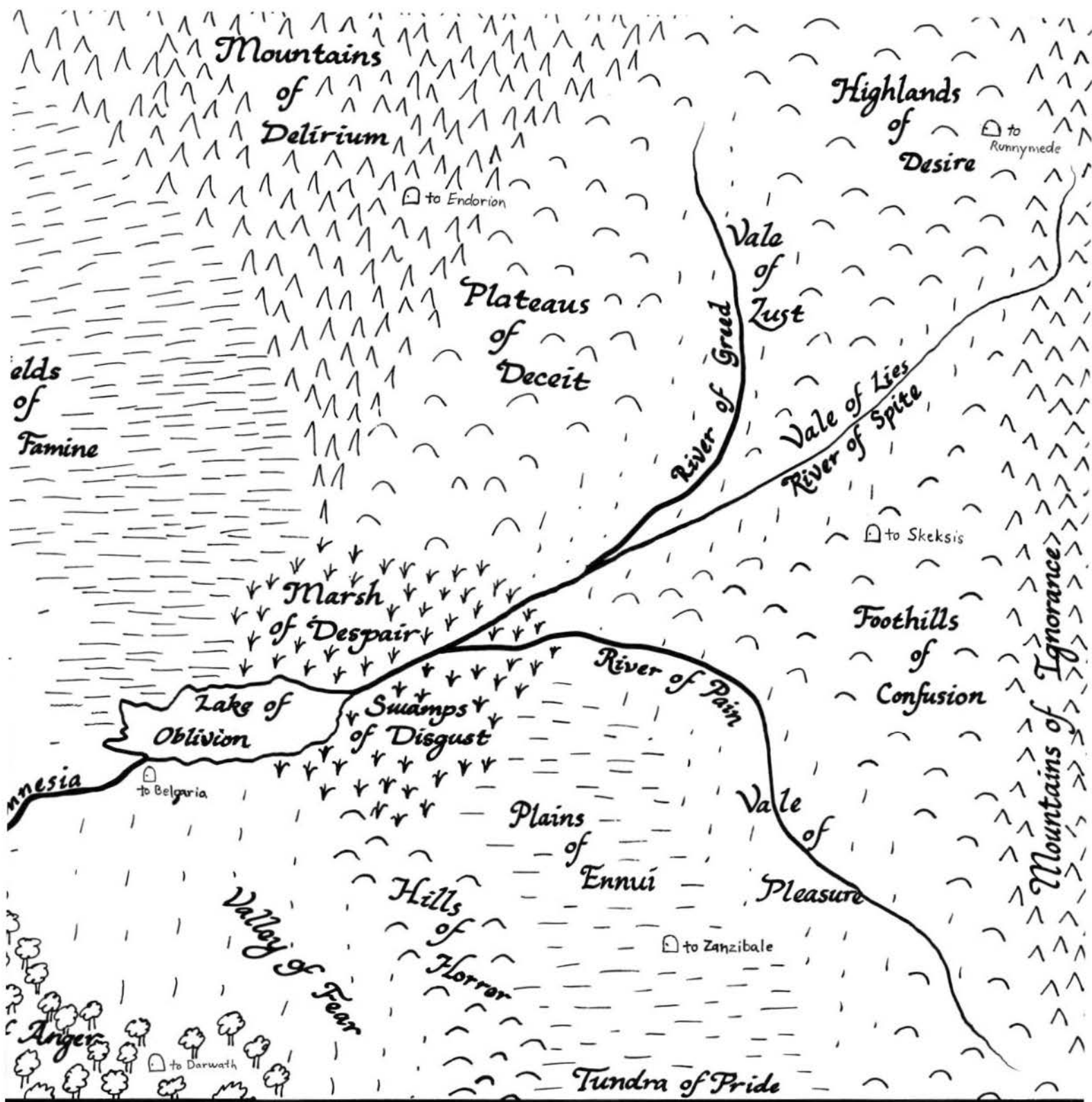
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The Lands Beyond, or The Unnamed Land

Through this twisted land lies the path
of many travelers, as they move from
one gate to another.

It is for none a destination.





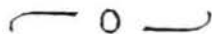
Chapter 1: Broadening The Horizons

"Had we but world enough, and time..."
—Andrew Marvell

One of the most enjoyable things about roleplaying games is the chance to create and explore new and interesting places. Out of the valley, over the horizon, into the sky—and beyond. Have you ever wondered just how far you can go?

That's what this book is about: just how far you can go. As you'll discover, it's very far indeed. You'll read about how to engineer new universes to provide consistency and logical behavior, and you'll see how logical behavior can still baffle and confuse people. There are dozens of imagination prompters and "seed ideas" that will season your multiverse like spice in soup. You'll see how to tie apparently incompatible universes together and how to get from one place to another *without* tying the two together. Various methods of travel and preventing travel, ways to tease and amuse, ways to slap down even the gods themselves—yes, planes can play a remarkably active role in roleplaying.

Can planes really be that interesting? Well, let me tell you a story...



There's no such thing as a typical wizard's workshop: the paths of power are innumerable, and no two people walk them the same way. So when the powerthief entered the room, he had to spend a couple of precious moments determining that he'd reached his destination.

Thievery had come naturally to the diminutive Zaveb, but his lack of stature growing up had made defending the curious nature of his magic powers problematic. A spellcaster of reasonable skill, he wielded powers that materialized through his sense of taste and smell. While he found this effective enough, actually working magic required actions that others often found... amusing.

Sniffing carefully, Zaveb crossed the room to the window. The only odor of immediate concern was the smell of alarm or protection spells, and there seemed to be one on the window. He licked the sill. Yes, there was a subtle spell that would hinder any attempt to exit as well as enter. Fortunately, he had no intention of leaving by the window.

Jitilak the Sorceress had made quite a name for herself in this little town, showing particular skill with woven materials. Her medium of choice was quite evident in the room; many of the books were covered in cloth, and most of the storage containers were bags. Jitilak had recently acquired some items in which Zaveb was particularly interested. He suspected that Jitilak didn't know the nature of these items and had them here in her workshop. If she'd foreseen their nature, they'd be in the house's secure room and too risky to acquire.

Zaveb stopped by a long, thin bag, sniffing intently. Yes! The Azherki Staff, a powerful interplanar transport item, was stored here. Now where was the shield ring? More sniffing and licking ensued before he determined that little item's keeping place was a small bag on



the wall. Zaveb sighed. Jitilak had probably mistaken it for a woman's ring, although it had a break in the perimeter. A powerful item, the ring gave remarkable protection to its wearer if worn properly: through the nose.

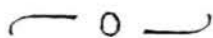
Zaveb had no intention of keeping either item, tempting though they were. Their value to certain "collectors" was more than he cared to pass up. The ring was easy to carry, and the staff was going to provide his escape; neither would be in his possession for long.

The hardest part was coming up. To cut, open, or otherwise disrupt the bags would immediately alert Jitilak. As it was, she might already feel something. Zaveb hoped that by the time she responded, he'd be away.

Zaveb started with the staff. He examined the bag for the seam he needed, then spat on one end. Gesturing rapidly, he convinced the bag that it needn't be so intimate with certain threads, and the seam unraveled. He snatched the Azherki Staff as he ran to the other bag, unraveling it the same way. A cascade of round objects fell to the floor. He grabbed likely items and popped them in his mouth until he found the ring he wanted. None of the others were worth taking.

With a radiant flash and a shelf-shaking bang, the door to the workroom flew open. Zaveb whirled the staff upside down and struck the end upon the floor as the figure in the doorway stepped into the room. Awash in a drift of gauzy fabrics, it could only be Jitilak. As the floor beneath his feet became insubstantial, Zaveb regretted not having enough time to choose his destination. He also regretted not knowing what the sorceress had thrown in his general direction as he dropped out of sight.

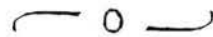
Discretion is the better part of valor.



Jitilak sat on her stool, staring thoughtfully at the floor. She was pretty sure that the thief had taken the new staff she'd obtained. Pre-

sumably he also took the ring she'd acquired at the same time, since her rings were all spilled on the floor. She cursed herself for a fool. She'd come expecting to find her cat or a breeze had jostled the bags, and she had blown the door open "just in case." In her surprise at finding a real burglar, she'd grabbed the wrong spool. She should have thrown the Thread of Binding, which would have promptly cocooned the vandal; instead, she had thrown the Thread of Finding.

But sometimes a mistake turns out to be the right thing to do. Clearly, there was much she didn't know about that staff he took. She'd assumed that he was dropping to the room below. But when she looked at the end of the thread she held in her hand, it trailed from her fingers to wander across the floor, then stopped, apparently embedded in the stone. No, wherever he'd gone, it wasn't downstairs.



Zaveb dropped and landed painlessly on a spongy, soft surface. No, he realized in alarm, it was more like ooze, and he was sinking into it. He scrambled to his feet to take stock of the countryside. It seemed to be made up mostly of rather literally rolling hills. Well, they were more bobbing and sliding, but motion was involved. It was like looking at the ocean in slow motion. Zaveb found that if he stopped walking, he would sink. Seasickness was definitely a danger.

So, Zaveb found after walking for hours, was dehydration. There didn't seem to be any food, water, or solid ground, just the endlessly pulsating hills, dark red under a light green sky. Shrugging in acceptance, he struck the ground with the end of the staff, this time adding the gesture necessary for a longer-lasting portal. With the staff held to his mouth and his tongue hanging out, he paced the perimeter of the gateway, trying to determine where it led and move it so that it would lead back home. He'd just started shifting the destination when the ground heaved up through the gate, disrupting it and forcing it closed. With an oath, the powerthief struck the ground again, reopening the portal. He'd only shifted it a short distance toward his home world before the ground dropped away and the portal again collapsed. He realized that he'd have to keep creating portals until one of them opened close enough to his destination that he could shift the arrival point home before the ground destroyed the gateway.

Mere bad luck caused Zaveb to keep opening the gate in the same place. If he'd kept moving across the countryside, the landbeasts underneath him would never have had time to react. But he paced in a circle while waiting for the right gate, and realized too late the error of his ways.

Zaveb was preparing to strike another gate when the landbeast made its move. A loop of landflesh hooked Zaveb's foot as he walked, causing him to pitch forward. Falling, he watched in horror as the ground just

ahead zippered open to reveal a cavity lined with pulsating pink nodules, glistening wetly with an odorous slime. Since he'd been holding the staff in front of him, it was the first thing into the landbeast's mouth. As it struck the lining, the whole pit twinkled with the telltale glimmer of the gate's opening. Zaveb, following the staff, fell through the mouth, and fell...

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... and fell, and fell. The burglar realized, as his eyes watered from the airstream beating on them, that he wouldn't be arriving on solid land anytime soon. It didn't look like he'd be landing at all, actually. As far as Zaveb could see in any direction, there was only sky and clouds.

Now, this was going to be a problem. Without a solid surface, he wasn't sure how to open a gate. And though this world might have its charms, well-stocked inns didn't appear to be one of them. What it did appear to have, circling below him, were winged creatures with teeth. Many teeth. Perhaps being fed wasn't as big a worry as being food.

When Zaveb had been planning the heist, escaping to another plane using the very object he'd stolen seemed like such a good idea...

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When One World Isn't Big Enough

A lot of roleplaying worlds start out as a collection of rooms buried in the ground: a dungeon. Next comes a series of dungeons, where players mysteriously appear at the entrance after picking up new supplies off-stage. Eventually, land appears between the dungeons, then cities, then

The Wizard of Oz

Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain.



countries. Mountains, rivers, oceans, and continents follow. Gamemasters start realizing that there are a phenomenal number of abandoned castles and whatnot in one little area, and begin to spread them out. Travel starts involving horses, ships, and flying carpets.

Eventually, players learn a lot about the entire world. For some reason, long before an adventuring troupe can claim to have visited most of the world, they want to go farther. To the moon. To Oz. Off the edge. Gamemasters may even force such trips. If the world-to-date was born when the gamemaster was younger and less experienced, the GM may chafe at the restrictions he or she has unknowingly built into the world. It should have been hoop-shaped. It should have more seas or parts with no air. It should be different.

The Multiverse. So one day the adventurers find a spell, an amulet, or a mysterious door, and before you know it, next Saturday's adventure is going to take place where the sea is boiling hot and pigs have wings. A short time there and, poof, you're off to where the plants have an attitude and the sky is a blue plaid. One world, or even one universe, is no longer sufficient. Now within reach are the worlds of the Serpent Queen and the lands of the grue; the Darkling Plain and Cloud Nine are tourist destinations. A multiplicity of universes exists, each with its own set of rules. Together, they can be collected into all the places player characters have ever gone or ever could go: the multiverse.

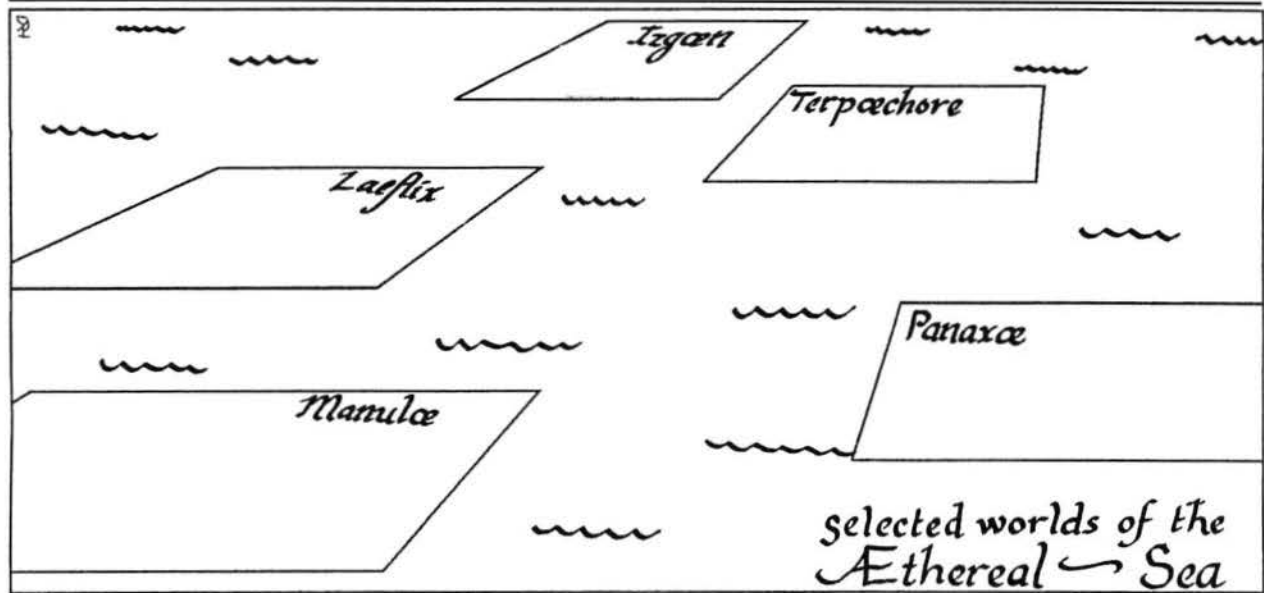
Planes. Not all of the locations in the multiverse warrant the term "world," however. The lands that Gulliver visited would probably fit into an area smaller than the Hawaiian Islands occupy. Wonderland could have fit into the area of one good-sized English estate. The term of choice for such distinct locales, as you've no doubt guessed, is *plane*. A plane is basically any place where it is possible for the nature of reality to be different from that in the surrounding area. The world of the Dark Crystal certainly isn't our world, nor is anyplace where Kryptonians can fly through the air and see through things.

Planes are often distinguished by their separation. Narnia isn't someplace that you can visit just by crossing the street. Nobody knows how to get to Moominvalley, or the Lands Beyond, or Middle-Earth. This criterion for judging planes is not always reliable, however. Xanth was polite enough to have a marked barrier on land, but you can sail to Lilliput without ever knowing when you've crossed the line.

So what really makes a plane a plane? Why are some planes harder to reach? Why don't armies invade other planes and take them over more often—or do they? What lies down that rabbit hole? In the wardrobe? Through that vorpal door? The vast new vistas offered by a multiverse teeming with planes should make even the most stolid GM tingle with excitement.

from the introduction to the Encyclopædia Planographica

Intelligent travelers will always be well informed regarding their destinations. The travel guide is an indispensable part of the traveler's equipment, allowing the most efficient and enjoyable expenditure of time.



Opportunity Knocks

Well don't just sit there and tingle. For your entertainment and enlightenment, the upcoming text will describe five planar groups that will be used in examples throughout the rest of the book. In the margins, to enhance your reading pleasure, will be excerpts from selected travelogues and other choice sources. Some add to description of the examples; others provide information on some of the many other worlds of the multiverse. For general reference, two books in particular are recommended. The *Encyclopædia Planographica* is an excellent reference source, but doesn't usually capture the true flavor of a plane. *The Planar Prowler's Guide to the Multiverse* is great for flavor, but can be a little flaky at times. Let's look at some of the places that a planar prowler might find.

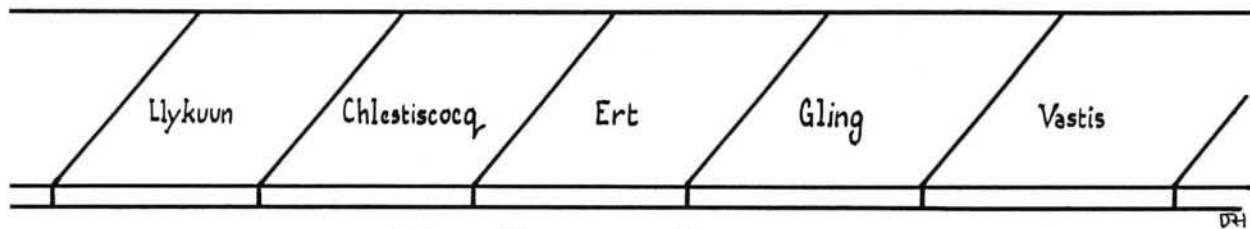
The Worlds of the Æthereal Sea. One intriguing set of planes is found in the Æthereal sea. Each plane appears to be a closed world to its inhabitants; if they walk far enough, they'll arrive back where they started. However, while the local planar reality makes each plane seem edgeless, they are actually islands drifting in the sea. The recommended local guidebook for this group of planes is *Sites and Sights to See on the Sea*, from Kzlingit's Æthereal Publishing Company.

If the islands themselves are the planes, what does that make the Æthereal Sea? A plane that contains other planes is a *metaplane*. In this case, the metaplane is tangible and occupies space. Other metaplanes are less physical, acting more like a concept hugging a particular group of planes. More on metaplanes will be found later in the book.

The Fuervir Continuum. Another noteworthy group of planes are located in the Fuervir Continuum, where each plane has two neighbors. Many of the planes appear infinite to the inhabitants, but others have

from *Sites and Sights to See on the Sea*

One of the most exhilarating activities anywhere on the islands is the trip between them. No sea of water can compare to the fury and glory that is the Æthereal Sea itself. The spume of this metaplanar medium and the excitement of watching enormous waves of æther break over the ship are sights unmatched in the multiverse.



• The Fuervir Continuum •

from Pan-Planar Publisher's Septe-journal

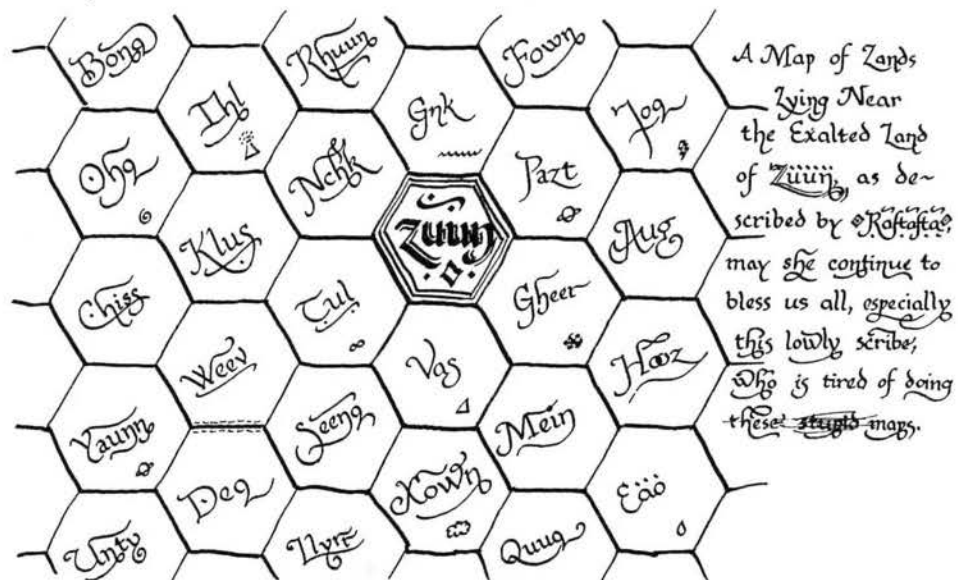
An engaging and useful book, despite the title. The Boring Travel series is kept up to date, and we recommend it for anybody traveling in the continuum.

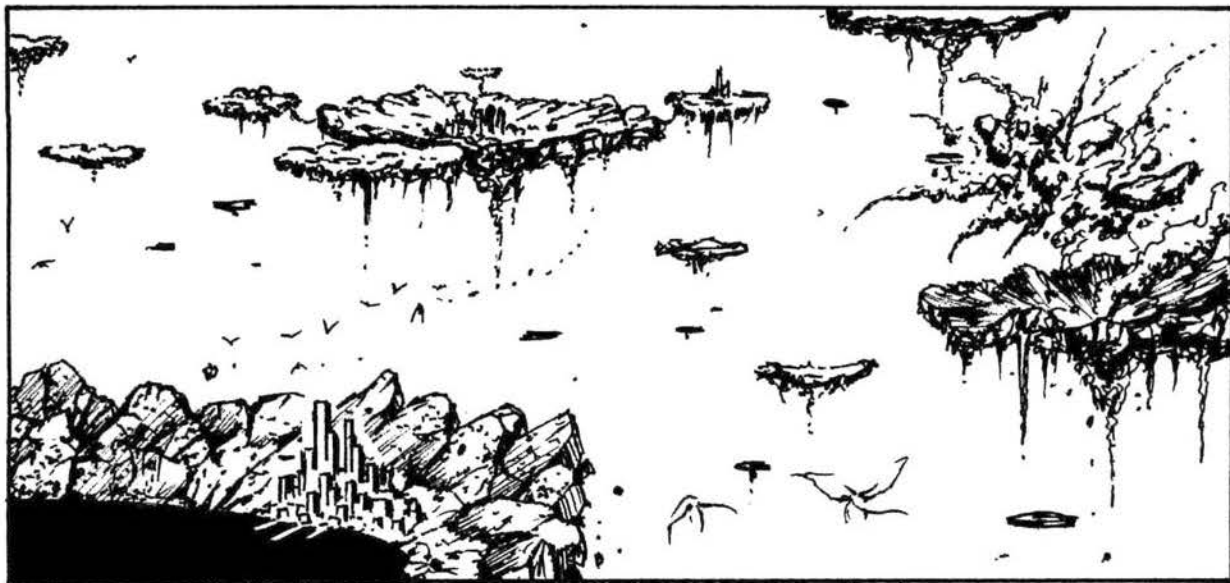
borders separated by a wall of mist—a rather disquieting trait. The nature of this mist is baffling to the plane's philosophers; many travelers have been lost while trying to penetrate its mysteries.

Our reference book for this metaplane will be *Edgar's Boring Travel Book*. The unusual name is intended to assure the traveler that no surprises will occur.

The Lands of Ledúa. The Lands of Ledúa are a distinctly diverse bunch of planes. Many of the lands have no particular tourist value, since they are composed of the typical trees, mountains, rivers, sunshine, and whatnot so common to the worlds of the multiverse. However, this scarcity of tourist attractions is offset by the ease of travel between planes and the quantity of planes available from which to choose places of interest.

These planes, while individually conforming to any one of a number





Ben Jones © 1993

of different map systems, are in the broader scheme of things arranged hexagonally. It is possible to skip from one plane to the next with great rapidity, thereby reaching distant planes with ease.

The best guide for this realm is the religious text from the Raftaftan Church, based on the plane of Zuun. Raftafta is the Goddess of Travel, and she has provided her followers with a reference book of unusual detail.

The Kaqxachle Chips. If the Lands of Ledúa are easy to travel between, the Kaqxachle (KAK-zak-ul) Chips are the most fun. Far, far down in the metaplane of Kaqxachle, the Eternity Mud bubbles and steams. Other parts occasionally go dormant and dry out. As the Mud dries it curls up in huge sheets, and if it dries long enough, it will eventually break loose and start to drift upward.

As this muddy crust rises, bits of matter, seeds, and other organic materials will fall from chips higher up. Eventually plants will grow, followed by flying animals. Soon a complete ecosystem will develop, shaped by the chips that happened to pass above this protoplane. Thousands of years later, the chip will drift to the top of the universe, where it will be burned and dissolved by the Sun's Blood, a barrier of liquid light.

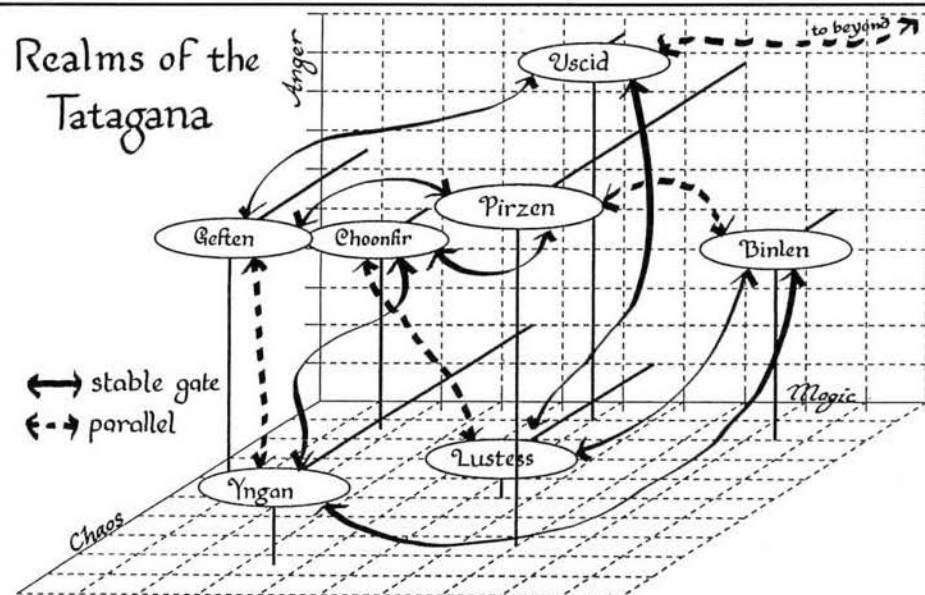
Fortunately, the space between the Mud and the Blood is filled with air. Creatures of wildly varied description fly between the chips, which can range in size from "barely enough room to stand" to "months of travel by sailboat from edge to edge," or even larger. Civilizations have come and gone on some chips without ever realizing that their worlds had edges.

There are winds, some quite strong, so the chips change position constantly, occasionally deviating from their slow drift upwards. A chip may be in shadow for minutes or years as a chip higher up obstructs the sunlight. Water can fall from the edge of higher chips, or spontaneously

from The Book of the Many Ways of Raftafta, Student Edition with Annotations, preface 4, paragraph 35

And, O Believer, beware lest the homebody covet your book, and seek to separate you from this, your boon companion. Those who would travel by Raftafta, but not with Raftafta, are to be vilified.

[Annotation: Modern theologians feel that "vilification" is clearly defined in postface 2, paragraph 13, where "those who prey on travelers are to be vilified until their death, and the tears left behind" where 'tears' are River's Tears, i.e., stones. Raftafta thus clearly intends her worshipers to stone any nonbeliever possessing a copy of this book.]



from One Chip at a Time: Traveling the Kaqxachle Metaplane

On the chip commonly known as Poofleis, a curious sport has developed. Poofleis is home to a remarkably strong, stretchy vine, and the natives of the chip have taken to tying one end of a long length of vine around their ankles, anchoring the other end at the edge of the chip. They then leap over the edge. After plummeting downward, often hundreds of feet, they are propelled upward, cycling up and down many times before coming to a halt. Then they're hauled back to the edge of the chip to do it all again. While it's not recommended that tourists attempt to participate, it is fascinating to watch, in part because sometimes the vines fail to hold.

appear from within. Since many chips curl up at the edges, there are often great interior seas. Many animals, and even some highly perceptive life forms, use the craggy bottom side of the chips as their ecological niche.

I chose the guidebook *One Chip at a Time: Traveling the Kaqxachle Metaplane* for this enchanting metaplane.

The Realms of the Tatagana. The final planes to make the list are the Realms of the Tatagana, a set of seven planes in one unusual metaplane. The Tatagana are seven divine siblings who discovered this cluster of planes and have claimed them as their own, one deity per plane.

What makes the metaplane unusual has given headaches to the four sisters and three brothers. The metaplane enforces three attributes on the planes: anger, magic, and chaos. Depending on where a plane is located on the metaplane, it will have varying amounts of the three traits. The plane Uscid, for example, is far along the anger axis. Animals bite people, the slightest insult will involve the unwary in a duel, plants are usually poisonous, and quicksand is common, as are volcanoes. Yngan is low on the anger axis, and wanderers are much less likely to be attacked while visiting. It is not, however, more peaceful, since it has a high chaos value. The weather can change in an instant, people find themselves quitting jobs and moving quite often, plants change color, plant seeds change which plant they grow into, animal behavior is unpredictable, and so on.

Needless to say, a guidebook for the realms is essential, in order to avoid the more dangerous planes. The travel book of choice is actually a textbook: *Realms of the Tatagana: A Study in Contrasts*. While a bit dry, it has the virtue of being exceptionally reliable.

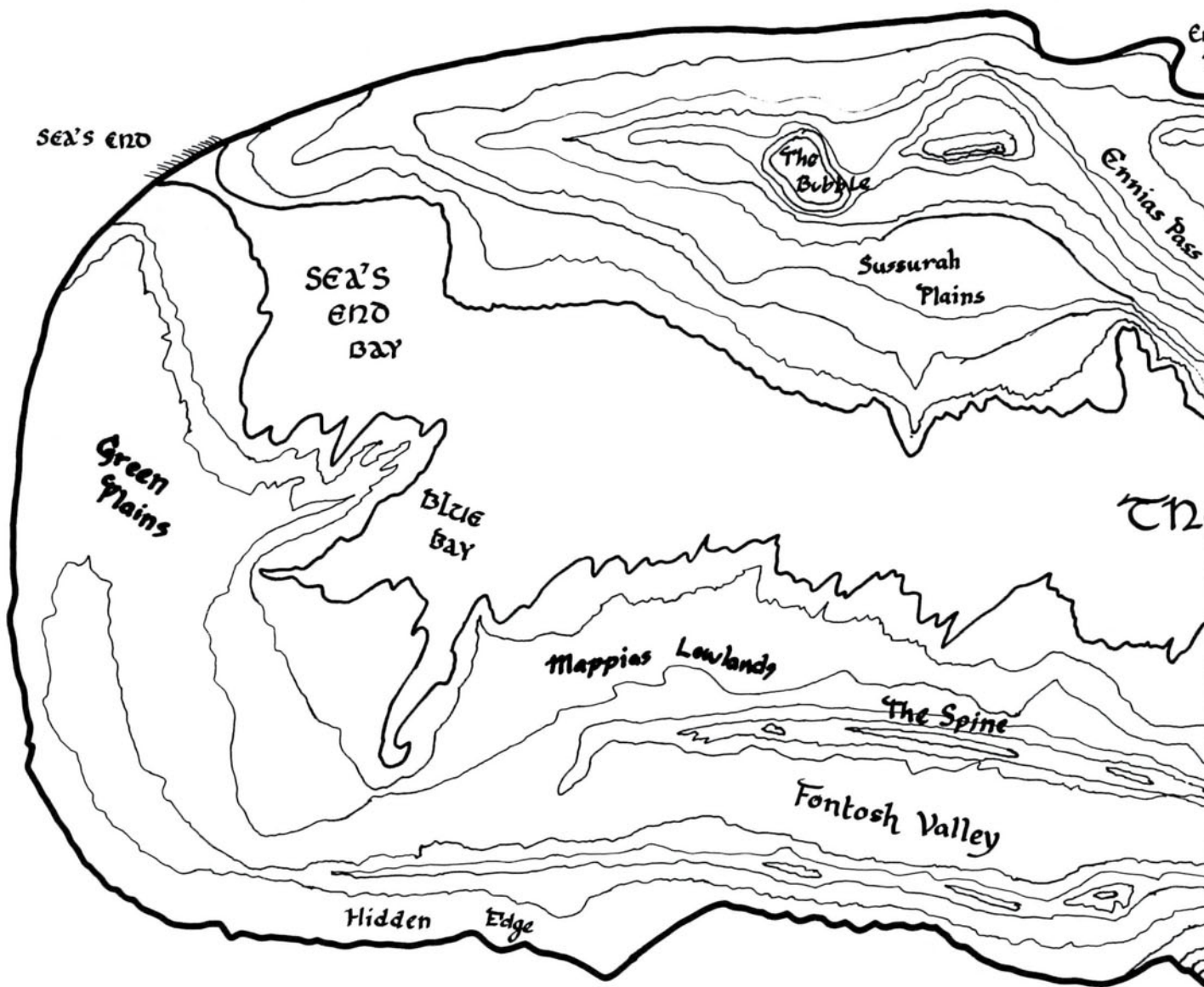
Preview of Coming Attractions

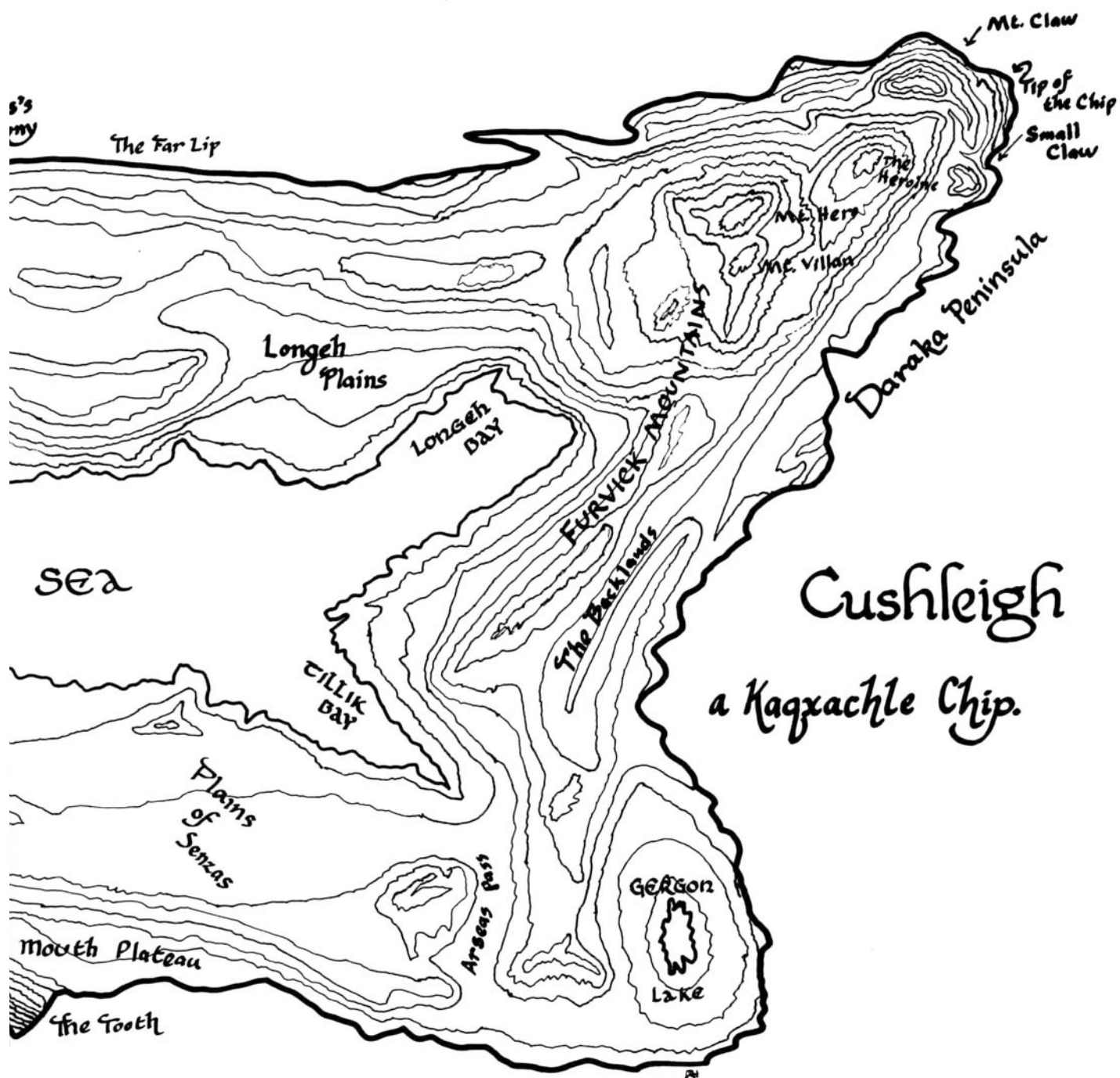
With some places to visit lined up, we're ready to travel. As we go, we'll examine the properties and attributes of the planes, what happens when traveling between them, and how they are related. In exploring these planes, we'll learn more about planes in general, and the more or less scientific basis for their existence. Finally, we'll be looking at the relationship between planes and deities.

from Realms of the Tatagana: A Study in Contrasts

The Tataganan planes are distinctive among planes controlled by deities, as there is unusual religious freedom. The number of nonconformists on the planes at any time is usually small, but unbelief is allowed, due no doubt in part to the struggle each deity has simply to provide for his or her worshipers in the face of the forces at work.

It is important to note that, while an inhabitant or visitor may be a nonconformist, any display of dissent is promptly suppressed. Visitors from other planes must be careful to observe the minimum of proper public rituals. Since there is significant trade between the planes, there are usually schools near the appropriate gates to assist the planar traveler to in avoiding religious faux pas.





Chapter 2: The Shape of Things to Come

"Your Highness, I ask for ships to explore the edge of the world."

"The what? You fool, everybody knows the world is round!"

"I believe this is a false assumption. The edge should have collected great wealth over the ages."

"Mr. Krystoforo, I've never heard such nonsense in all my reign."

from The Planar Prowler's Guide to the Multiverse

Yet another one of those tedious round worlds, with all the charm of an eyeball, and the sightseeing opportunities of a closet.

from One Chip at a Time: Traveling the Kaqxachle Metaplane

The inhabitants of the Wirgha chip labor under the belief that the entire universe consists of their chip and of screens upon which are projected the illusion of other places. Despite this conviction, or perhaps because of it, the edges of the chip are very sparsely inhabited. The majority of the population huddles on the vast group of islands found on the chip's inland sea.

Have you ever noticed that the maps of our globe and maps of fantasy realms tend to look different? Your typical map of the Lost Lands of the Koosp will probably be overlaid with hexes or maybe marked out in a standard grid. Maps of Earth have latitude and longitude lines that are spaced out differently. And what about those maps that are cut into weird patterns?

Yes, the truth can now be revealed. Most imaginary lands are flat! Earth maps, as you probably know, are strange because our planet is round. While this is convenient for people who want to travel around it and while it also facilitates trade, it's intensely annoying to mapmakers, who would be much happier if the Earth were a disk on the back of a turtle, or some such thing.

There's some irony in the fact that many adventurers—and gamemasters—are under the illusion that their worlds *are* round, despite the evidence to the contrary: flat maps of their lands of fantasy prove accurate, and there are no time zones. This quirk, while awkward, can often be repaired by adding the time zones and map distortions and blaming the confusion on medieval cartographers, for example.

The Sphere. A round world does have advantages, mostly in its familiarity. There's already a system in place to handle seasons, sunrises, weather, all that environmental stuff. Many fantasy worlds take place on a single continent, where the distortions of a flat map of a round world can safely be ignored.

This familiarity can also be a trap, however. If you decide that air reaches all the way to the moon so that characters can get there on the back of Moon Moths, some players may start wondering how it can stay up, since atmospheric friction should cause it to fall. Players will assume climate changes to the north and south, but not the east and west.

These assumptions aren't necessarily bad. Having a reasonably comfortable world allows players, especially beginning ones, to concentrate on more important matters, like not being lunch for the Mock Corridor monster, a worm whose gullet is exactly ten feet wide and ten feet tall, and looks like stone from the inside. Since Earth is available for examination, we won't dwell on global planes, instead moving on to more interesting things.

Flat Planes. We sort of assumed, above, that a flat plane would have an edge for foolish ships to sail off. This isn't required. Declare the world flat and infinite. No matter how far a party travels, just keep tacking on new map squares.

If the world is flat and extends forever, how does the sun rise and set? Well, how about borrowing from the Apollo myth? Far, far in the east is where the Sun lives, and every day she flies into the air, etcetera. This means that if the travelers travel far enough, there either won't be

any sun or there will be a different sun, and that there are twilight lands, or places where the sun rises in the northeast. The moon, or moons, can be handled in the same way.

Another possibility is that the sky emits light in parallel beams. To a point observer, the only light they seen directly would appear to be a spot, since only the beams from that part of the sky shine directly on the observer. This means that it is noon absolutely everywhere at the same time.

Stars? Let your imagination roam. Tiny, long-lived creatures hovering far above, releasing at night the light they absorbed in the day. Holes in the sky, where the light from the Great Beyond leaks through. Lamps, tended by minions of the Great Sky God.

Many other effects can easily be blamed on deities. The changes of the seasons might reflect the eternal battle between fire and ice. Note that this could result in seasons of unpredictable length. For meteorologically inclined GMs, weather will have to be driven by thermal differences in the land itself, and in land-water borders.

If the plane does have edges, then the sun can once again orbit the plane. Either the space beyond the edge has air, which is nice for the people who fall off, or there's some magic that prevents the air from leaving. The Kaqxachle Chips are planes of this nature: fairly flat slabs that float through air. In this case, there's one source of light for all the chips. The Sun's Blood is like a faraway ceiling that glows, so even when one chip is casting a shadow on another, the lower chip isn't really very dark. There is no night on the chips, which bodes poorly for accurate timekeeping. Nor does it rain, for that matter, although there's always stuff falling from chips higher up, sometimes including water.

Stranger Things. Now it's time for mind games. Take a typical rectangular map, and declare that anything that walks off the top reappears at the bottom, and what walks off the left reappears at the right. If you were to fashion an object that allowed such behavior, you'd have a torus. However, with real doughnuts, the inner distance is quite a bit shorter than the outer distance, and on our map, walking left to right near the middle covers the same distance as walking left to right near an edge. We thus have a toroidally closed map.

Why do such a thing? Because it's so easy. The world is a finite size, but it doesn't have any edges for people to fall off. Continents can be joined across borders. To their inhabitants, the islands of the Æthereal sea are mapped in such a way. To provide a sun, the parallel beams system is used. There are no moons. Weather is driven by whimsy, alias random dice rolls, and climate is arbitrary. Well, actually it's set by planar constants, which we'll cover later.

How about a cylindrical world? You can have characters not notice the break or have them walk to the edge, and they'll see this incredible

from The Planar Prowler's Guide to the Multiverse

Oh, sure, the tour of the Light Caverns is the thing to see while visiting. But treat yourself to a special experience, and visit in the daytime. All the little lamps are put away, and the crew has time to show you details and answer questions. Oh, and be sure to bring dark glasses. You'll get a great view of the backside of their sun, alias The One Who Throws Down The Light Upon The Ground.

Just don't ask, "What happens to the sun at night?"

from The Planar Prowler's Guide to the Multiverse

There's this little plane off to the left that few guidebooks mention. It's about two meters wide, and about twenty kilometers long. The great part is that it's all wound up into a ball, but loose and tangled. Visitors walk in/on to the plane on one of its ends. If you're into foot travel, you can just walk, but the various loops are close enough to allow jumping from one part to another. Gravity is relative to the chunk nearest, so it's hard to miss, but the gravity is weak enough that you won't hurt yourself. Grab some buddies, and spend the afternoon playing loobee on the trails for a real blast. It's lifeless and generally deserted.

from Sites and Sights to See on the Sea

It is the edge of a world, of course, that exacts the most interest. For most inhabitants, the issue is moot, since the edge is imperceivable. To them, the edge is a myth.

To the traders, the edge is a place in the world where commerce occurs. This conceptual slash across the face of reality is merely a dock, a transition point between land and sea.

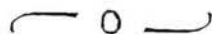
To geoturgists and lithomancers the edge is an enigma. By what means are people, vision, and power translated from one edge of the world to another? How is it that the edge can be made real? Are there fundamental universal rules to the edge? What is reality?

It should be noted that geoturgists can get really weird at times.

cliff. Stepping over the end would suddenly have them lying on their backs, with what appears to be a cliff just behind them. Gravity would be perpendicular to the surface, so nobody's in real danger, but boy, what a stomach-turning view! There are some intriguing military problems about guarding the joining point between the cylinder wall and the end caps as well.

If you'd like something similar to a globe, but the curvature mapping bothers you, go for an icosahedron. This is the shape of a twenty-sided die, and it can be accurately represented with a flat map. Either gravity can be defined from the center of the world, like Earth, which means all the ridges are natural mountain ranges, or gravity can be perpendicular to the surface, which hides the ridges and lets mountains appear wherever they want to.

How about a Möbius strip? Make the flat map long, consider the north and south sides edges, and the east and west sides connected to each other. The only difference between a hoop-shaped world and a Möbius world is what happens if you dig deep enough. With a hoop, you're going to fall out the other side, or arrive in a different world on the opposite side of the hoop. With a Möbius map, you'll pop up on the same world, but at a point as far from your old location as possible. Rather like digging to China, except it isn't that far.



Zaveb considered it something of a shame that he wasn't going to get to write his memoirs. He hadn't really expected to anyway, given the risks of his line of work, but they would have made interesting reading.

Over the past three days he'd been reviewing the material that would go in them, since he had nothing else to do. He spent most of the time with his eyes closed to protect them from the wind, and that left him free to think about books that would never be published.

Zaveb was starting to get used to the idea of his death, although he'd assumed that his final curtain would be brought down by a sword or spell, instead of dehydration. Between the pain of his dry throat and the ache of his empty stomach, he was having a hard time concentrating on a name for his memoirs.

He was considering the various virtues of "Zaveb's Tale" or "The Tale of Zaveb" when he realized that his hand had started to tingle. No, he thought with what little surprise he could muster, it was that useless chunk of wood, the Azherki Staff. It seemed to be excited about something, and growing more so by the minute. Soon it was not only buzzing, but jerking back and forth, and possibly throbbing as well, although the idea of throbbing wood seemed unlikely.

Zaveb had almost decided to toss the thing away when the cause of the vibrations became clear. With no other warning, Zaveb broke—through? around? between?—the empty air and saw a strange grayness



before a second impact brought him a short distance above a calm body of water. The third impact, his cannonballing into the water, was the most welcome sensation Zaveb had felt in a long time.

The water tasted dreadful, but Zaveb wasn't about to wait for something better to come along. Although, he realized, it probably wasn't the most prudent thing to drink so much at once after having had so little. He'd have to try again, drinking just a little at a time, after he was done being sick...

— 0 —

Where the Plane Ends

Ah, yes. Those edges, or lack thereof. The whole point of an edge, of course, is that it makes *beyond* a very clear and tempting place. There is also the issue of beauty.

Planes Without Edges. We've already seen ways to do this. There are basically two kinds of "edgeless" planes: open and closed. An open plane will just keep on going. If an adventuring party picks a direction and starts traveling, there will always be new places to see. Such a plane is effectively infinite.

Science fiction has provided some structures that would behave as if they were infinite, even though they aren't. Probably the most well-known is a Dyson sphere, a shell built around a star. While there is a finite amount of surface, the total surface area of a Dyson sphere with a diameter the size of Earth's orbit is approximately 540 million times the surface area of Earth. For almost any practical purpose, a plane this big can be treated as if it were infinite, at least as far as mortals are concerned.

from a tale told at a court in Quuq, as excerpted in The Book of the Many Ways of Raftafta, Student Edition with Annotations, 011:24

"And the bold hero donned his newly won magic boots, and strode to the king, and told him 'I go to seek the edge of the earth, for such I feel there must be.' The king's advisers bespoke him, saying that there was no edge, and he would never be seen again. He listened to them not, and strode off, traveling vast distances with every stride, for such was the nature of the boots. And he was never seen again."

from *The Planar Prowler's Guide to the Multiverse*

Now there are a lot of planes with edges, but Iango is one of the most annoying if you fall off. See, there are four planes joined at their edges sort of triangular-like. (Okay, it's a tetrahedron, for the geometrically stuffy.) The way it works is that whatever plane you're on, you fall off it as if that was the only gravity, even though you're falling past another part of the triangle-shaped bunch of planes. So to the inhabitants of that face, it looks like you're falling diagonally into the sky, and they have plenty of time to point and laugh at the stupid fool who fell off the world.

With all the slime and mountains and stuff, it's really easy to fall off, too. This plane Not Recommended for the easily embarrassed.

Speaking of Earth, it's an example of a closed, edgeless plane. There aren't any edges to fall off of, but it's definitely a finite place. As we've seen, there are quite a few ways to seal off the edges of a plane: sphere, torus, cylinder, or something more weird. A plane can also be closed in three dimensions. Imagine a closed plane where inhabitants who fly high enough can reach the ceiling, where gnomes hang lanterns at night. Spelunkers enter a cave opening in the sky, keep climbing, and eventually climb out on the surface of the world, right where they started. Another way to close a plane in three dimensions is to have every edge connect to itself. Travel far enough upward, and characters realize they're flying upside down to the ground "above." Travel far enough down, and some poor sap will find that he's standing on his head with his feet in the air. Dealing with the gravitational issues is left as an exercise for the reader.

Planes With Edges. As soon as you mention a plane with an edge, people think of Christopher Columbus. The notion that water is pouring off into a vast abyss, sweeping sea monsters and sailors along with it, is a compelling one. Who can resist a story that ends in an entire crew lost for eternity?

Mind you, if you happen to be one of the crew in question, other concerns come to mind. Foremost is probably where you will end up. Exactly what is beyond the edge?

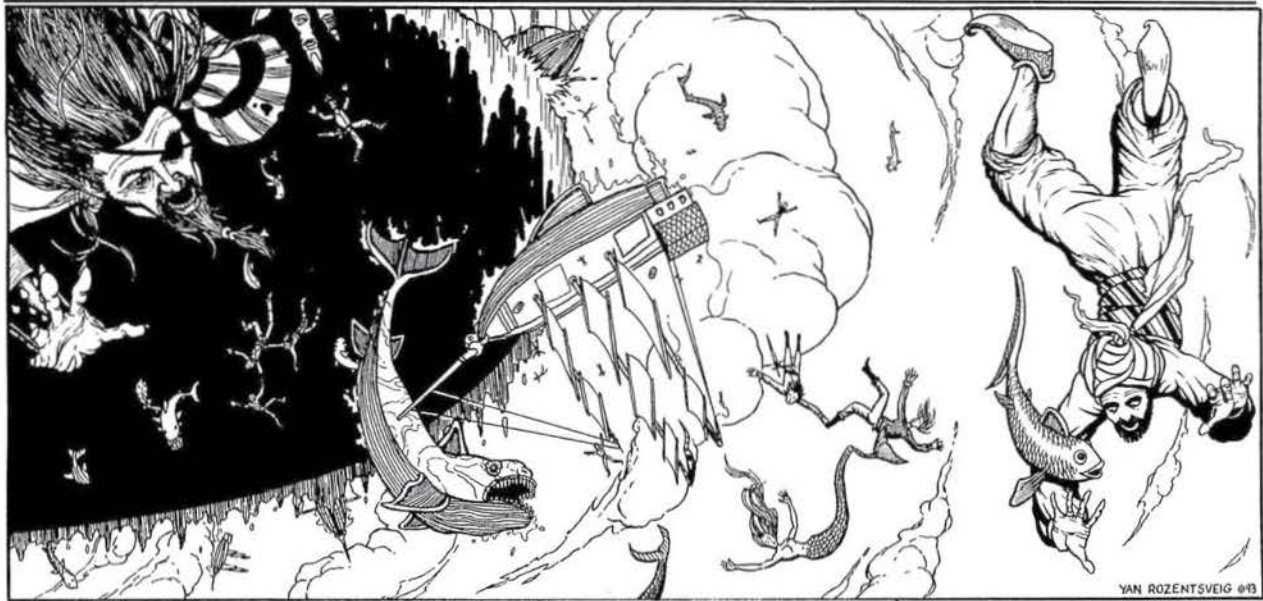
This is one of the questions that can be so much fun to answer. We could start by filling it with air. Ships and whatnot just keep falling until the passengers have starved. Possibly there's enough protein—fish, merfolk, albino whales—falling off the edge that desperate adventurers could just flap their way over and try to catch dinner. Cooking it while in free fall could be more challenging than catching it. Communities of fallers might clump together.

Many of the same issues pop up if you "fill" the space with a vacuum. However, this tends to be hard on those who travel over the edge, and without air to serve as a brake, high falling velocities can be reached.

What's holding up the plane? If the world is sitting on the back of a giant turtle, is held up by a giant, or is actually a limited edition collector's plate, then there's something, eventually, on which to fall. The strange situations that could be encountered on the back of a giant turtle, or on some cosmic display shelf, should keep the fallen ones busy.

There isn't any particular reason to dump all that water off the edge. There could easily be a rim, perhaps mountains or a mysterious wall. Edge-dwellers may have a fence up, or a dike.

The ultimate thing-over-the-edge, of course, is another plane. Such a plane might be physically located beneath the first one, or falling off the edge could result in a metaphysical translation to somewhere else. The trip need not be reversible: it might be impossible, for various reasons, to go back "up." On the other hand, it might be easy, and people could do



it all the time. Perhaps the edge of the plane is there because the plane is some kind of enormous mesa, and bored plane-dwellers can climb down the sides to see what they can see.

Visibility can also be adjusted. There might be blue sky, with far-away objects lost in the distance. There might be mist, or black sky with stars, or strange colors, or worse. The edge might be hypnotic, and people can stare for days before collapsing.

There are also less visually distinctive edges. Some of the planes in the Fuervir Continuum have mist edges: Ert, for instance. The farther Imogene the Explorer wanders into the mist, the more likely she's going to be randomized and come walking back out of the mist at some other point, far from her hometown of Lingting. It doesn't matter if she figures out how to walk a straight line or not; points on the perimeter are chaotically joined. Sometimes, if the poor sap is particularly unlucky, she could be randomized onto a different plane altogether. And since these

from Edgar's Boring Travel Book,
Continuum Edition

Unless you are the sort of traveler who is fond of stress, you shouldn't consider one of the tours into the mist. These are advertised as "great adventure," which is true. What is also true, but not advertised, is that there are still parts of the ends of the world not mapped, and some tours have lasted for years before the participants could return. Of greater concern, there are primitives at some points who take a dim view of beings who come out of the mist, usually slaying them at the first opportunity.



planes are usually quite big, even coming out on the same plane might mean returning by regular methods to the starting point would take years. Not that anyone at the new location has even *heard* of Lingting.

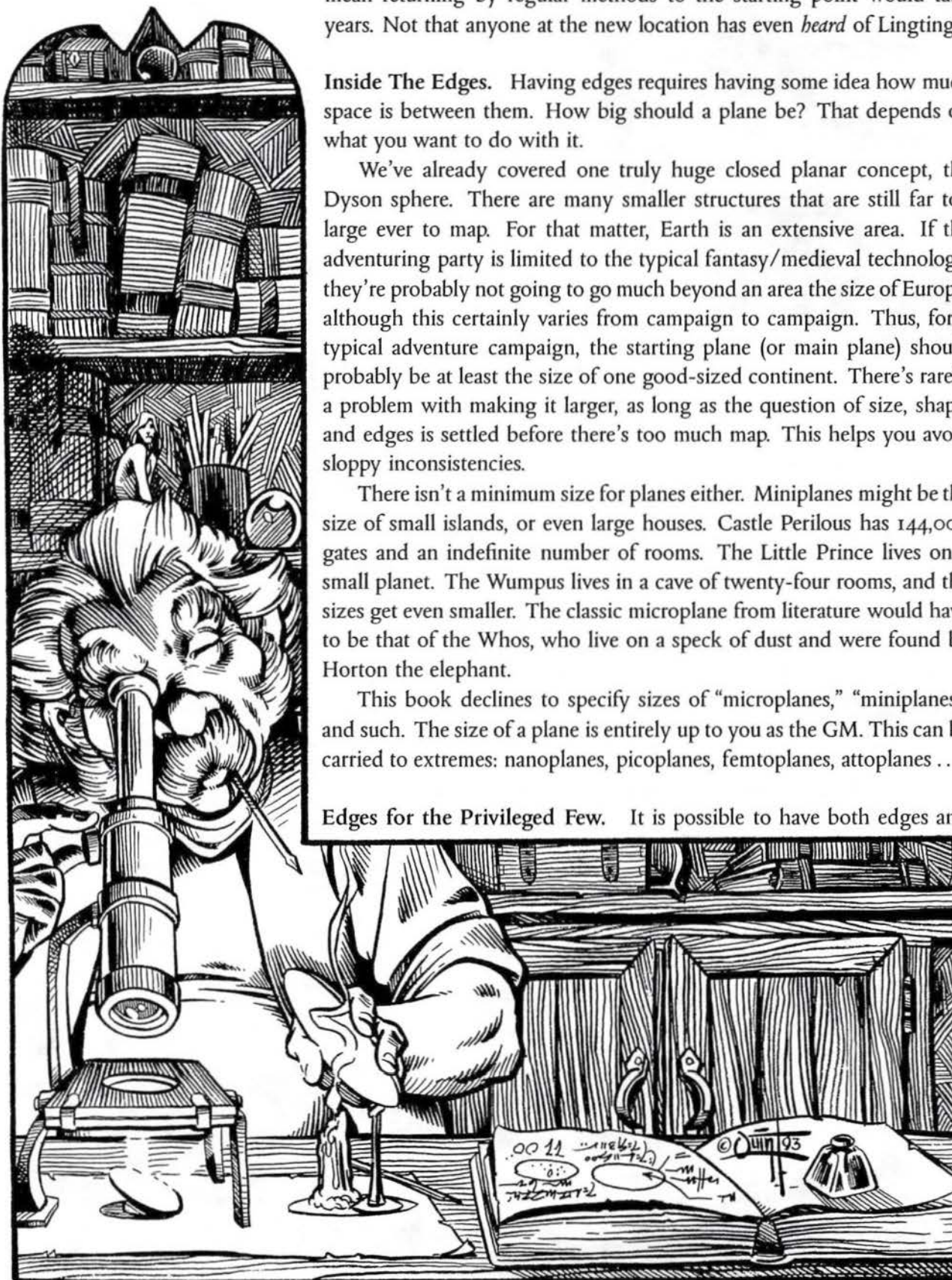
Inside The Edges. Having edges requires having some idea how much space is between them. How big should a plane be? That depends on what you want to do with it.

We've already covered one truly huge closed planar concept, the Dyson sphere. There are many smaller structures that are still far too large ever to map. For that matter, Earth is an extensive area. If the adventuring party is limited to the typical fantasy/medieval technology, they're probably not going to go much beyond an area the size of Europe, although this certainly varies from campaign to campaign. Thus, for a typical adventure campaign, the starting plane (or main plane) should probably be at least the size of one good-sized continent. There's rarely a problem with making it larger, as long as the question of size, shape, and edges is settled before there's too much map. This helps you avoid sloppy inconsistencies.

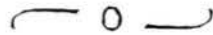
There isn't a minimum size for planes either. Miniplanes might be the size of small islands, or even large houses. Castle Perilous has 144,000 gates and an indefinite number of rooms. The Little Prince lives on a small planet. The Wumpus lives in a cave of twenty-four rooms, and the sizes get even smaller. The classic microplane from literature would have to be that of the Whos, who live on a speck of dust and were found by Horton the elephant.

This book declines to specify sizes of "microplanes," "miniplanes," and such. The size of a plane is entirely up to you as the GM. This can be carried to extremes: nanoplanes, picoplanes, femtoplanes, attoplanes . . .

Edges for the Privileged Few. It is possible to have both edges and



no edges. The islands of the Æthereal sea have edges, which are very clearly marked on the individual maps. However, to the natives, each island is edgeless, mapped to that impossible toroid mentioned before. Normal travelers will walk right off the top edge, and back onto the bottom edge. Abnormal travelers, who know the secret and know where the edge is, can choose to walk off the top edge and into the sea.

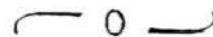


Zaveb decided the effect was like some unimaginable butcher had come along and taken part of the ocean, leaving him carefully treading water right near the edge. What a wretched plane. Back home, oceans didn't stop until they were cuddled up against land. Here, it just stopped. Very carefully, he stuck his head out the side and looked down. The view was much like that on the surface of the ocean: a smooth expanse of water fading into the distance.

It occurred to him that maybe someone had taken the land, and this was the hole left behind. Upon reflection, this was a pleasant thought, since it meant there might be reefs, rocks, islands or *something* that he could sit on and rest.

Oh, sure, Zaveb thought with a curse. As long as he was wishing, why not wish for an inn with a good cook who had lollagamerk stew with ceeps and bread, and a nice dark ale to wash it down?

Rolling onto his back in the warm, calm water, he began to stroke his way along the edge...



The Master's Notes

As you might have guessed, I'm biased against round worlds. It takes so much fiddling to make them interesting without having to rewrite all sorts of things, like gravity. Of course, there's a lot of fiddling with flat planes as well, but since the fundamentals of the plane don't match your players' experience, they can't call you on invalid assumptions as easily. Also, I find that solving problems for flat planes results in interesting ramifications. Do you want the stars to move across the sky, like they do on Earth? Why? If so, how? Any and every answer is an interesting one.

Another problem is that of closing a flat plane in three dimensions. I included some ideas for completeness, but personally, I'd much rather have a situation like the Kaqxachle Chips, where you can catch a roc and fly to new and distant lands.

The business of the "sometimes" edges is probably my favorite idea in this chapter. First, you can hint that the apparently closed world has these edges. Then you send a party off in pursuit of a key, and move

from the
Encyclopædia Planographica

There are some metaplanes that have no particular travel value. For example, a certain small metaplane is populated by planes the size of grapes. There are beings that live on these planes, and there are beings that feed on these planes. What effect the experience of being excreted has on the life on each plane is not presently known.

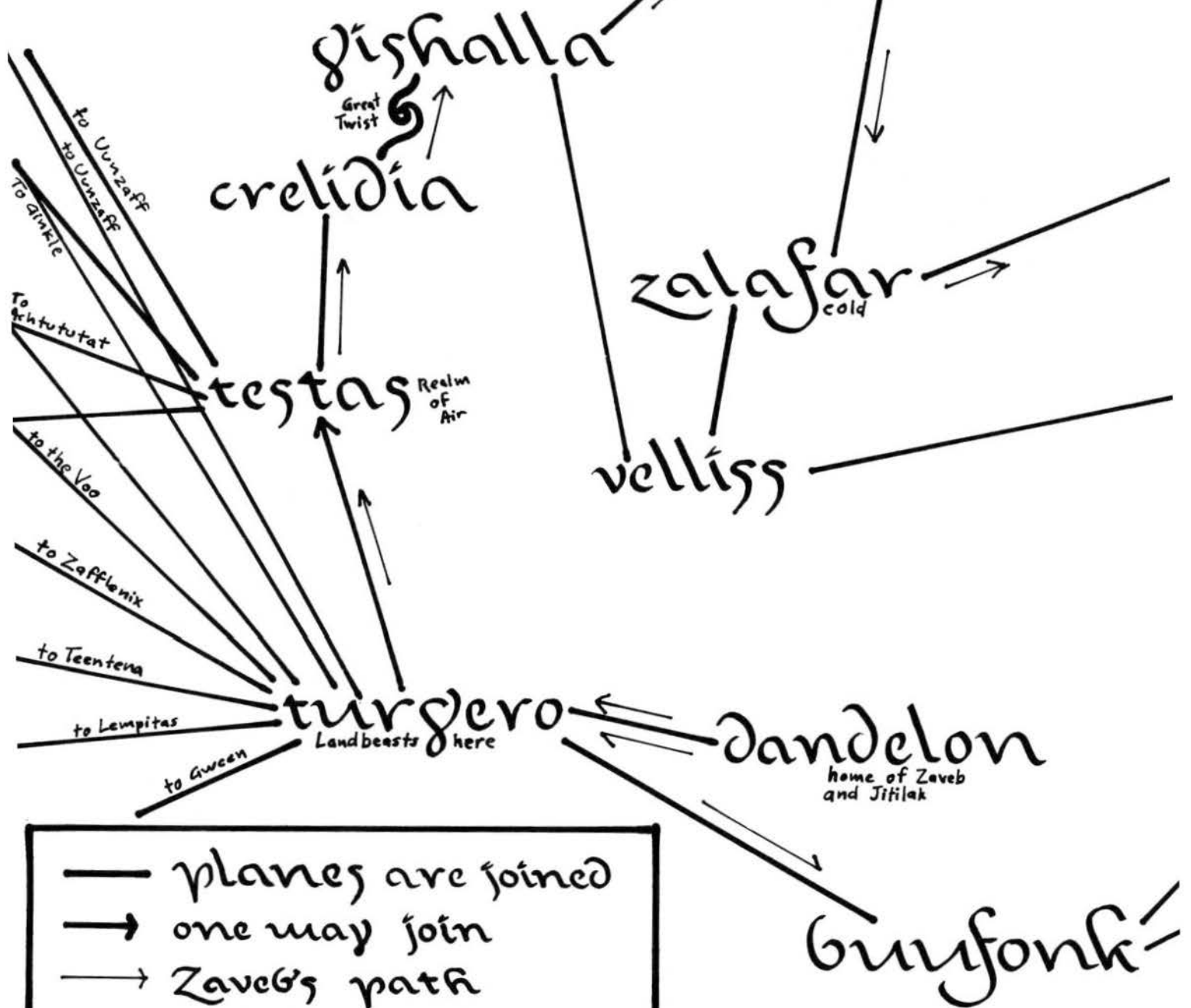
from The Planar Prowler's Guide
to the Multiverse

*Plane 52alpha7J, locally known as "Dirt:"
Mostly harmless*

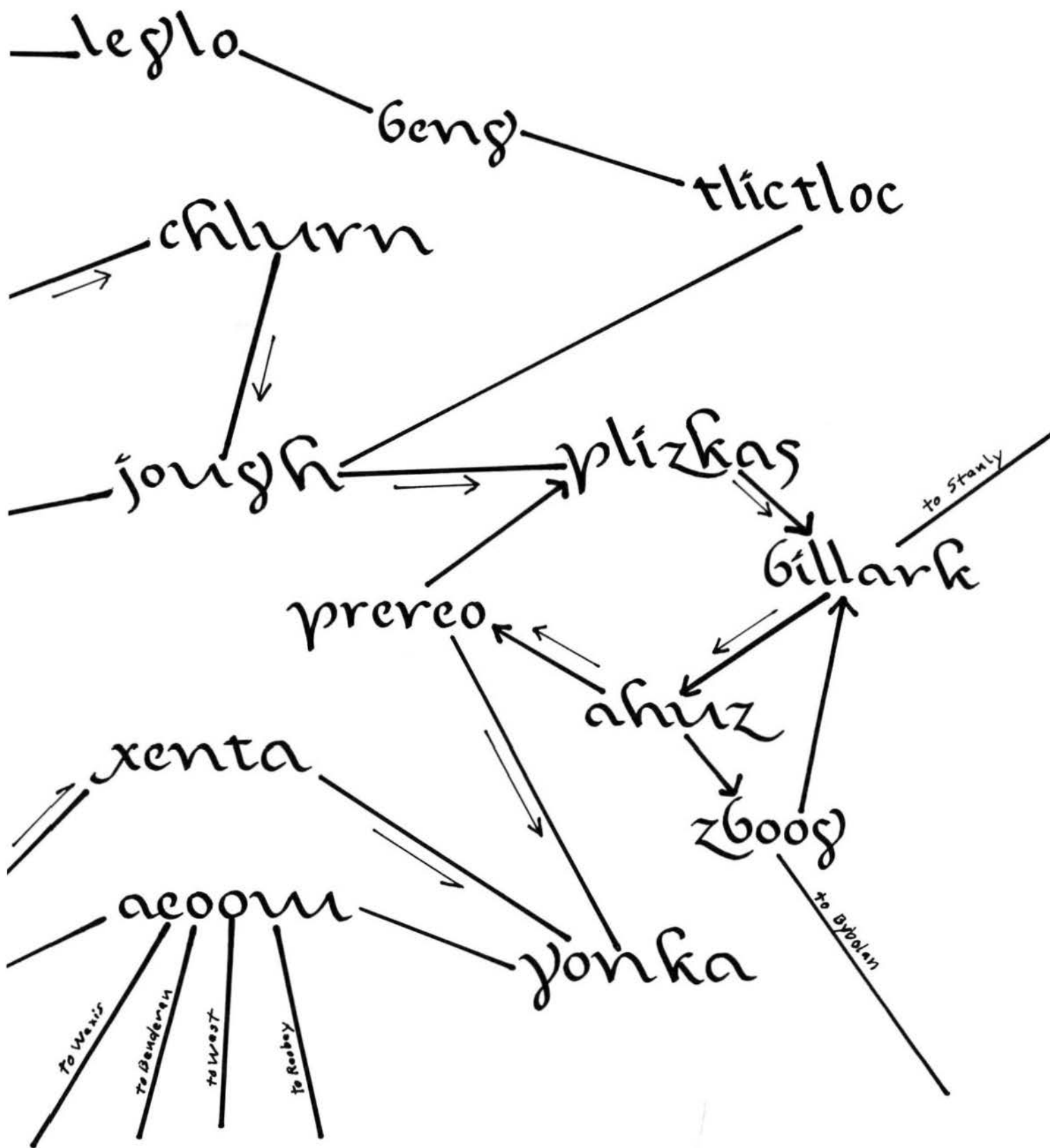
the edges around. Just because the edges you drew on the paper are fixed doesn't mean the plane's have to be. Imagine cutting the top strip off and gluing it on the bottom, and doing the same left to right: the edges have moved. You don't actually have to cut the map, just mark the latitude and longitude lines that indicate where the "edge" is today. Give these edges just enough drift, and have this poor party of adventurers chasing madly across the countryside with their new planar key, trying to catch up to the edge. Heh heh heh heh . . .

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the journeys of Zaveb



- planes are joined
- one way join
- Zaveb's path
- Jirilak's path



Chapter 3: The Space Between

from The Planar Prowler's Guide to the Multiverse

Everybody on Xown keeps wings handy, since Xown consists mostly of air and these particularly sturdy clouds. Inhabitants pick a cloud, dig out a house, and get on with their lives, until that cloud finally dissolves or rains away. Naturally big clouds are the primo real estate. Some clouds have lasted for generations.

The views are great, the flying is really fun, and the people are nice. Recommended, except for those afraid of heights. Also, make sure to get a weather report before visiting.

*from the
Encyclopædia Planographica*

The well-prepared traveler will make sure to carry along some sort of small watertight bag. Certain methods of planar travel may cause digestive disturbances in some individuals.

from The Book of the Many Ways of Raftafta, Student Edition with Annotations, 005:05

Vas has the great virtue of being tilted. Bless Raftafta for this plane. Rivers always flow down the hill, eventually arriving whence they came. Transport along roads is usually on diagonals, so that no force need be applied. The energy saved is vast, and the benefits huge. Plants find it easy to spread their seed, and forests tend to occur in long strips running northup and southdown. Not surprisingly, there are few lakes.

Many beasts have adapted to the tilt by preferring a facing, and growing legs of different lengths to match. Of particular note is the spinspace, with four short and four long legs, able to level itself no matter which direction it faces.

You've got a bunch of hyperactive heros who are tired of being here, and want to go there. How, exactly, do they go about getting there? And if the trip takes a while, through what are they traveling? This chapter discusses ways and means to get from here to there, and where you are in the meantime.

Metaplanes Revisited

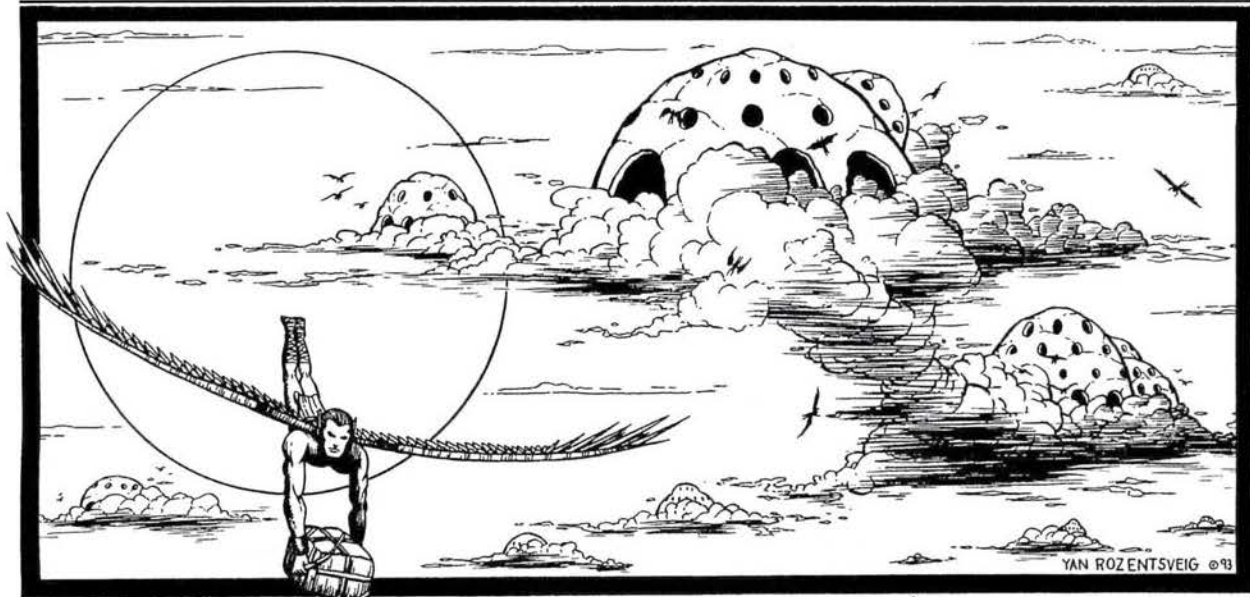
Each island of the Æthereal sea is a plane. As was mentioned earlier, the planes are self-contained to most inhabitants. The Æthereal sea is the metaplane, the medium that contains the planes. Some metaplanes are obvious. The Kaqxachle Chips are floating through a metaplane that is generally obvious, having a bottom, a top, and air. The Realms of the Tatagana have a much less obvious metaplane, in that nobody can actually *be* there; there is no physical space for matter to exist. In the case of the Lands of Ledúa, there isn't even metaphysical space; those planes are all jammed up next to each other. They do share some common traits, specifically the method of planar travel and the planes that can be reached by that method.

The effect a metaplane has on its member planes can be dramatic or subtle. The Fuervir Continuum imposes almost no restrictions on the member planes. The method of travel generally used does not require solid ground or a particular size or orientation. The Kaqxachle metaplane has severe restrictions on its member planes: they must be flat and floating, have the same air, be at a certain temperature, and so forth.

If you wanted, you could group all the planes into a few flexible metaplanes. Alternatively, metaplanes could be grouped as well. In general, there's not a lot of benefit to the added complexity, so we'll just stick with two levels: planes and metaplanes.

Mapping the Metaplane. In showing the relationship between planes, a map may or may not detail physical relationships. The Æthereal sea is a map of the metaplane; if two planes look close together then they are, and it's not hard to see how long it will take to sail from one to the other. With the Lands of Ledúa, the hexagons have nothing to do with the shapes of the planes, only with their interrelationships. Zuun, in the middle, is a planetary plane. Gheer, to the "east," is an open, infinite, flat plane. Vas, to the "southwest," is a finite, closed plane.

Maps do not necessarily have to map physical relationships; they can map metaphysical relationships, or other connections. While there are only a few ways to show spacial, physical relationships, there are dozens of fine ways to map metaphysical relationships. The Fuervir Continuum metamap was drawn linearly, with one plane next to another. They could also have been drawn as a stack, or a list, or as a matrix. The matrix system is used on some travel maps to show the distance between cities.



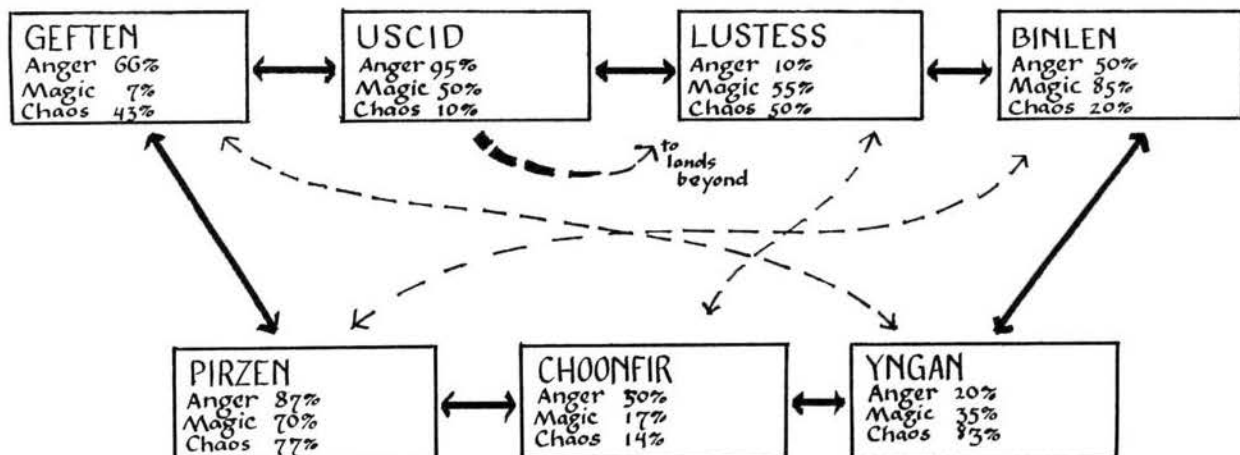
The map for the Tatagana metaplane in Chapter 1 shows how the planes relate to the metaplane. An alternative method of display is given here. This map is more useful, since it's very clear which plane connects to which. The different kinds of connections will be covered shortly.

Metaplanes, like planes, can be open or closed. The Ledúa is an open metaplane. The travel reference we're using only lists about 216 worlds, but there's no reason new planes can't be tacked on. The Kaqxachle Chips are in an open metaplane. It has a top and bottom, but no sides. Tatagana is closed. It contains seven planes, no more, and the space they take up is roughly cubical.

The Universe. Is the universe a metaplane? Well, that depends. The definition of a plane insists on the possibility of distinct planar constants; there has to be the possibility of a fundamental difference between planes. As far as we know, the speed of light, the absence of magic, the Planck

from Realms of the Tatagana: A Study in Contrasts

While it is generally considered a meaningless question, occasionally an institute of higher learning will attempt to answer: "What would more than a hundred percent anger or chaos or magic be like?" So far, every attempt to answer these questions has failed, often resulting in the deaths of the researchers, and occasionally in the deaths of innocents as well. Perhaps it is not too surprising, given the environment, that new attempts to answer these questions are made. What is surprising is the frequency of the attempts. This persistence is a distinguishing trait of the Tataganan societies.



Realms of the Tatagana



from *The Planar Prowler's Guide to the Multiverse*

Vas is a pretty happening place since vacations are easy, as long as you want the around-the-world version. Lucky that this world isn't all that far around. Pretty wide, though. The best recreation is simply to go someplace. If you're the timid type, you head mostly eastward, and just a little southdown. If you're a serious thrill-seeker, straight southdown. Since the roads usually don't take such a steep route, this means you've got to go off-road. Off-road is Highly Recommended!

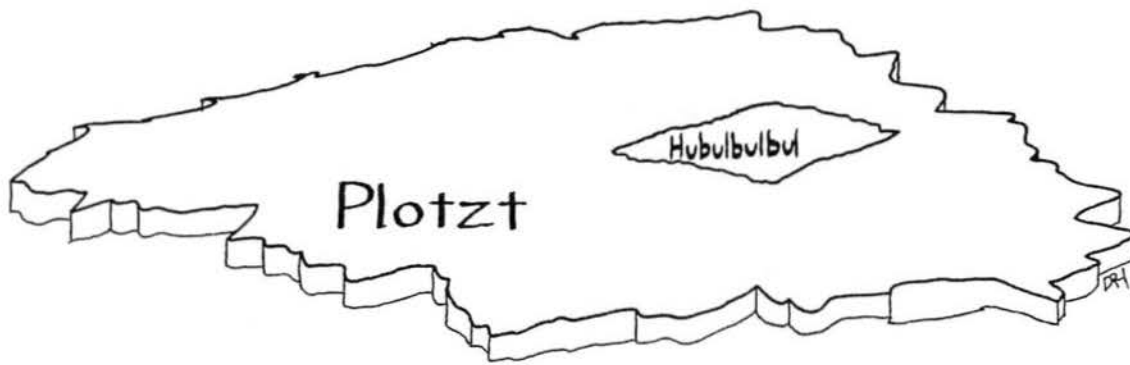
constant, etcetera, are locked in all across the universe. So, we probably live on one planet in one insanely big plane.

On the other hand, if you are willing to assume that the air on Mars will sustain humans although it doesn't contain enough oxygen, or that a long time ago there was a galaxy far away where humanoids and big furry things flew in spaceships, then the universe must be a metaplane, because there's more than one plane contained within it.

The Well-Connected Multiverse

While travel to exotic vacation planes might be possible, it's not necessarily easy. A number of different relationships can exist between planes, from Siamese planes joined at the hip, so to speak, to planes unreachable by any method known. Some planes may be easily accessible via one method of travel, but unreachable by another. After all, if you live in Chicago, you can't just drive to Brisbane! The five classifications we'll be using, roughly in order of accessibility, are: connected, parallel, adjacent, removed, and isolated. Since different travel methods can imply different kinds of relationships, which plane gets which classification is not always clear. Such is life.

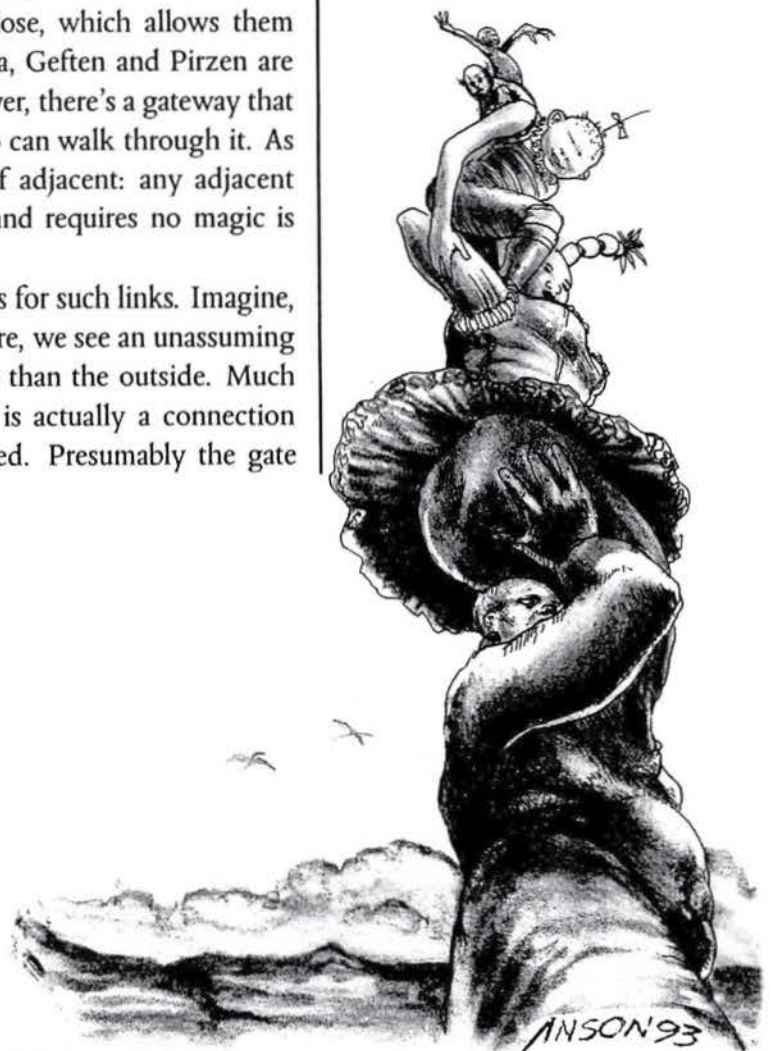
Connected. Connected is about as close as two separate planes can get. When two planes are connected, they're joined physically. Zandar the Barbarian can stroll from Binlen to Lustess and back wearing only his loincloth and carrying only his great big sword; he doesn't need a magic helmet, a kiss from his goddess, or anything else. The Kaqxachle Chips are also connected, although they're floating about in the air. Connected doesn't necessarily mean attached. With the chips, it means that should



the local dance troupe fall off of one, they might splat on a different one. More importantly, if they have wings, elevator shoes, or a rope, or stand on each other's shoulders, they might make it back.

Now the chips happen to be physically close, which allows them to qualify for connected status. In the Tatagana, Geften and Pirzen are quite far apart, metaphysically speaking. However, there's a gateway that allows everyday, all-day access to anybody who can walk through it. As you'll see, connected is often a special case of adjacent: any adjacent connection that is two-way, stable, constant, and requires no magic is connected.

There are charming uses beyond the obvious for such links. Imagine, if you will, a farmer's market, a bazaar. Over here, we see an unassuming little tent. Curiously, the inside appears bigger than the outside. Much bigger. The tent is misleading; the entryway is actually a connection to another plane, where the residence is located. Presumably the gate



from Realms of the Tatagana: A Study in Contrasts

The importance of the gates to the realms is so great that each realm has very strict laws regarding vandalism or damage to the arches. Historical evidence indicates that even the determined saboteur is doomed to failure; placing the arches in jeopardy, even accidentally, is cause for death. In some of the more primitive areas, the belief in the gates' importance takes on the strength of a taboo.

from The Planar Prowler's Guide to the Multiverse

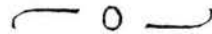
Crelidia is a real drag. Made up almost entirely of water with just a few archipelagos, it has no weather to speak of and never any wind; it's always sunny and always the same temperature. It's not very big, there's an edge to fall off, and it's hard to get to. Don't bother.

*from the
Encyclopædia Planographica*

Crelidia and Gishalla are permanently connected by an ocean-based gate: a vortex or whirlpool. Any material, including whole ships, that is snared by the current will surface on the other plane. The lucrative trade opportunities that exist due to Crelidia's excellent agriculture and Gishalla's mineral wealth result in a small number of ships that are specifically designed to survive the violent trip. Inasmuch as neither the trip itself nor the planes involved are particularly appealing to tourists, the vacation industry has avoided these locations.

connecting the two planes was created, not found, although we don't know this for certain. The disadvantage of building this way is that the residents have to worry about dangers from both planes, as the owner of our sample residence, Skeeve, has found to his dismay.

The connection between planes might not be detectable. The plane of Plotzt completely surrounds the plane of Hubulbulbul. To the clueless inhabitants, it's all one big place. To a deity, the difference is crucial. More detail on this difference is in Chapter 6.



"Well, my fine young boy, it's certainly lucky for you we found you when we did, eh?" This pronouncement from the captain of the vessel was accompanied by a hearty slap to the back that nearly knocked Zaveb right back into the water.

'Uf! Yes, indeed.' For some reason, it hadn't occurred to the captain to ask exactly how Zaveb had come to be in the ocean, paddling feebly about. Since answering without revealing the power of the staff might prove awkward, he was determined to keep the shipmaster talking.

"So tell me, how long until we reach our destination? It will be a pleasure to walk on dry land again."

For some reason, this caused the captain to laugh so hard that his dark blue hair came untied from its knot, cascading over his shoulders. "But, lad, our first stop is the Great Twist, and there won't be dry land for you there, no matter how anxious you be to flee my fine ship."

"The Great Twist?"

"Aye. Don't tell me you haven't heard of it? I would have thought there was no place on Crelidia far enough away for its people to have never heard of the Twist. The vortex, boy, the Ocean's Throat! The passage to Gishalla! The only way to leave Crelidia! Unless you don't plan on returning. I suppose then you could throw yourself off the edge, or climb through one of those Specter Windows into the place of wind and sky. Are you sure you haven't struck your head on something? Or perhaps you have a brain disease? Your hair *is* a funny color."

Time to think fast. "Well, I'd hoped to see more of Crelidia, since I've spent so much of my life in my village, but there seems plenty to see without facing the Great Twist." Zaveb moved to keep the captain talking. "I would think you'd want to avoid it yourself."

"Nonsense. A good ship, properly battened down, can survive the dunking fine. Tests a seaman's mettle, it does."

This was not pleasing news. So far, progress had been pleasant, due to the smoothness of the water. How the ship moved without sails was a mystery, but not one Zaveb was dying to solve. Of much greater interest to him was using the staff to get off the ship before arriving at the maelstrom that was their destination.



"Captain, perhaps there's a place I could lie down? I'm not feeling quite right."

"Take the forward hatch down to the first cabin on the right. A wee speck as you ought to fit just fine."

Zaveb chose to ignore the commentary and stalked below the deck. As soon as possible, he struck the staff to the floor, and promptly recoiled from the hole that appeared and seemed to lead right back to that horror of space and clouds. Moreover, there didn't seem to be any way to move the gate. Crelidia appeared to join only two planes: the one he'd just left, and the one to which he was being carried. Joy.



Parallel. Parallel planes are related in a continuous fashion. From any spot on one plane a wizard can pop to a parallel plane, and where the wizard appears is related in some way to the departure point. Let's assume that the preferred method of travel for the genie-in-the-know on Llykuun is the head-bob, used to travel to Ert. The simplest relationship between two planes exists when any change in position on one plane is equivalent in distance and direction to that on another. If the genie pops to Ert, flies four kilometers northwest, then pops back, she'll be four kilometers northwest of her last position on Llykuun. Easy, huh?

Too easy. Today the genie forgot her flying carpet. There's a river in her way, and she doesn't want to get her pointy shoes wet. She could pop to Ert, walk across the place where the river would be on Llykuun, then pop back. Now she's on the other side of the river, and can continue her journey.

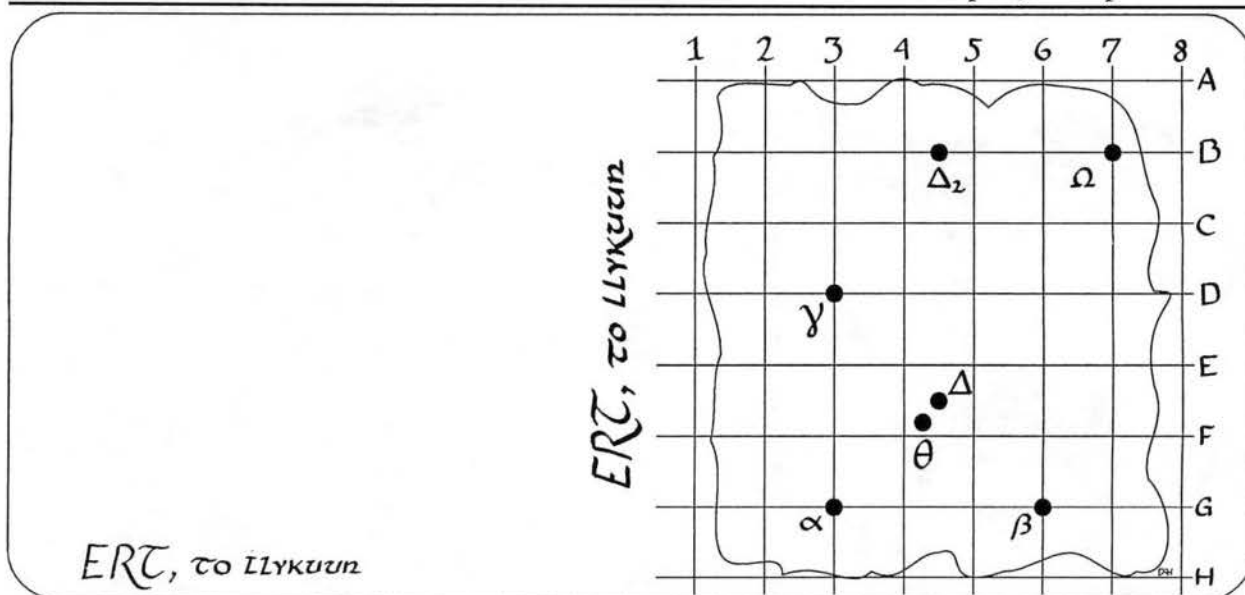
That is, she could if Llykuun and Ert were related that way. Why should we make things so easy on lazy adventurers? Take a look at the map Ert-Llykuun. Ert and Llykuun are both closed planes with edges—

from the Book of Genie Magic

The head-bob is often performed with arms out, right hand on left elbow, the left hand under the right elbow, and a blink during the bob. Nobody knows why.

from The Planar Prowler's Guide to the Multiverse

On Bleegee, objects can only travel north to south. On Bambadoon, only east to west. The two planes are parallel, and it's easy to cross them. No problem, unless you can't work the crossover spell. The spell is simple: kiss your elbow. Not Recommended for people who don't have elbows.



from the
Encyclopædia Planographica

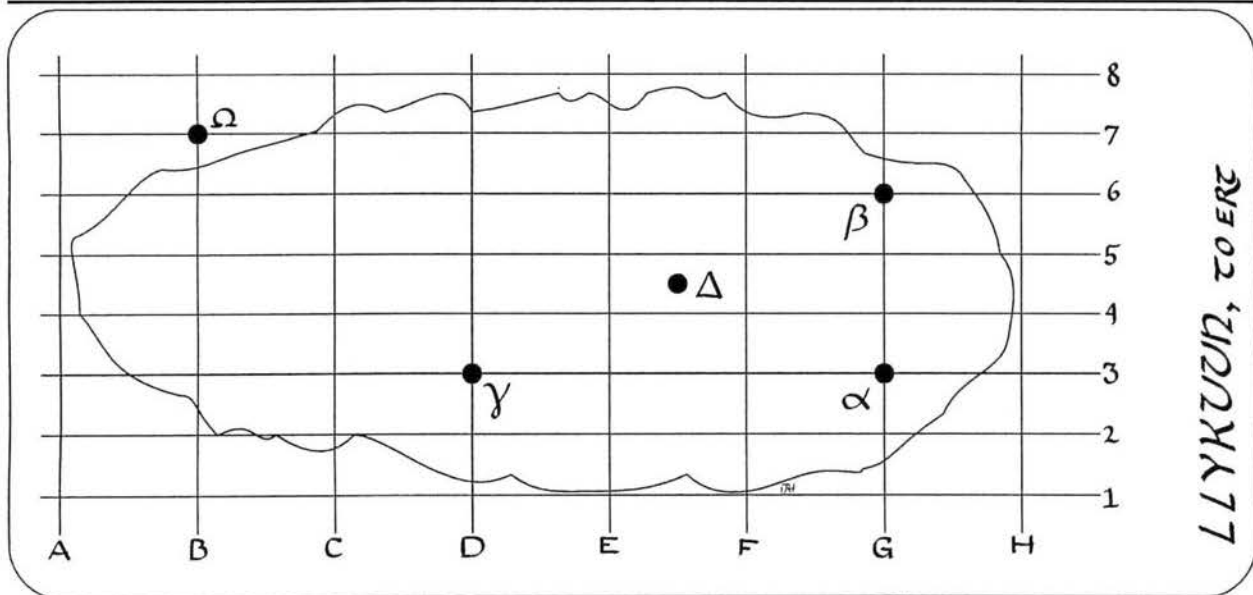
Once a favorite of the divine intelligentsia, Splurg has finally succumbed to thick air. This problem, apparently a natural phenomenon of the plane, causes air to get thicker every time it is breathed. Sunlight has been found to thin the air again, and before the tourist trade, the system was in balance. With the sudden influx of people, the solar thinning could no longer keep up, and Splurgian sunlamps proved only marginally effective. The plane, having fallen out of fashion, is once again left to the native population, which spends significant time giving mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to wildlife.

in this case, that misty border mentioned earlier. However, Llykuun is somewhat oval, and Ert is square. If the genie is on Llykuun at point α , pops to Ert, and walks three kilometers east, when she pops back she'll be one and one-half kilometers north of her position, at point β . If she starts at α , pops over and walks three kilometers north on Ert to point γ , she'll be four and one-half kilometers west of α when she returns to Llykuun. So north on Llykuun is west on Ert, and west on Llykuun is north on Ert. If you want to go south, it's shorter to stay on Llykuun, but if you want to go east, it's faster to travel on Ert, then cross back over. Unless *Edgar's Boring Travel Book* has really good maps, the genie is going to be pretty confused.

But we're just getting warmed up. The relationship between Ert and Llykuun is linear. Sure, the grid's been rotated, flipped, and stretched to fit, but if the genie walks halfway between point β and point γ on one plane, she'll be halfway between the two points on the other plane (as indicated by point Δ). Take a look at what happens if the genie's on Ert and decides to use the nose-twitch spell to transfer to Chlestiscocq, a plane with no edges. Chlestiscocq uses the standard toroidal map: the bottom connects to the top and the left to the right.

First of all, the numbers are in the right order and are located at the top of the map, but the lines are all squiggly. This means that moving from α to β , a three kilometer walk on Ert, is also three kilometers on Chlestiscocq, but walking from γ to α is one kilometer on Chlestiscocq, but three on Ert. Note that point Δ is halfway between lines four and five on Ert. It is also exactly halfway between lines four and five on Chlestiscocq. For any point that isn't on a numbered line, you must figure out how close it is to one line or another to find the correct crossover points.

But squiggly numbers are nothing compared to the letters: they're scrambled. Scrambling the lines between planes is an excellent way to



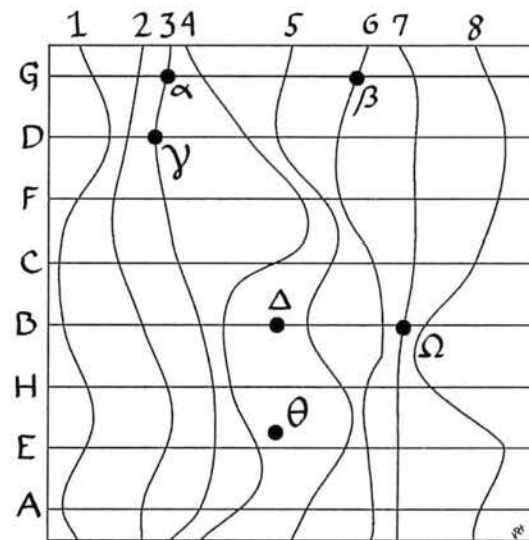
turn the brains of planar travelers to mush. For the GM, though, it only looks hard. Examine point Δ , which is halfway between line E and line F. Point Δ on Chlestiscocq is also halfway between E and F. That happens to lie right on line B. Since Chlestiscocq has no edges, you could also plot a point halfway between lines C and D the other direction. But for this map, the rule is to plot points halfway between two lines in the direction that they are the closest, or closest to the middle if there's a tie. This is a tie, since line G is just as close. If we chose to use the farthest point between the two, then any north-south travel on Ert would almost certainly equal huge distances on Chlestiscocq.

Even more weird: if the genie does travel from Δ on Ert to Δ on Chlestiscocq, then twitches right back, she won't appear on Ert's Δ ! Her position on Chlestiscocq is clear: halfway between four and five, and on line B. She'll reappear on Ert at point Δ_2 . The way it's set up, if somebody at a random location starts popping back and forth, that person would keep shifting north and/or south until he or she settled onto one of the grid lines. If the east-west lines were scrambled, then this popping person would also shift east-west. If the genie pops to Δ on Chlestiscocq, she can get back by walking one and three-quarter kilometers south. She's now standing between lines H and E, about three-quarters of the way to E. If we look at Ert, three-quarters of the way from H to E is just a tiny smidgen south of the departure point. However, her southerly movement has also caused her to have a different distance between the number lines, so she'd reappear at point θ .

The practice of finding "between" spots helps you keep track, in a logical and orderly fashion, of who appears where, while your players would swear on a stack of Raftaftan guides that you were throwing darts at a map whenever they transport. Hold on, there are even more tricks up the parallel sleeve.

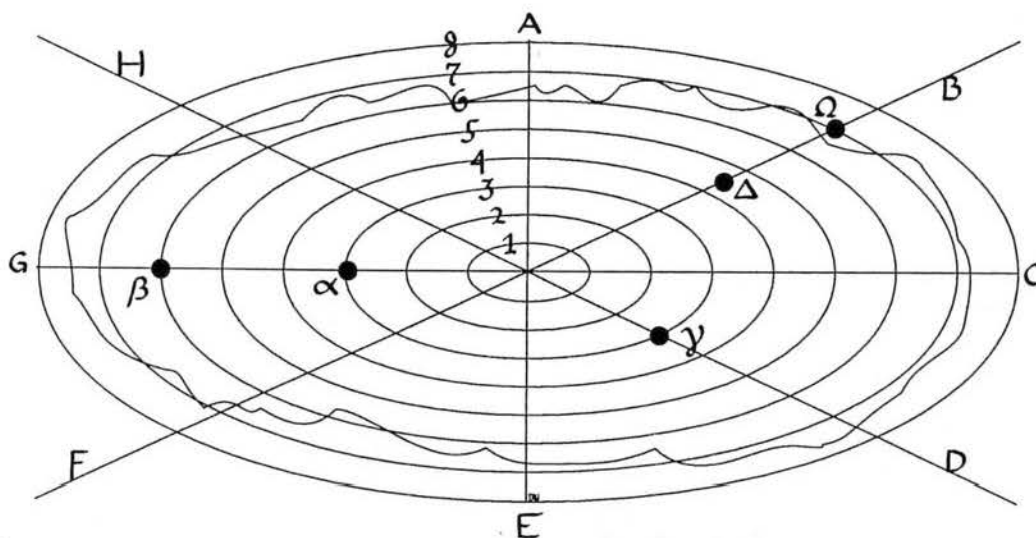
Just because Llykuun has a Cartesian grid (vertical and horizontal

CHLESTISCOCQ, to LLYKUUN



lines) in relation to Ert, doesn't mean it has to have a Cartesian grid in relationship to Chlestiscocq. Instead, it's going to get a polar coordinate grid. The higher the number on Chlestiscocq, the farther from the center on Llykuun. The higher the letter on Chlestiscocq, the farther around the clock from north on Llykuun. Even without using the crazy grid on Chlestiscocq, this is going to be confusing. North on Llykuun will be east on Chlestiscocq only if the genie is standing on line A on Llykuun. In the eastern lands of Llykuun, north will be either north or south, depending on which side of Llykuun's line C the genie is.

But wait! There's more! As we've seen, there are certain lines between Chlestiscocq and Ert that allow the genie to cross over, and return to where she started. The same is true of Chlestiscocq and Llykuun. We could add a new rule: every time somebody crosses over, put them ten kilometers northeast of where the grid says they would appear, no matter which way they're going. Between Llykuun and Ert, this would cause



LLYKUUN, to chlestiscocq

a traveler to leap across the countryside as they popped back and forth, as if they were wearing seven-league boots. Between Chlestiscocq and Llykuun—well, let's just say it would be very confusing indeed.

Or, you might want to have the relationship between the grids drift over time. Assuming a twenty-four hour day and the eight grid lines on these maps, we could say that for every three hours past noon, Ert is one line farther west than Llykuun. So at six PM, line two on Llykuun is matched with line four on Ert. You could subtract when going from Ert to Llykuun, but that would be boring. Adding when traveling one direction and subtracting when traveling the other would make sense if the two planes were physically drifting across each other, but there's no rule that says you have to do that. At three AM, we'd be adding five to the trip. In this case, leaving from line seven on Llykuun would put you on line thirteen on Ert. There's no such line. When adding a drift factor takes the traveler outside the map boundaries, add or subtract the total number of lines on the map plus one more until the traveler is back again. In this case we'll subtract. There are a total of eight lines, so thirteen minus nine equals four. We're just wrapping the travelers around just as if they were on foot. If you count on the map, when you reach the last line keep counting with the first line on the other side, as if the world had no edges.

If this section has been somewhat confusing, just think of the effect it will have on the characters who try to travel without benefit of maps! Some hotshot swordwielder may have her ego deflated when she tries to take on the worlds and they won't hold still. A sorcerer who finds the lost spell Dimensional Handstand could be in for a lot more than he bargained for, even if there are only a few planes within reach.

There are a couple of other tricks and snags that we'll just glance at, since they're harder to use. Instead of having planes drift in relation to each other, they could rotate. There can be areas or times when travel isn't possible. Take a look at point Ω on Ert. The equivalent point on Llykuun is inside the mist. Any traveler crossing at Ω is going to eventually come out at some random spot on the edge of Llykuun, or get jumped to somewhere else. If the planes are drifting, then the danger zone will be moving across the plane as time passes.

One plane does not have to map the entire area to another plane. The two planes might be parallel in only a small area, or one plane might map to two different planes, either overlapping or mapping in different areas. To map an infinite plane to a finite one may require the inclusion of dead zones or repetition of the grid on the infinite plane. This results in one location on the finite plane having a large number of possible destinations, depending on how much of the infinite plane you've actually mapped. This could be handled by random selection or based on the time, last departure area, or arrival in a certain sector.

With round worlds, like Earth, the latitude and longitude lines map

from Sites and Sights to See on the Sea

The annual aethercraft race is a real treat. Three ships from each island in the area race from Manulæ to Læflox, going around Izgæn. The flutter of sails and the screech of the sea as the contestants race for the InterPlanar Pennant is not to be missed. Make reservations early, as most inns near good viewpoints are booked well ahead.

from the private journal of Nasturcium Farwalker

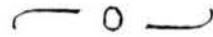
"I hope I never see Llykuun again. I've never experienced such a snarled-up mess when it came to traveling. I've a good mind to find the being, if there is such, responsible, and give it a stern talking-to. Making walking the planes that hard is simply inexc [the journal ends at that point]."

from The Planar Prowler's Guide to the Multiverse

The best part about exploring Innzit are the peril-sensitive plane pop charms that the neighboring plane of Laalaagaag makes available for a small fee. No matter how far afield you totter, if you're actually in danger you'll be translated back to Laalaagaag before harm can befall you.

Mind you, since Laalaagaag is parallel to Innzit, where you appear on Laalaagaag does vary. No guarantee is provided regarding any harm that might come to you after returning, should you, for example, reappear in a fireplace, or catch some residents in flagrante delicto . . .

reasonably well to a flat plane's Cartesian grid. Mapping to other shapes can be a challenge. If you need to provide planar travel from a flat world to one that's shaped like an icosahedron or a bowl, the next method of travel might suit you better.



The trip had been even more unpleasant than anticipated. Zaveb had been sick in that melon-crate of a cabin from the time they spun through the vortex until landing two days later. He hadn't really started feeling well until getting off the ship and into an inn.

Gishalla wasn't all that bad a place. Edible food, friendly people, and a great exchange rate. His copper coins were worth a small fortune, so he had enough money for awhile. In anticipation of eventually getting home, he was making a point of collecting change in gold.

On the downside, he didn't speak the language. The port city had establishments that spoke Crelidian, but that was rare further inland. Why Crelidian and his language were the same was going to have to be included under "big mysteries," along with much of this trip. Another big mystery to Zaveb was why the Crelidians looked like ordinary people except for their coloring, which seemed wrong, and the Gishallans looked like ordinary people except they had extra wrinkles on the bridge of the nose. Nobody had commented yet on his appearance, but he figured that would just be a matter of time.

Zaveb had no intention of hanging around that long. After having a hearty breakfast and picking up supplies like food, water, and an extra knife or two, he retired to his room at the inn and struck the floor. An incredible wave of heat emanated from the gate, promptly igniting the quilt on his bed and charring the ceiling before Zaveb could spit enough protection on various items to prevent the whole inn from burning to the ground.

While he was putting out fires, Zaveb was busy twisting the Azherki Staff to find a different plane, preferably one more conducive to living. After hunting about, he found that the only alternative seemed to be someplace that was a dim green-gray and smelled awful. Taking a deep breath, he stepped through. As soon as he'd established that there was no immediate danger, Zaveb opened another gate. This time, his choices seemed to consist of someplace with a deadly atmosphere, an ocean experiencing a major storm, or a place that looked relatively safe, but was freezing. Zaveb decided to try the cold world, but thought first he'd head back to Gishalla to get something warm to wear. He reopened the gate and stepped through.

Zaveb realized he'd gotten too cocky again as soon as he'd transferred. While this place certainly looked like Gishalla, it wasn't his room. He couldn't even see the city he'd been staying in. Instead he was in a field, where somebody was raising a rather prickly, shrublike

from the
Encyclopædia Planographica

*When traveling, it is always good to know
something of your destination.*



plant. Looking around at the rows of bushes, it occurred to him that he'd moved around a bit on the bad-smelling plane. He opened the gate and stepped back.

Zaveb turned in some frustration. This wasn't the clearing he'd been in last time. Now he was on a steep slope, near a stream of slow-moving, bluish brown ooze. The gods must be laughing, he thought as he pondered whether to open another gate here, or move away first. That decision was made for him by a sudden increase in the amount of goo flowing down the mountain. He popped open a gate and jumped through.

He arrived on Gishalla near an abandoned pit mine. Fighting back an urge to cry, and gritting his teeth against blasphemy, he picked a direction at random and set off to find civilization. Behind him, an unpleasant blob of ooze slowly liquefied in the sun.



Adjacent. Parallel planes provide translations continuously from one plane to another. Adjacent planes have specific spots that allow travel, or rather, translation, between two adjacent planes; translation must be handled on a case-by-case basis. Let's look at some examples.

The Realms of the Tatagana are an excellent example of one of the basic forms of adjacent planes. For each of the seven planes there are two great stone arches that contain the gates to the neighboring planes. Yngan, for example, has a gate in the northwest that connects to Choonfir. Remember Zandar the Barbarian? He could tour the seven planes by walking through each gate. From Choonfir, he'd walk through the gate to Yngan, cross Yngan to the next gate, walk through to Binlen, and so on.

from Realms of the Tatagana: A Study in Contrasts

Perhaps due to harsh conditions, every plane in the realms believes that, while it is self-sufficient, neighboring planes would be in grave difficulty should trade be cut off. The second half of this belief is correct, but there are still feuds going on between various families over the independence of the various planes.

from Realms of the Tatagana: A Study in Contrasts

The danger to outsiders wishing to visit the realms is related to the nature of the connections involved. The only access available to traveling mortals is from Vastis to Uscid, and the connection to the adjacent plane is a random one. The risks of appearing at an unknown location on Uscid are great enough to discourage casual visitors.

from Realms of the Tatagana: A Study in Contrasts

The secondary links are rarely used. It has been theorized that this is a result of the inaccuracy of such travel, combined with the risks involved. Few are able to appear at a random location on a foreign plane without harm.

The predictable nature of this adjacent connection has allowed significant interplanar commerce. There is another set of less reliable connections. Look at the map of Tatagana in this chapter. Not only are there the connections around the ring, there's a set through the middle. If Wanda the Witch from Geften wants to visit her brother Wally on Binlen, she can either travel via the regular gates to Uscid, Lustess, and then Binlen, or put on her traveling dress and transport to Yngan, then take the gate to Binlen.

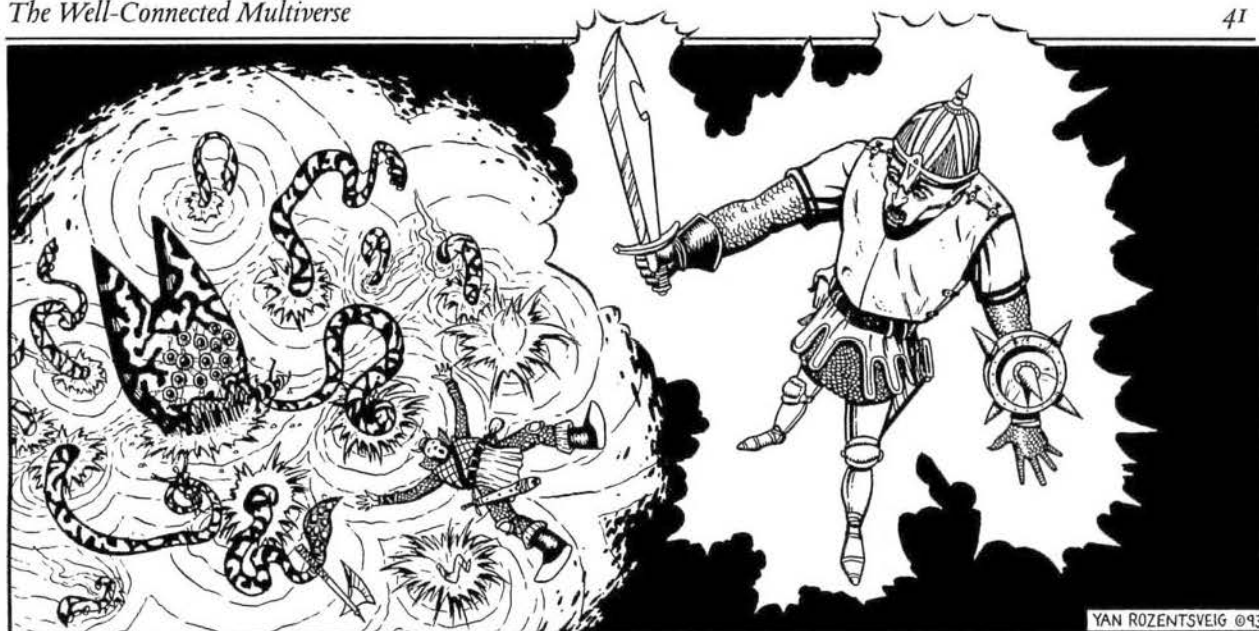
In the case of Geften and Yngan, while it's possible to travel back and forth, it's not possible to control the arrival point. Leaving Geften will result in appearing at a random location on Yngan.

There are four ways to connect two planes adjacently: one-to-one, one-to-many, many-to-one, and many-to-many. There are enough variations on these themes for a lot of planes; we'll examine some of them.

We've already seen the simplest variation, the one-to-one, when there's only one point involved. Imagine, instead, a plane with five magic mountains. It is adjacent to a plane with five sacred forests. If the Druids of the Pesh sacrifice a zianya in the right spot on mountain number one, they will be transported to a clearing in forest number two. The sacrifice of a blade here will thrust the druids to mountain number three, and so on. These links are all one way, but each point leads to only one place and can be reached from only one place.

Now let's look at the one-to-many variation, and selection schemes. Tossing Sennis the Thief into the Great Pit might seem like a good way to be rid of her, but actually the Great Pit will cause her to appear on a different plane, somewhere near a caulderwood tree. There are quite a few caulderwood trees. What decided where she would appear? One answer is that it's random. Another would be that each pit victim is placed at the next tree in sequence. A third option would be that the traveler chooses his or her destination from the available trees. Perhaps some





outside condition controls the destination: whichever tree is receiving the most sunlight, for instance. The outside condition option offers all sorts of interesting possibilities.

But enough of trees. We'll drop off the thief and look at a more ominous option: many-to-one. Whether departure is from one of the Nine Gates of Ninevah, or from any old spot, the arrival is going to be at the same place. This predictability in arrival can cause complications. For example, with the Kaqxachle Chips, any planar traveler arriving from outside the metaplane will land in the exact center of the plane. As you might remember, many of the chips are concave, and have lakes in the middle. This can be a bummer if our intrepid explorer arrives with leather luggage or is wearing armor. Even if the arrival point is on dry land, perhaps the local inhabitants don't want visitors and are raising vermicious knids on the spot, or have filled in the Cave of Strangers with rocks and nasty pointy things.

Unspoken so far has been the assumption that travel between planes, via any method, involves moving from surface to surface, placing a traveler at the same height relative to ground level at the departure and arrival points. If Sam the Witch is on the ground when she leaves, she'll be on the ground when she arrives. If she's at forty-five hundred feet in a holding pattern on her broomstick and decides to board a different plane, so to speak, she'll arrive in the sky forty-five hundred feet off the ground. There are more evil ways to map between planes. A trip that involves appearing at a random location might involve a random altitude, making planar travel more hazardous. If translation to another plane would put the traveler into something solid, either the transfer fails, or something unpleasant might ensue. Appearing a significant distance above solid ground could be equally unpleasant. The altitude of the transfer could be relative to sea level, which is fine if the departure and arrival points are at the same height.

from the
Encyclopædia Planographica

The plane Pippetikibbit suffers from being adjacent to only one plane, and accessible from no others. All access to the plane occurs at a single location. A charming visitor's center has been built at the planar arrival point to encourage people to visit. It includes a wide variety of shopping experiences for the traveler willing to stray from the beaten path. Especially recommended is the floofloo fruit, a delectable confection common to the southern climes...

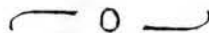
from the Planar Prowler's Guide to the Multiverse

What guidebook would be complete without mentioning Elysidise? This world is without a doubt the most amazingly cool, wonderfully wonderful place in the universe. It is also really, really far away—unbelievably, incredibly, stunningly far. So, by the time you could get there, you'd be dead.

from the minutes of the Yonkan council meeting

Proposed: That the council of Yonka build a bus terminal for the convenience of planar travelers. Motion passed.

Removed. Our last two types of connection are actually ways that planes *aren't* connected. If one plane is "removed" from another, it's not possible to get from one to the other without passing through other planes. With the Tatagana, for example, we can see that there isn't any way between Lustess and Pirzen without passing through one other plane. In the same way, travel between Gling and Llykuun in the Fuervir Continuum requires a stop on either Ert or Chlestiscocq. The nature of that metaplane does not allow travel farther than two planes to the "left" or "right." From Vastis, the farthest plane in reach to the "left" is Ert. Chlestiscocq and Llykuun are removed from Vastis.



Zaveb stepped through after straightening his attire. Now *this* was more like it. After suffering through snow, slime, crystal air, fields of buzzing, carnivorous feathers, and things he didn't stop to appreciate, a room where travelers were coming and going regularly was definitely appreciated. Wherever he was, it appeared to be a hub of commerce. There were food stalls, and vendors hawking sleeping accommodations were milling about the crowds, which seemed to appear out of thin air before wandering from the building.

He'd spent some time watching all this before stepping through, since he wasn't sure he wanted to pop into just any room full of people; as it turned out, he couldn't get the staff to show him any other location on the plane. No matter where you were when you came to this plane, apparently you arrived here. This had a downside, as Zaveb was shortly to discover.

Zaveb made his way across the room and was approaching a seller of bubbly pies when he found himself suddenly falling to the ground, cocooned in fine thread like a bug in a spider's web. He narrowly managed to avoid smashing face-first to the paving stones, picking up a painful bruise on his left upper arm instead. He completed the roll, preparing to deal with this sudden attack, and found a familiar figure standing over him.

"It's so gratifying to have one's predictions confirmed. Well, little thief, this time I'm the one doing the taking. I seem to have stolen your freedom, as you stole my staff and ring." The sorceress delivered her introduction in a low and measured voice.

"Jitilak!"

"I'm afraid you have the advantage over me there, thief. I hope that the care you took to learn my name has been matched by the care you've taken with my property."

The Thread of Binding had done its work well, and none of it was within reach of his tongue. Zaveb realized that the only way his mouth would get him out of this predicament would be by talking fast. He doubted that would work. This woman seemed remarkably resourceful.



"How did you find me?"

"It didn't take much research to find out that what you'd taken could travel the planes. A little more research uncovered the fact that many planes are adjacent to this one, and all travelers arrive here. I knew you were wandering around it its vicinity—trade secret," she added as Zaveb was about to interrupt. "So I just made myself comfortable and waited. Now, return the staff and ring."

Zaveb realized with chagrin that the spider and web analogy was accurate in more ways than one. "I'm afraid that the ring you seek is presently bound up at my belt. As for the staff . . . is it your intent to strand me here?"

"Why should I care?"

"Because there are many things I know about the Azherki Staff that, I suspect, you do not, some of them gained through use. I would be willing to exchange this knowledge for the opportunity to return to my accustomed plane, which I gather is not all that near."

"You are correct in the latter. Dandelon is removed from our present location." Jitilak was amazed that this thief would dare to bargain with her after being caught red-handed. She felt a grudging admiration for the man. This was intensified by the knowledge of where he had been. The Thread of Finding had given her some indication of which planes he was traversing while she was gathering her maps, and many of them, based on their descriptions, were places she was not willing to follow. Then she recalled that he hadn't known what he was getting into. Only a fool would walk the planes blindly.

— 0 —

Isolated. Then there are those planes that are just plain unreachable. Meet Ludo. Ludo wants to go to the Land of Never-Was. Ludo can drink

from the
Encyclopædia Planographica

Care should be taken when visiting Zafar. If a traveler comes in contact with a candavo berry, the various Groves of Travelers will no longer transport them. Exit from the plane becomes a matter of finding an alternative method of transport.

from *The Phantom Tollbooth*, by
Norton Juster

They walked to one of the small windows, and there, tied to the sill, was one end of a line that stretched along the ground and into the distance, trailing out of sight.

"Just follow that line forever," said the Mathematician, "and when you reach the end, turn left. There you'll find the land of Infinity, where the tallest, the shortest, the biggest, the smallest, and the most and the least of everything are kept."

all the planar potions he wants, until he bloats like a blueberry. But if the plane he's on is isolated from the Land of Never-Was, the only trip he's making is to the bathroom.

More Than One Way to Skin a . . . These categories, as you were warned earlier, aren't hard and fast. For example, on the islands in the Æthereal Sea, the only way to get off a plane is to have the power to "walk the seam." On some of the planes, nobody has this power. Technically, that plane is adjacent to others in the sea, but for the inhabitants, it's isolated.

Other planes might be adjacent many-to-many with the Amulet of Arrival, but parallel with the Tool of Transference. And, as we'll see in a later section, it's the rare plane indeed that isn't adjacent for deities.

Travel Methods

It's all very well to speak of traveling from one plane to another, but how do you accomplish such a feat? A few different methods were mentioned in the last section, from walking to bobbing to using potions. The ease or difficulty of travel can have a drastic effect on the way characters will interact with a plane.

from an unpublished text on invading planes

It is very important to locate and secure a reliable Gatekeeper and Keymaster. Establishing the absence of ectoplasmically aware adversaries should also not be forgotten.

*from the
Encyclopædia Planographica*

A particularly popular spot with water-breathers, Muer consists entirely of a waterlike substance. The only appreciable difference from interplane-standard water is that it forms ice above a certain temperature. To say it freezes would be misleading, since cooling Muer ice is what causes it to return to a liquid state.

Left to itself, the entire plane would be warm enough to form ice; however, running in long tubes are rivers of cold light. The chill these tubes give off melts the ice for hectometers around, creating a world of long corridors running through ice, with light coming from an intense cold rod in the center. It has been suggested that there is simply one loop of light, but if this is true, it is so long (and its "landmarks" so hard to place) that it has never been proven.

Gates. In its most basic form, a gate is a location where planar travel can occur. This simple idea can crop up in an amazing variety of forms. A good analogy can be drawn with ordinary doorways. There are doorways without doors, doorways with curtains, doors that can be locked, doors that open automatically, doors with security systems, revolving doors, dutch doors, trap doors, elevator doors, glass doors, secret doors, and more.

The equivalent of the open doorway is the two-way gate as found in the Realms of the Tatagana. Look through such a gate, and there's clearly a different land on the other side. Keeping a gate such as this in a frame (arch, doorway, pit, etcetera) is a good idea, because if something only goes through the gate at the edge, things can get ugly. What happens if Zandar swings his sword so that the end passes through the gate? The easiest solution is to separate the two parts, so that the tip of the sword is lying in the other plane, and Zandar is left holding a short sword.

Another possibility is to not transport the object passing through the gate unless it passes *entirely* through. People can play silly games with gates, however. Zandar walks through but keeps his hand behind; then he can attack foes on the other plane, and retreat by swinging his hand past the opening. This makes him blink backward to the first plane. It is much better to have gates always form in some sort of frame, so that the edge is defined by a physical object.



What about the backside? Again, the recommended approach is to make the gate two-sided. Approaching the gate from either side and seeing the second plane solves a lot of problems. If the gate is one-sided, what about people who walk partway through the rear of the gate and then back up? Are they allowed to retreat behind the gate, or do they get cut in two as the part of them in front of the gate moves backward into the other plane? Do people on the second plane get to see internal organs as the person moves through the gate? Much too messy. If you don't want a backside to the gate, you might place it against a solid surface like a wall or floor.

Even if the gate is in a doorway or against a wall, there might be conniving characters that want access to the back or the edge. There's no need to oblige them. The presence of the gate should probably be related to the integrity of the supporting surface. If a gate is in a wooden frame, and the frame is broken or cut, the gate is destroyed. This also offers opportunities for exciting adventures, when players are trying to close a gate that is cast in a cave, for instance, or some other hard-to-destroy structure.

A gate that doesn't pass light would be like a doorway with a curtain. It would behave just like the gate mentioned above, but would either be opaque (characterized by blackness, strange eldritch mists, swirling colors, or polka dots, for example), or would appear to be an ordinary door or wall.

Let's add a door to this doorway. This could be a real door, or a door created by a gate that doesn't operate at all times. One famous portal of this nature was the cave of Ali Baba, which needed the words "open sesame" to allow passage, though it wasn't a gate and thus didn't open onto another plane. Another well-known portal required the word "friend." Besides magic words, other door-opening methods could include knocking, gestures, or spells.

from The Planar Prowler's Guide to the Multiverse

Getting to Muer can be difficult. It has gates to many planes, but water is always pouring out of them. It's really amazing how many planes owe their main water supply to Muer. So, all you have to do is swim "upriver" into the gate. This can range from tricky to impossible, as different gates seem to manifest different pressures. Some of the easier gates to navigate include . . .



Mirror, mirror, on the wall, what's the fairest world of all?

It's only a small step from a gate with a door to a gate with a locked door. Unless the instructions for opening the gate are provided by the gate itself, any opening method that isn't common knowledge is like a combination lock. More interesting is the idea of a type of key: some particular object, a jewel perhaps, that is required to open the gate. Keys might be available to anybody, like a rod of rowan wood, or exclusive, like a magic ring that is the only key to the portal. The mere presence of a key might not be enough; a particular action (turning the key) may also be needed. The opposite of this would be like a supermarket door, a door that opens automatically as soon as characters get near. The advantage of a doorway gate over the latter is that miscellaneous wildlife or other undesirable influences won't pass through as often.

Gates with security systems might have means of dealing with unauthorized use. Using the wrong combination might disable the gate for a period of time. Attempting to force the gate might result in unpleasant consequences for characters nearby. Trap doors are similar to this idea. Trap gates would probably transport characters whether they wanted to go or not. Such a gate might be in an entire room, or on a floor. To prevent a character from "grabbing the edge," the trigger area should be a small area inside the much larger gate. When the gate appears, the adventurers have already walked away from the edge of the gate.

Glass doors let you see through them even when they aren't open. There might be a puddle or a window that shows a different world. For those that know the secret, this object might allow passage to the other world; otherwise, it's just a magic mirror.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of elevator doors is that they don't open right away. A gate might have a time delay, or only open when the moons are full, or not open at all if it's been opened in the last week.

Two other traits of elevator doors are that they ultimately lead to various places, and they are influenced by other users. Having looked at getting gates to open, let's consider what happens when someone steps through

Revolving doors and dutch doors are intended to let certain things through, but not others. A revolving door lets people through but is designed to keep heat in a building. A half-open dutch door lets in light and air, but keeps animals out. Gates also can be selective. A door might only let sentient beings through, with or without their possessions. Maybe it selects for height: explorers less than 154 centimeters tall need not apply. No magic items are transported, or edged weapons. If a gate is exclusive like that, there are a few possible results. One; the owner can walk through, but illegal items disappear in transit, either destroyed or transported elsewhere. Two; such items fall to the ground on the first plane, simply failing to make the transit. Three; an item might "stick," preventing the possessor from moving any farther until he or she has been freed of the item. Four; the gate might simply not function for the unit (person, box, or even group) containing the illegal object.

There's no reason to guarantee the destination, either. In the section on adjacency, you might recall the one-to-many option; elevators are like that. A gate might not only have multiple destinations on another plane, but lead to more than one plane. A party walking through might be able to choose between five different planes, or have that choice made for them. Furthermore, each individual might arrive at a different location, if that suits the gate's whimsy. Travel between this network of gates might or might not be possible simultaneously; if a caravan is traipsing between gates D and A, then a party wanting to open a gate between C and B might have to wait.

The location of a gate needn't be fixed. Some gates might ooze along the walls of a castle, or drift from clearing to clearing in a forest. Every

from the journal of Blisev the Very Slow

The archway seemed very obliging, showing us various strange landscapes that we could presumably visit. Our choice of worlds was dictated by rearranging glowing gems on a table. This curious selector mechanism was ultimately of no use to us, since we were unable to determine any system or scheme to the patterns, thus preventing us from determining the pattern that corresponded to our own world except by trial and error.

Proceedings of the Society for Thaumaturgical Research

Ergo, the reason that Ahnkala's Door is a tremendously atypical conjuring spell is that it is actually a summoning. Until now, wizards have assumed that the door is created or opened in position. Our experiments show that there is actually only one door, permanently open to Plaxas, and Ahnkala's Door summons it to the caster's position. Placing this spell in its proper category restores much of its expected orthographic nature.



overheard at a meeting of professional illicit object redistributors

"So she brings the dagger in, and tells me that it's cursed."

"She tells you this?"

"Yeah. She's so desperate to get rid of it she's going for the truth-in-advertising approach. See, she figures it's got some kind of spell that makes you get lost fast. Comes crying to me about how she'd turn around, and the road behind her didn't look like the road she'd just walked along, so it was confusing her senses, and would I buy it to befuddle an enemy. It didn't occur to her that a cursed weapon you can get rid of isn't much of a curse."

"By your description, that sounds more like a Plane-Walker's Twister than a cursed dagger."

"Ah, my friend, I believe you are as quick on the uptake as I was."

"You must have gotten it for a song. A short song."

condition for the opening of gates mentioned above can also be applied to a gate's location or destination. For example, if gold is nearby the gate goes one place, if not, it goes another. One set of magic words opens the gate on the floor, another set on the ceiling. In the morning, the gate is normal. During the afternoon, the gate is upside down, twisting travelers when they use it. The faster someone moves through the gate, the farther away the plane at which they'll arrive will be. There are so many interesting ways to make life difficult for the planar traveler.

Basic Teleportation. Another well-known form of planar travel is focused on the person doing the traveling. A good example of this form of travel would be some spell or object, such as the staff in the opening story, which allows the wielder to walk the planes. This form goes hand-in-hand with parallel planes, since it's hard to show that planes are parallel unless there's freedom to choose a departure point.

Sometimes this form can work like the gates, described above. Thus, the Mage waves her arms, chants, and throws powders, and an eerie, eldritch rip in space appears, leading to lands wondrous and strange. Such an opening can borrow from many of the characteristics of gates. The difference is that if Thustra wants to go through a gate, she'll have to go to where the gate is; when she uses her spell, this opening will appear at a location convenient to her.

Teleportation might require something internal to the traveler: having magic powers or psychic abilities, for instance. This can be combined with the plane-traveling object option. For example, the Amulet of Elsewhere won't function without the application of arachnomantic powers. The Ear Clamps of Crossing only function on an individual of sufficient strength, or perhaps an interesting variation would be an individual of sufficient weakness.

Such an effect might not work the same for every plane. On one plane, the Shoelaces for Walking the Multiverse might cause the wearer to wink away. On another plane, a slow fade might be involved, and on a third, the wearer sinks into the ground. There might be sound and fury, or dead silence. The traversal might involve everyone within a twenty-meter radius, only those who want to go, only those the caster wants to go, or the caster alone. Personal articles, such as clothing, may or may not be included in the deal.

What if the person being transported doesn't want to go? Most roleplaying games provide some mechanism that allows characters to avoid or resist certain phenomena. Being phase-shifted to Landover might not usually be one of them, but don't let that stop you. Gates are often—sometimes wrongly—seen as beyond the reach of mere mortals, but in any sort of involuntary transportation, it's possible that the transfer can be disrupted by "bad vibes."



Location Morphing. A more obscure form of travel that offers some fascinating possibilities involves morphing the landscape until the destination is near. This, it can now be revealed, is the method of travel in the Lands of Ledúa. The basic form is as follows: Zitch is in Gheer, and wants to get to Chiss. He picks a likely looking road and starts walking while he summons the forces of planar shifting. Since he doesn't know what is around the corner or over the hill, he can't tell if what he sees is supposed to be there. An outside observer, alias the GM, would know that at some point he was no longer walking a road on Gheer, but was now on Vas. Continued meandering would result in walking on Tul, Klus, and finally Chiss. Zitch would probably know where he is as he walks, although exactly when he changed from one place to another wouldn't be clear.

The key to this method is that it has to involve a series of locations or scenes with which the travelers are unfamiliar so that they can't see the joins. A powerful wizard was once led, blindfolded, into a clearing. When the blindfold was removed she transported herself seven planes while rotating in a circle, just using the new scenery that swam into view. Generally, however, the entire view at any particular time should be stable.

This means that location morphing can't be used to escape a cell, for example. There are four walls, and they're all visible. No door will suddenly appear. Should the prisoners get into the corridor, location morphing could allow them to turn a corner and be in a different dungeon, and eventually morph to a place where they could walk out into the open air.

The speed of travel with location morphing depends somewhat on how often the traveler can change the scenery. Corridors and rooms in a building are often good, as are narrow alleys in a city. A forest is ideal, a desert much less so. The principle assumes that everything that can

from the newsletter of the Plaggian Transportation Guild

The trip to Keng from Plagg can be made through co-location transmorphology. Unfortunately, as Keng is a humid, forested world with vast bodies of water, it has no locations that are orthomorphological with Plagg, with its widespread desert conditions. Attempts are being made to artificially construct orthomorphological areas for use in transferring to Keng.

be seen in one moment belongs to one reality. To move wholly to a different reality, a completely different landscape must be seen: on the other side of the hill, around the bend in the road, down the stairs.

This explains why the lands haven't been showing up often in the examples. If travel between them is from road to road, then they all must have roads. Well, okay, so they don't. GnK is mostly wooded islands. The only way to get there is by location morphing a forest, or moving an ocean-going ship. Anyway, they display reasonable uniformity. If you've seen one Land, you've seen 'em all.

Since this is a relatively unexplored method of travel, there are a number of questions that the GM will have to answer. Is it harder to move a whole ship than just a person and a horse? If you step around a corner, then back again, does it have to be the same as it was? Ordinarily, the answer would be yes, but as with everything in this book, you're encouraged to adapt the rules to suit your taste.

This method can be limited in certain ways to make it more difficult to use. Perhaps it only works on rivers, or on roads. Maybe only wizards can see the changes, so if they want to bring others, the rest of the party must be blindfolded. What if it only works when nobody else can see the would-be travelers?

Traveling Light. Sometimes, whether by choice or not, planar travelers aren't allowed to take a body with them. Naturally, this can pose a challenge to both the traveler and the GM. Because out-of-body travel is often system-specific, this book isn't going to go into much detail. In general, traveling without a body can be treated like any other form of travel, but the situation after the traveler arrives at his or her destination might be different. Whether to treat out-of-body travelers like ghosts, disembodied points of view, or other phenomena is up to you.

The return trip also offers a couple of possibilities. Either returning would be the same as if the traveler had a body, or traveling lightly might guarantee a return ticket. When the traveler was ready, transfer back to the body could occur immediately.

Inadvertent Trips. Occasionally, a planar traveler doesn't visit exotic new locations by choice. We've already discussed gates that include booby traps and the like. There's also the possibility of some twisted travel agent surprising the traveler with an unplanned excursion. However, the most common form of inadvertent travel in literature is the summoning.

Ask your typical necromancer about summoning, and he or she will give you a song-and-dance about bringing the dead back to life, without giving too much thought to where the dead are coming from. Your typical demonologist will wax lyrical about pentagrams of containment, the differences between short, ugly demons and tall, hairy ones, and

whether or not red demons are especially virile. The summoning game works both ways. Should the Oolgarth Pezzlpix so choose, it might summon up a typical party of adventurers to terrorize the neighbors and fetch treasures from nasty places. Whether the punishment for failure to complete the assigned task is death or the loss of a return trip depends on the summoner and the GM.

When Trips Are Canceled or Delayed. As I've said, different methods of travel can allow different connections. For most mortals, the Lands of Ledúa are connected via landscape morphing, so visitors must pass through them in order. Imagine a special spell, available only to a select few, that allows travelers to go directly from any one of the planes to any other, as if they were all connected in parallel fashion. Obviously, those who can use this spell will get from Chiss to Pazt first.

The possibility of different methods of travel becomes more important if certain types of planar travel are somehow blocked. What if an enormous extraplanar wall went up, or magic was stripped from the land? If one method of travel fails, another more laborious method might be the only way to reach a plane.

Warping the Multiverse. Now for a quick detour into planar travel theory. Assume for the moment that, at some point, whatever method of travel or connection is used, something must go from here to there. It might be an instantaneous trip, perhaps through higher dimensions or simply at a very high speed. Under this condition, if a barrier can be erected, it could possibly block all travel to or from the plane, except travel by distortion or warp.

Warp travel occurs when a traveler moves from here to there without passing through any of the space, time, etcetera in between. Warp travel avoids all those sticky problems about whether a plane is connected,

from a lecture at the University of Wizardry

"Poof! Here, there. No lines, no waiting, nothing to feed, nothing to pamper. What a way to go!"



adjacent, or removed, and whether or not there's a barrier. But unless the campaign is throwing around some mind-boggling powers, the distinction is irrelevant. If you're playing with *The Primal Order*, we recommend that warp travel be reserved for use only by beings who can use primal energy. This is the method we called "primal travel" in TPO.

By twisting the multiverse until the start and end points overlap, opening a gate, and stepping through, the traveler avoids the space between. Since the two points are next to each other, anything "between" them has more or less been pushed to one side. Feel free to expand upon this theory. Perhaps some areas of the multiverse are rigid and won't warp. Others might just be stiff, requiring extra power.

The Master's Notes

The easiest, if not the neatest, way to make a map is to draw a bunch of ovals on a page and connect them with arrows.

There are a lot of variations on these ideas. For instance, you can set up a square or hex grid and mark walls along the borders to stand for planes that aren't connected. However, keep in mind that it's easy to draw up a bajillion or so planes and then be stuck making up stuff for them! I definitely have too many Lands of Ledúa. I even have trouble making up names for them. Filling them in with interesting details is sometimes more work than I'm in the mood for. Even two or three planes, if done well, will provide a fascinating new dimension to play.

Overkill is a risk in every aspect of this chapter. A good way to start might be to pick some metaplanar structure that will allow for later growth; the Fuervir Continuum is a great model. Set up a couple of planes, pick one or two ways of connecting them, and see what happens. Trying to get every kind of gate onto one plane is a good way to make Swiss cheese, but not a good way to create coherent game play.

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To Yngan

BASUS
good place
to get horses
and livestock.

Top of
Cliff

Marda River

trade for
cow first
here

DANKEN

Lata
Valley

white
pinksaur:
great
bar

INDIG

Property of Mst. Tr. D. Xelreh Wol

Trader's Gate to Gate Map of Choonfir

To
Choonfir

→ fast, dangerous

Selfish
✓ this way

CADKIS
Very friendly,
but sharp traders.

They think they're in charge.
Humer them.

MAVR

Great Crevice
Very dangerous
highly chaotic.

SANDUF

Food sells well here.

Prop. of
Master Trader
D. X. Wol

Trader's Gate to Gate Map of Pirzen

To Pirzen

Don't charter
cheap ship during
storm season!

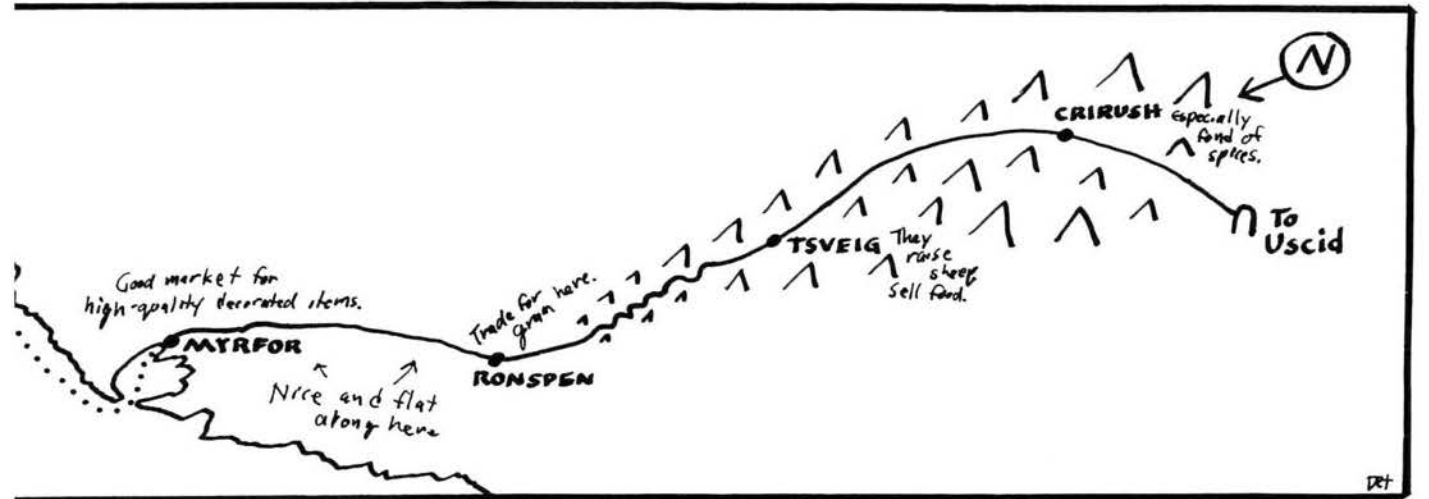
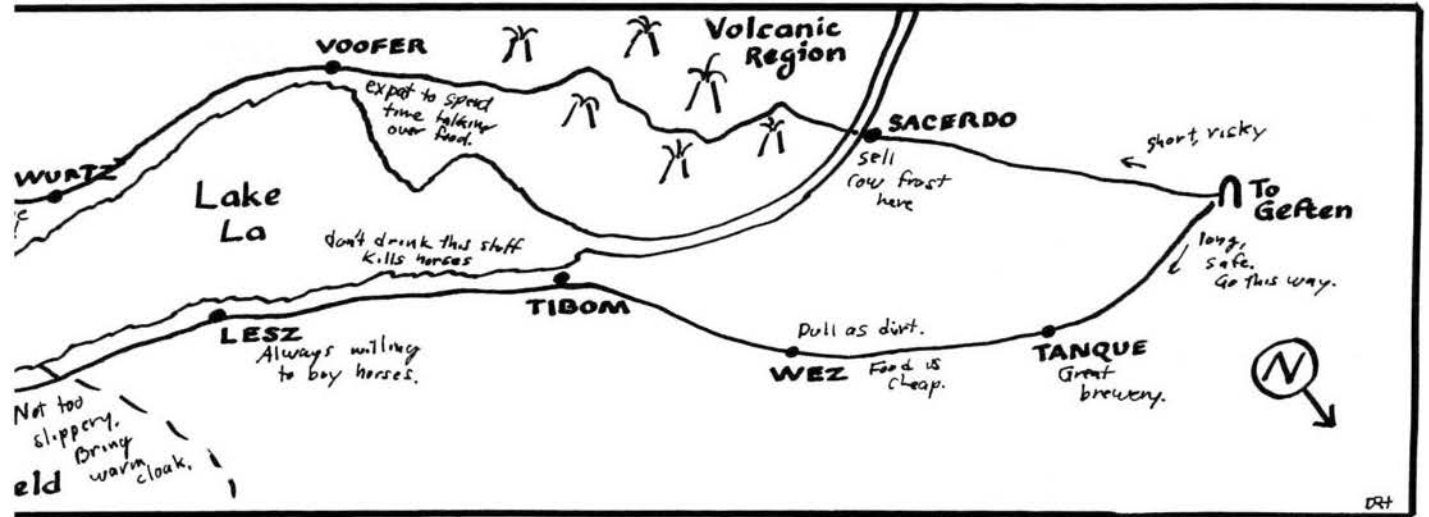
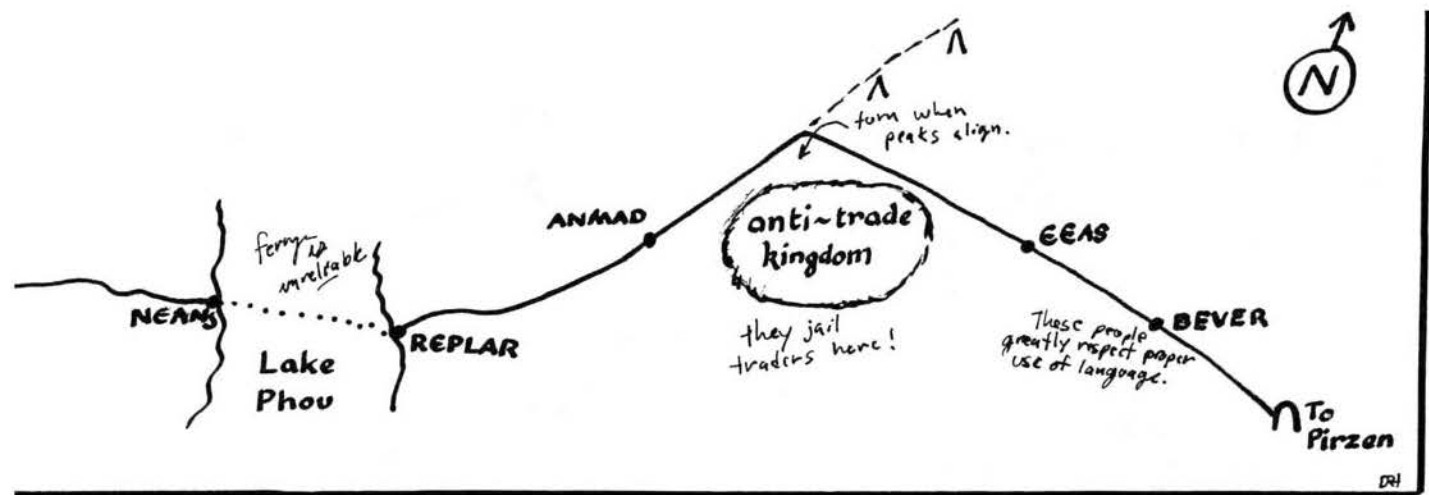
Island is gorgeous.
Take couple days
layover if
possible.

RALEXA

QUINHÖ

Prop. of Mst. Tr. D. Xelreh Wol

Trader's Gate to Gate Map of Geften



Chapter 4: A Planar Potpourri



from regional records on Izgæn

"Well, y'Lordship, it's like, well, y'see, my field isn't there any more . . . No, y'Lordship, it's not flooded or sunk or aught like that, it's just, well, gone. M'neighbor over the hill is now just th'other side of my animal shed, and . . . oh, the hill's gone too, y'Lordship . . . Yes, y'Lordship . . . No, y'Lordship . . . I really couldn't say, y'Lordship. Maybe it went to visit relatives . . . Sorry, y'Lordship.

There are many little issues that need to be covered, and this chapter is where we do just that. This section will deal with adding and subtracting planes, dividing them, and joining them together. We'll also examine the internal reality and how it's supported by planar constants, what happens when planes think, and how all this can be used to make campaigns grow and join.

Planar Mathematics

You may have gained the impression that planes are pretty stable objects. Well, okay, they are. Usually. When provoked, however, planes can behave in all sorts of exciting ways. Take, for example, those islands in the Æthereal sea. There are winds and currents in the sea, and the islands respond to them. Occasionally a rare collision will occur, and two planes will stick together. Imagine the amazement of the poor farming folk that find, upon looking out their windows, that the nearby hills (which were really across the seam where the edges of the plane appear to join) have been replaced by a forest. The plane has just doubled in size.

The reverse is also true: planes can be divided. Some incredible natural disaster, perhaps an ætherquake, could snap a plane in two, for example. Or some secret ritual could allow snapping off a corner of the plane, making an entire world smaller than Liechtenstein.

While the islands are particularly prone to this phenomenon, it could happen to all sorts of planes. A planet is divided, leaving either a hemisphere or a Moon-sized world. An infinite plane is sliced, leaving a gray wall across the landscape that nothing can penetrate. The Kaqxachle Chips might crack or crumble, leaving hosts of microplanes tumbling about.

Adding planes together can be even more strange. If one plane is an infinite flat surface, where does the other plane go? The first plane

might have a section taken out for the new plane, or the second plane might be glued to the bottom of the first, or perhaps stood on end.

Planes don't have to actually collide for strange things to happen. If two planes have a near miss, the effect might be the equivalent of planar wind-burn. Physical, mental, or psychic vortices might form. Objects might be sucked from one plane to another. Inadvertent temporary gates might appear. Characteristics from one plane might appear on another: if a plane of lava and ooze swung by a plane of ice and air, the lava plane might see mountains of solid rock piling up where the lava had been chilled, and the ice might vaporize, filling a corner of the plane with fog. You can always fall back on the classics as well: earthquakes, tidal waves, plagues, and so on.

With some metaplanes, there might not *be* any stable planes. Planes could have a life cycle: a plane appears as a pebble out of the metaplanar void, growing connections with nearby planes as it gets larger; eventually it peaks and withers away. Little planes might join together until a plane reaches a certain size, or until all planes have become one in the metaplane.

There is a key difference between planes that have been added together and those that are merely connected. The difference has to do with planar constants.

Planar Constants

Planar constants are the things about a plane that define it. For example, some of our reality's planar constants would include: the speed of light, magnetism, inertia, the laws of thermodynamics, and the force that makes socks disappear from dryers. In a fantasy roleplaying game, a comprehensive description of a plane would include the rulebook, house rules, and whatever theories the GM has come up with. Thus, some planar constants might include the following conditions: that magicians can become more powerful by running around in the woods and killing things, or that a two-handed pig sticker does as much damage as a Blavian boathook, but doesn't require any training.

A planar constant is part of the reality of a plane. If one of the planar constants is that the sun is easily embarrassed and people going outdoors naked causes it to blush a light red, well, that's just the way it is. The plane itself is supporting its constants, so they have all the effect of natural law, much like the law of gravity.

Now, while planar constants are sort of the ultimate "it works that way because I say so," this is not the best way to approach them. It's better to try to base behavior on one or two simple rules. Our universe can be simplified down to three forces—gravity, nuclear force, and electroweak force, for you science-minded types—and a handful of other theories. A

from royal records on Izgæn

By royal decree, no longer will the phrase 'When pigs fly' be used as a euphemism for 'never,' inasmuch as porcine acromobility was demonstrated to the satisfaction of the court and king this Llesday past. Further prohibitions will be placed on the following sayings...

from Proceeds of the Ecumenical Council on the Nature of Reality

Wherefore our divine guidance has indicated that for every time there is a place, and for every question an answer, and for every effect a cause, and for every action a motive, and for every phenomenon a reason, this council hereby decrees that "just because," or "because he said so," are not acceptable conclusions to research sponsored by this council.

stolen from the notes of a planar researcher

At this point, the following constants have been confirmed for the plane in question: "nothing may travel faster than light;" "no loitering;" "keep off the grass;" "you can't have dessert until you clean your plate;" "you break it, you pay for it."

from the list of the top ten folk songs on Cushleigh, a Kaqxachle Chip

"Bad News Is Like Gravity; It Always Gets Me Down."

sound approach for planar constants is to add just a few new constants to that mix. One that is often added is a constant that allows or provides for magic. Keeping the number of constants small will make paradoxes less likely.

There are two kinds of constants: permissive and imperative. One highly recommended permissive constant is "This plane will permit anything that originates on another plane to keep its reality." In other words, if people from Chiss, where everybody flies, visit Vas, the Chisslings can still fly even though the Vassians can't. Permissive constants are like saying "you can." Although a plane may not provide the means to turn mountains into molehills, if Fendesar the Mountain-Mover comes on from another plane and starts selling hill-shrinkers, then mountains can indeed become molehills. The constants already in place, things like atomic structure and whatnot, would seem to say such things can't be done. However, since we've decided that they're permissive constants, breaking the rules is allowed.

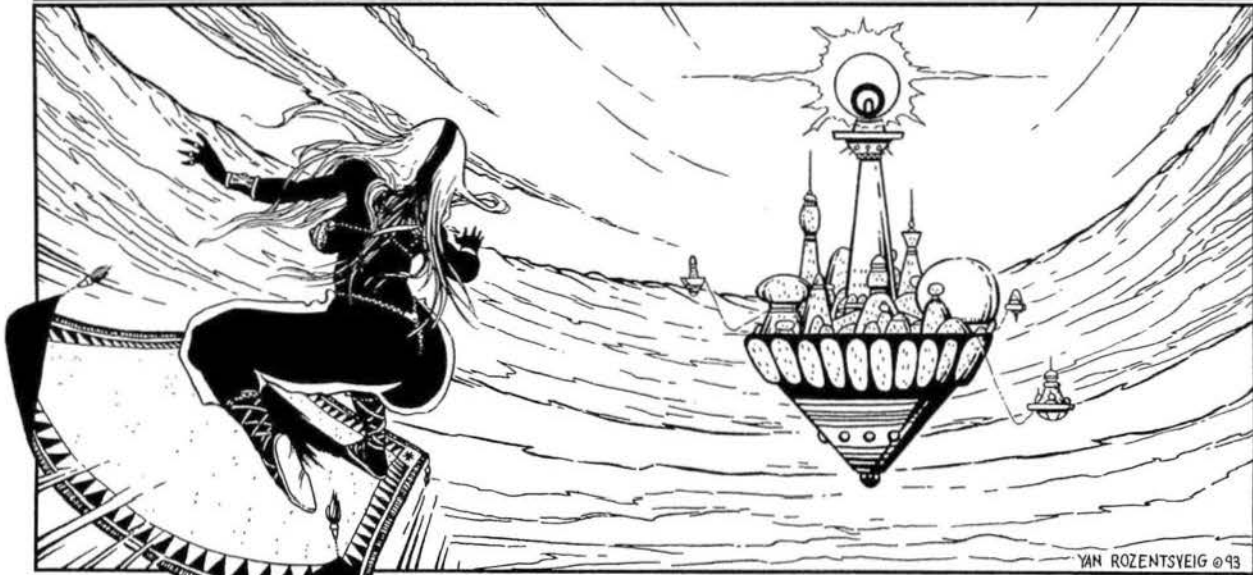
Imperative constants say "you must" or "you can't." One imperative constant might be that there can be no magic. Magic items brought onto the plane cease to work. Beings that use magic to stay alive will die on this plane. As another imperative constant, try "Everything on the plane must be in contact with the ground, directly or indirectly." This would allow people to walk across the ceiling on their hands, since falling from the ceiling would break the indirect contact. Once they reach the far wall, they'll slide right down it, as long as at least a pinky is touching. Arrows won't work, rain won't fall—boy, what a weird place.

Constants can affect all sorts of things. One plane might have as a constant that everything must travel north to south or east to west: no diagonals allowed. Another might require that extraplanar visitors get the hiccups. A third might permit turtles to sing or plants to travel through time.

Do you remember the discussion about planes colliding? If two planes are connected, they may still have very different planar constants. If they actually add together, then one set of constants applies to both parts of the newly enlarged plane. By the same token, if a plane splits, the two parts will have separate planar constants. These constants might be identical, but either plane can change its constants without affecting the other.

If two planes with different constants are joined together, it's up to the GM to decide what happens. The planar constants from the larger plane could predominate, or the new constants could be a mixture of or compromise between the two. Maybe the collision creates a whole new set of constants unrelated to the other two, or the conflict between the constants results in both planes being annihilated.

Think even further back, to the beginning of the book, where we defined a plane as "any place where it is possible for the nature of reality



to be different.” The actual definition is “any place with independent planar constants.”

Metaplanes can have constants too, although they often don’t. The Kaqxachle Chips are the strongest example. It is the metaplane that has light and air, and controls the direction of the force of gravity. These are imperative constants to the planes: the planes must accept these as the norm. This is also a good example of some important subtleties. Just because air is an imperative constant doesn’t mean that vacuums can’t be created. The actual constant is worded something like “Air will exist wherever it can reach.” If the constant was “Air will be wherever it is possible for air to exist,” then air would automatically appear any place not already occupied by something else, which would bode ill for thermos jars. The plane must also use the metaplane’s definition of air. While vacuums are allowed, different atmospheres are not.

Gravity is more imperative. “Gravity is everywhere;” thus sheets that block gravity won’t work—much like our universe, actually. Things that lift against the pull of gravity should be fine. The magic carpet seller’s guild is rumored to be quite pleased with this.

The Realms of the Tatagana also have metaplanar constants. The forces of anger, magic, and chaos are metaplanar constants imposed on the planes. The Lands of Ledúa have a subtle metaplanar constant: the mode of travel. Every plane must have at least one location that is similar to each of its neighboring planes, or location morphing travel fails. Now, there’s nothing intrinsically wrong with planes that don’t have anything in common, but it’s not allowed in the Lands.

*from a poster advertisement on Pirzen
There are four sure things in life: magic,
anger, chaos, and Immaterial Insurance,
Inc.*



Sentient Planes

Most planes, thankfully, are rather like plants. They grow and change very slowly, attempting to preserve the status quo. Planar constants are just that—constant, allowing everybody to live in peace and harmony.

But some planes literally have minds of their own. Imagine reality with an attitude. Such planes are self-aware, so to speak; they are aware of everything that occurs on or in them. Sentient planes are all-knowing within themselves. Anything that occurs affects the plane's reality.

The effects of such a plane can vary widely, particularly with regard to extraplanar travelers. Perhaps one wizard's magic doesn't taste good; poof, she's powerless. The building of a castle *here* offends the plane's aesthetic sensibilities, but *there* is all right. Perhaps the plane decides one morning that mountains are unsightly wrinkles. Since the plane is in control of its own reality, those mountains not only no longer exist, but to the inhabitants of the plane, they never did exist.

In short, planes control tremendous amounts of power. Fortunately, even sentient planes are generally slow-moving. Hey, if you're going to be around for the rest of eternity, more or less, why sweat the little stuff? A sentient plane that decides mountains are gauche is more likely to manipulate things so that erosion flattens those mountains out in around two hundred thousand years or so. That's why sentient planes aren't usually worshiped; they aren't likely to act on a request until long after the civilization has turned to dust.

The Multiverse as Jigsaw Puzzle

How would a planar prowler get from the Kaqxachle Chips to Lustess, a Tataganan realm? The connections of gates and parallel planes are not

from instructions on how to reach a plane

All right, first you've got to head on down the River of Worlds for a ways, then take that one medium-sized offshoot. Get out at the cold and damp world a pace or so down, then turn right where the Temple of Alakotopop used to be. Then you'll need to fly about halfway to Yam-kabuur before twisting over five, or maybe six, times. That gets you in the general neighborhood....

restricted inside the metaplane. As it happens, the chips are adjacent to Llykuun in the Fuervir Continuum, and it's the best kind of adjacent; the traveler gets to choose the destination point. It's possible to get to Vastis by way of Ert, among other paths available. Vastis happens to be adjacent to Uscid in the Tataganan metaplane. The only external access to the Realms of the Tatagana is through Uscid.

We defined the multiverse as "all possible planes and places." This means that it contains not only your campaign, but also your friend's campaign, all those great modules on the game store shelves, all the cool places you read about in books, and more.

Ordinarily all of these places are isolated. Sometimes, players want to move characters from one campaign to another. Ta-da! A system ready-made to explain such transfers. A permanent or temporary gate exists between the two campaigns, one that might transform objects or beings passing through. This allows for adding or subtracting power or stats in order to balance the character in the new campaign; it also lets them travel back and forth. Maybe the gate is in a distant location, in which case a quest will be required before the character can change over.

Linking campaigns together can also offer fascinating new dimensions to gaming in a club. The GMs in the organization figure out how to link their worlds to the worlds of other players, and a master map of all the planes can be published. Travel can be restricted in various ways—gates have to be opened from both sides or the moons have to align, for example—so that characters aren't popping through unnoticed by the GM. Aside from the pleasure of being part of a larger multiverse, there are some great possibilities when deities are introduced. More on that later.

from the
Encyclopædia Planographica

Yarcadell is one of the riskiest locations to visit. The land shows no rhyme or reason. The unpredictable nature of reality results in one of the highest accident rates of any plane. Those who have gone have tried to prepare for anything, and have usually failed. Part of the problem is that the very fabric of reality there seems to be aware of those who visit, and also seems to be insane.





The Master's Notes

The section on joining and separating planes is intended mostly for emergencies. We're talking about such momentous events that my gut reaction is never to do this. Well, maybe once. The whole concept isn't really applicable to your basic vanilla metaplane, such as the Fuervir Continuum or the Lands of Ledúa.

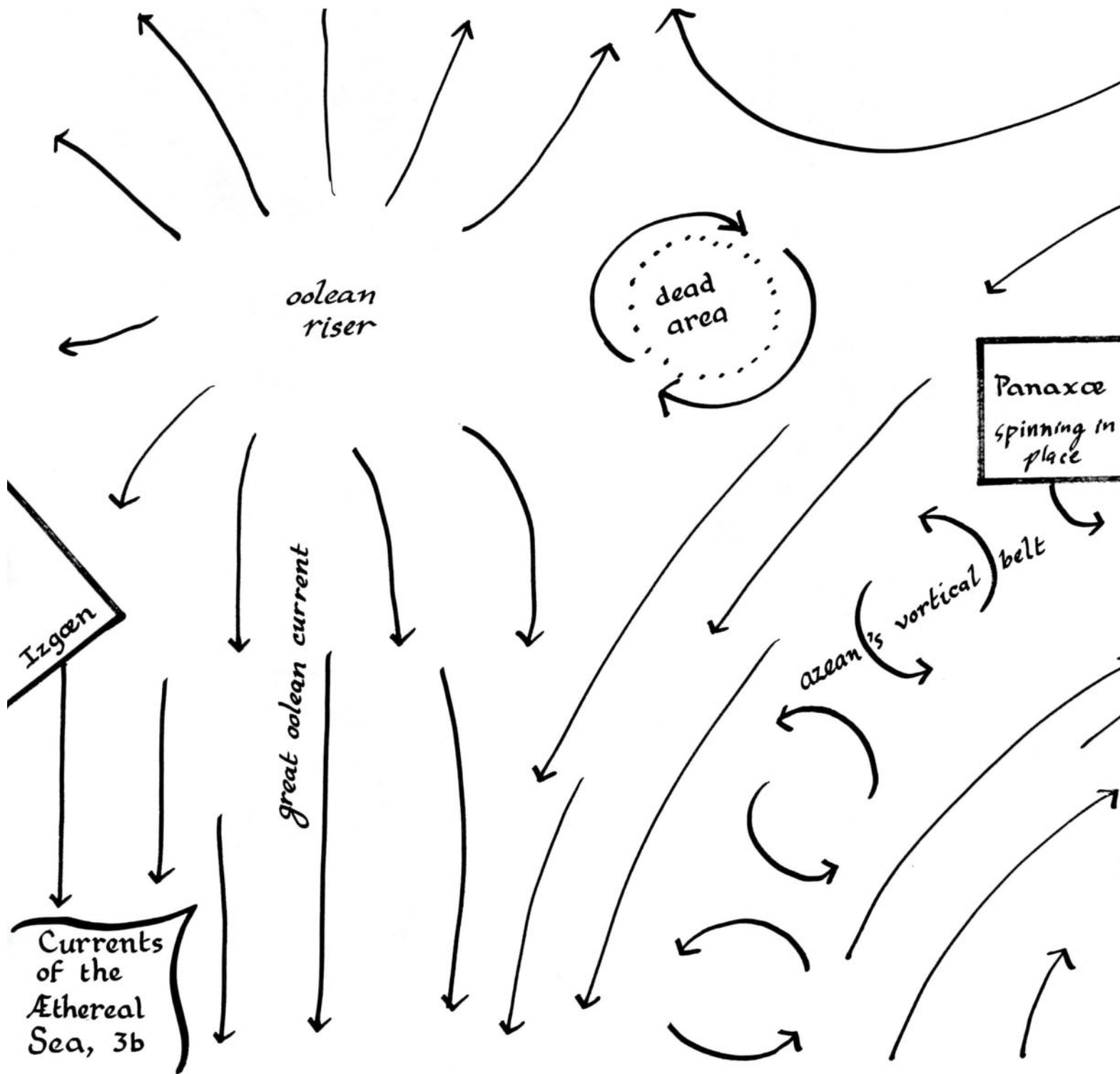
Planar constants are the messiest concept in this book. There are no hard-and-fast rules about constants: what they really are, what side effects they have, what their exact wording is, and so on. You'll have to play them by ear, which means more chances to contradict yourself, or to set up situations that don't go the way you want. I would try to avoid writing constants down unless I had to, since that way I could change the exact wording at the last minute if something was going to happen I didn't like. To some people, this is cheating. So I confess, sometimes I cheat. On the other hand, writing down a set of constants and then trying to extrapolate a plane from them could be a fascinating exercise in world-building.

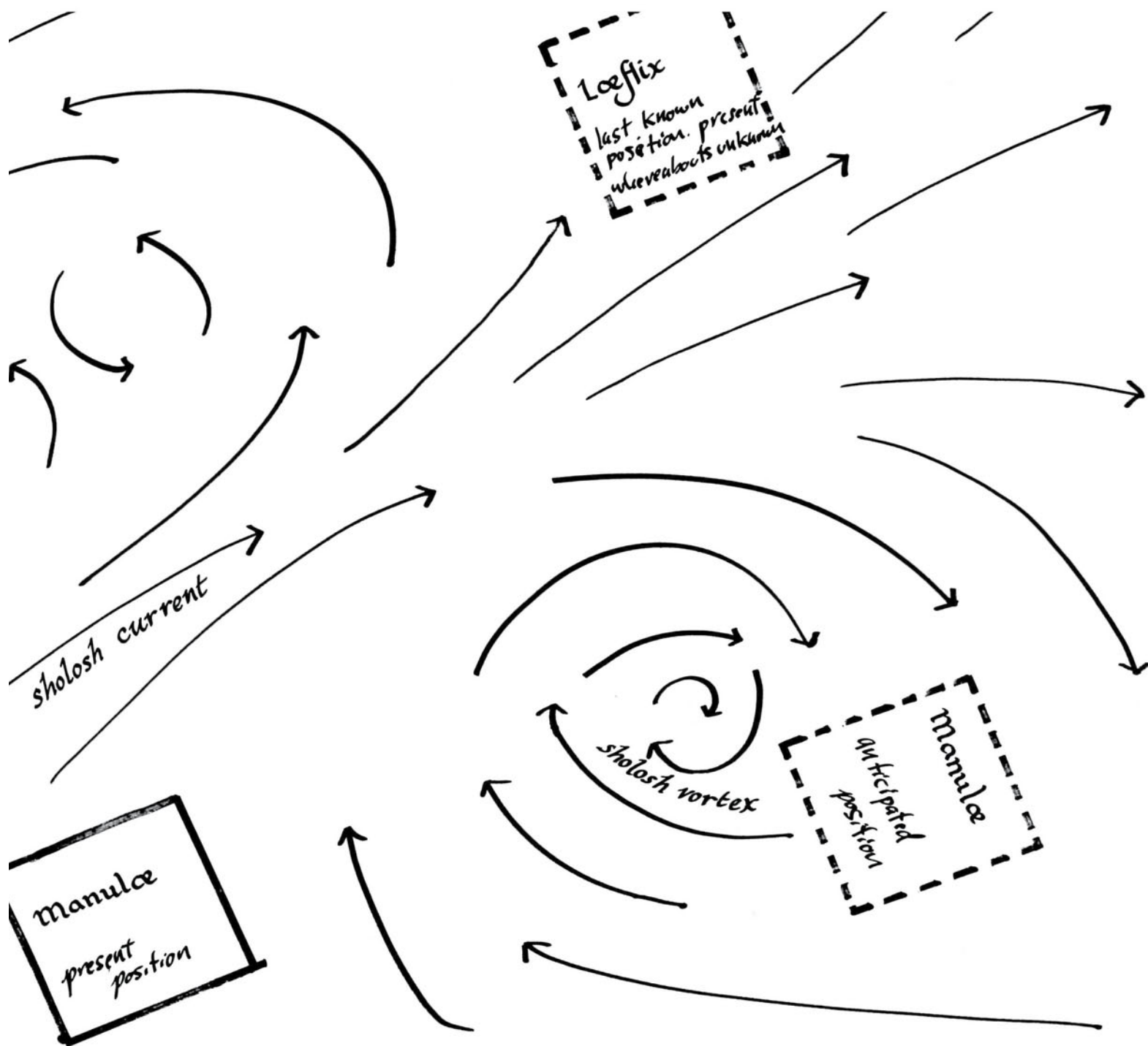
Sentient planes. Now *there's* a concept that could get totally out of hand. I keep seeing planes that have gone insane running around and smashing into other planes, or playing twisted little games with their sentients. A sentient plane could take millions of sentient, obedient creatures and send them throughout the multiverse. Other planes would be completely helpless, especially those with the reciprocal-exchange-of-reality constant. You can see why it has been said that sentient planes should be slow-acting. I often set them up to be wise and benevolent as well as lethargic, although there's no reason to assume this other than it makes the GM's life easier.

from unpublished notes of the author

Other ways that planes could be created: Created by gods. No, puts too much power in divine hands. Vacuum energy. Too complicated. Techie-types can develop that one themselves. Created by other planes mating. A truly bizarre concept, but there's no way I'm going to sit around working out the logistics.

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Chapter 5: Planes and Primal

Until now, what's been said about planes has been fairly universal. Almost any universe, campaign, or milieu can make use of the mechanics presented. This chapter includes an explanation of why that is: a theory that explains from whence these planes came, and where they get their powers.

There are many possible explanations for the phenomena of planes; I've collected five or six already. This book is only going to tell you about one of them, which you can adapt as is or use as an example for creating your own. This particular theory, the Grand Unified Principle of Primal Energy, is designed to complement and complete the effects first described in *The Primal Order*. We'll describe this theory, the GUPPE (pronounced "guppy," "goop," or occasionally, "goo-PAY"), in intimate detail, and then cover some other primal aspects of planes.

The Grand Unified Principle of Primal Energy

Before we explore the further reaches of the GUPPE, a little groundwork is in order. Magic, psi powers, and technology are effects that are provided and/or powered by the plane. As mentioned earlier, planes have a sort of cosmic exchange program going; each plane will provide the necessary connections for magic to work, whether it's their own magic or that of another plane. On those occasions when magicians or magic items are between planes, the metaplane may pick up the slack and provide a reality to allow magic.

Mere magic isn't the only power that comes from planes; primal energy is also tapped from them. Primal energy, in fact, is the fundamental energy that the plane uses to create reality. It is the form of energy that is subsequently converted, transformed, or burned to manifest "ordinary" energies such as magnetism, gravity, light, and psionics.

Primal energy comes in two forms: base and flux. Primal base is the stable form, flux is the active. The plane receives its primal as base and converts it to flux, and so on with other forms of energy as they are needed. More detail on the differences between the two forms can be found in the next chapter and in TPO; we'll just note for now that the plane converts base to flux on a one to one basis if needed. Planes will treat the two forms as identical for most practical purposes.

As it happens, there's so much primal energy sloshing around that there's a little slack in the power distribution system. It's not much, but there's already so much energy that the residue amounts to, on average, one thousand points of primal per plane, which is available as primal flux. This flux is normally bled back into the parent metaplane, which deals with it somehow. It is possible, under the right conditions, to convince the plane to direct its overflow to a particular destination.

from unpublished notes found in the archives of the Panplanar Institute of Research and Technology

Xankifile is totally mad. I'm sure that his travels have unhinged him, and I certainly hope it's not contagious. The ridiculous nature of his babblings about energies more fundamental than the ether and the elements, and his insistence upon supernatural beings that control such forces as we control clay, are surely reason enough to have him dismissed. His past history must surely be discounted in light of this new nonsense. One hopes the trustees will see fit to finally recognize my potential.



Beyond the internal systems of the plane itself, the only other place that primal energy is ever regularly seen is in souls. In TPO, deities can gain primal flux from being worshiped by sentients (in other words, beings with souls), which could indicate that they either have some form of primal energy within themselves, or can somehow access it without being able to manipulate it. The true nature of the relationship between primal energy and souls remains obscure, but teams of researchers continue to explore the link.

On the other end of the primal food chain lies the question: where do the planes get their primal energy? They get it from the metaplane. The slack in a plane's power system is typically on the order of 0.1%. So, that slack of one thousand points of flux from a plane per day reflects a daily planar flux usage of one million points. Planes also typically have two thousand points of base available. This represents power reserves of two million points of base available to the plane. Since most entities that use primal energy measure their power in terms of mere hundreds or thousands, this is a treasure indeed.

The conduit by which planes are fed their daily primal energy appears to be completely inaccessible to any means of tapping. Inasmuch as the planes are within their metaplane, the energy effectively "appears" within the matrix of the planes themselves. This is another project that has occupied researchers, yet the question remains: if a deity actually gained access to this energy flow, would it do that deity any good? The density of energy involved might treat anything coming in contact with it like a bug-zapper treats bugs. This has never, to our knowledge, been empirically verified.

Above and beyond the metaplanes, beyond the multiverse, lies what is called the "grand reality." The only thing known about the grand reality is that it provides metaplanes with the power they need to make primal base. This lack of knowledge is not expected to change.

from an inscription on an artifact of unknown origin

There are some things gods are not meant to know.

from the final page of the Book of Aruu, the primary text of the dead Aruuzin religion

O Peeple, heare wyth thine ears that We, Aruu, will suume be of greate Powwys as We hafe fownd a Sourse ov Goddley Myght suche that All thoze of Aruu wyll be re-waerdedd beeyawned measur.

Awaite the Returne of Aruu.

*from a transliteration of material from
psychic channel 43*

*'Are your indivisibles giving you a hard
time? Are they bored? Sluggish? Prone to
remaining in low-energy states? You can
feel better in no time with Ato-happy, the
molecular entertainment system!*

*Ato-happy provides a constant, cheery
glow to your indivisibles, allowing them
to feel that you really care about each
and every one of them. Special options let
you provide zippy, independent feelings to
gaseous indivisibles, or tune in friendship
and close bonds to those bits where solidar-
ity and unity is the State That Is Great.[™]*

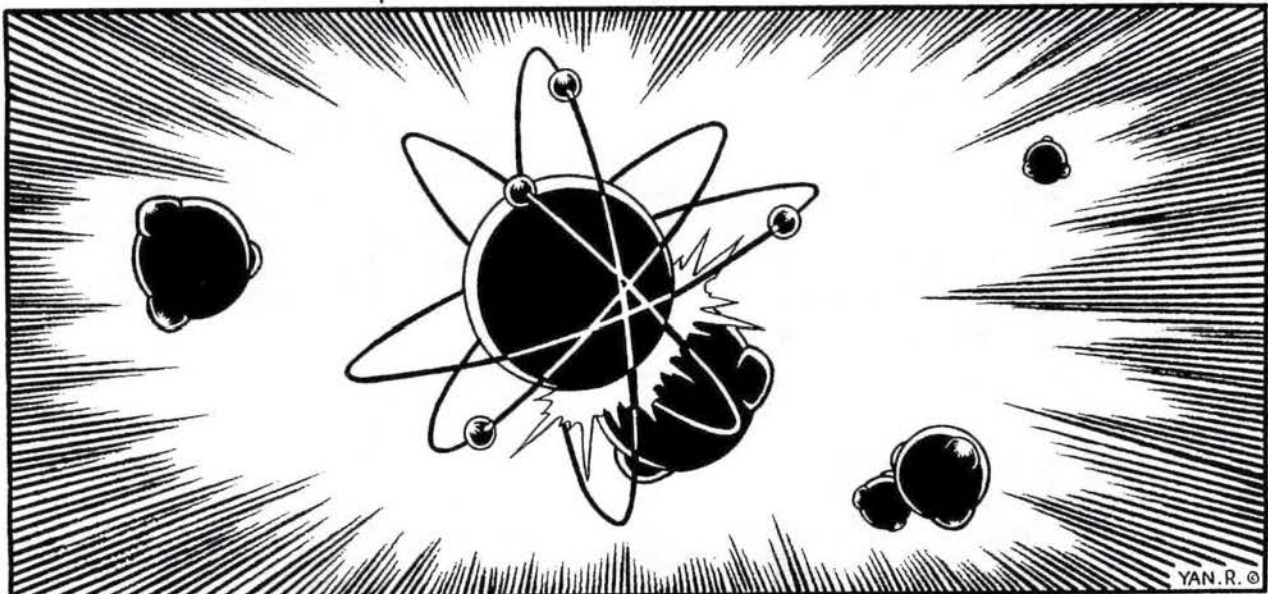
*Get Ato-happy, and Let Your Indivisi-
bles Know You Care.[™]*

More on Reality. The plane's maintenance of local reality can take many forms and involve diverse mechanisms. For example, on some planes, the amount of power available for magic spells would be related to the experience of the spellcaster. Some realities might concern themselves with a caster's personal health and vitality, while others will dole out power based on the spell used. Some planes will provide a stable magnetic field; others will let it wander about. Some realities might have mentalic powers directly tied to brain structures; others might distribute such powers at random. Some places might have consistent, interlocking rules of physics; others might have whimsical demons of speed and time running about.

There is certainly opportunity for confusion and illusion on the part of the plane. Imagine the grand joke of a society coming up with complex theories like friction, thin film dynamics, and quantum theories when the underlying reality actually involves atoms with an attitude problem. Residents of one plane might labor under the misconception that there are demons in the night, when in reality, people disappear because they get eaten by lions, tigers, and bears. On another plane, the people sigh and moan about random chance and quirks of fate, when what they ought to do is put out milk and cookies to placate the house brownies and yard imps.

The term Reality, with a capital R, will be used to distinguish how things really work from what the locals think is the truth. Generally, only the GM will completely know what reality is, although most deities should be pretty close.

Planes as Morons. It's all too easy, when thinking about planes, to anthropomorphize them, assuming that some plane "wants" to have reality just this way, or that it will be "irritated" when shaped by outside forces. Resist the temptation. Planes are more like fantastically complex





machines, or forces of nature, or maybe slugs. Oozing slime is just something a slug does, without speculating on the nature of gelid exudates, or the drawbacks of salt. Similarly, planes sustain realities because it's their nature.

Planes as Monsters. The above paragraph does not apply to sentient planes. These were alluded to in an earlier chapter, and now we can see why they're a rather daunting prospect: they have outrageous amounts of power at hand. Fortunately, most sentient planes think in terms of aeons, and an entity that counts years one billion at a time doesn't usually worry about mere mortals, or mere *immortals* for that matter.

Available Power. Let's look again at those numbers. Primal base generates primal flux at one point of flux per ten points of base. Thus, a plane with two million points of base on hand is already generating two hundred thousand points of flux. The conduit has to provide eight hundred thousand points of primal, which will be primal base, to meet the plane's energy needs.

Usually the conduit has extra capacity, up to ten percent beyond current demand, or as little as one percent, depending on circumstances. Usually a plane's power needs are stable, but if something should occur to seriously distort local reality, the plane will have to draw extra power to compensate. A tremendous magical war or an artifact of chaos might be sufficient cause for a plane to need extra power. An artifact of order could be equally draining. In any case, it is possible for some event to occur that would require more than eighty thousand extra points to counteract or dissipate, assuming ten percent extra capacity. At that point the plane has to start converting its reserves of base. If this is a one-time event, the plane can restock those reserves by continuing to draw on the extra capacity. If this is an ongoing problem, the conduit,

from a memo at General Primal Products

Due to recent developments, foremost among them being the total loss of our research lab, further work on batteries for primal energy storage is being suspended.

from One Chip at a Time: Traveling the Kaqxachle Metaplane

The most popular sight in this part of Kaqxachle, if not the most popular place to visit, is Runtaban's Folly. Runtaban is a now rarely worshiped god who obtained control of a medium-sized chip and proceeded to modify its behavior. One of his first moves, and as it turned out, his last, was to flip the chip over, so that everyone would live on the bottom. He unfortunately forgot to provide a way to keep the population attached to the chip, so everyone promptly fell off. The sudden loss of so many worshipers was a devastating blow to the deity, especially since nobody else was willing to join the church of such a stupid god.

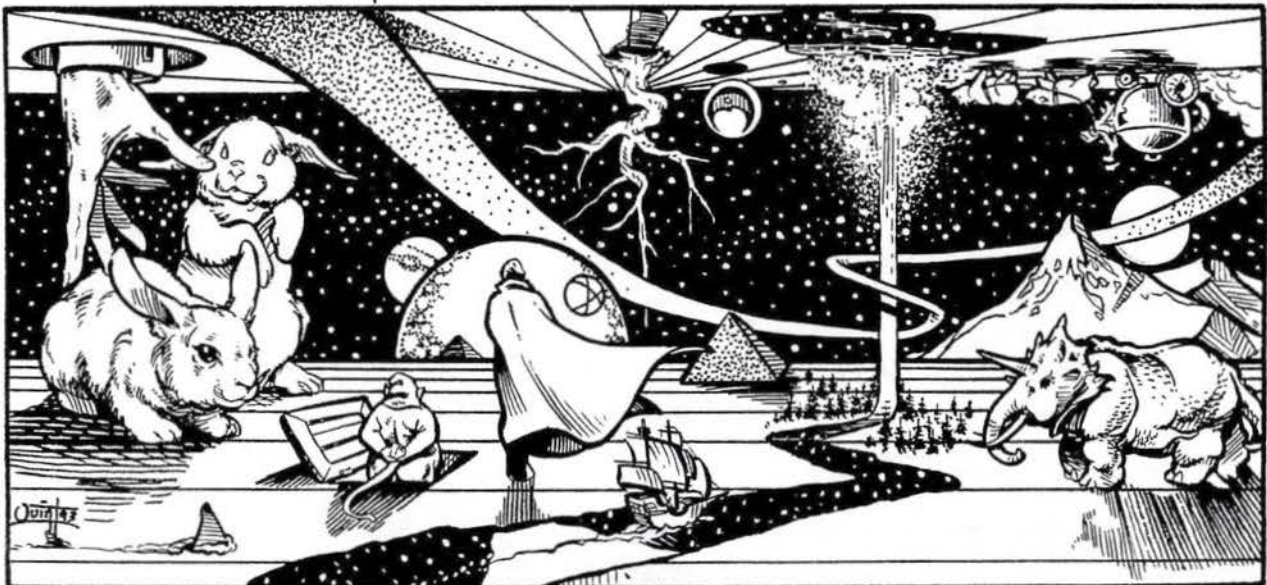
under extra load, often expands to handle increased demand. This is a natural phenomenon, since the plane will always increase demands as it grows larger. Natural growth is a very slow change, so the conduit can rarely increase capacity more than one percent every century or so.

Planes won't usually burn their reserves at full blast right up until the last moment. As energy demands climb, "nonessential" energy uses will be cut back. Gravity will go down, the sun will be dimmer, magic will be erratic, life forms will become sterile. As things get worse, reality will be less stable. Earthquakes, transformations, disappearances—all sorts of peculiar and disturbing things may happen. Sooner or later the plane will start cutting back on total surface area; whole chunks of reality will be cut loose to drift in the metaplane, be grabbed by neighboring planes, or be reabsorbed into reality, depending on the circumstances.

Pretty dire, eh? It's fortunate that the multiverse is a quiet place from a plane's point of view.

Finesse. The bash-it-till-it-breaks approach to changing planes is unlikely to succeed, simply because of the tremendous energy stores available to most planes. However, just as enormous rivers can be diverted with a small dam or canal built at the right place, planes can often be coerced into changes with relatively little effort. The most common method of modifying reality is to convince a significant proportion of the sentient life on the plane of the need for a change. The link that those souls have with the plane can result in reality changing slightly to reflect the beliefs of the sentients. This method is commonly used to allow a deity to receive the day's excess flux from a plane. However, the beliefs of mere mortals almost never result in large-scale shifts in local reality.

Another method of modifying planar reality involves gentle persuasion, as described in TPO under "Planar Constants." Applying flux



toward changing one of the planar constants for a period of time will usually allow the change to take place. Since this change isn't the natural condition of the plane, the primal flux must continue to hold the changed constant in position. Should the pressure cease, the plane will spring back to its original state, and the coercion must start over from square one.

Conservation of Energy. *The Primal Order* notes that primal energy does not appear to obey the laws of conservation of energy, since it seems to manifest and vanish without conversion. If you're using the GUPPE, this isn't strictly true: planes are the source, and metaplanes will absorb loose primal energy. Whether the grand reality obeys any laws whatsoever is not known.

Planar Networking

Gates, as you may recall, can force changes on things passing through, by prohibiting the passage of certain objects or attitudes, transforming or destroying others, and so on. These effects are powered by the planes, as they attempt to enforce their aspects of reality. If the gate has full access to a plane's power, it's very unlikely that anything will be able to escape untouched.

When someone travels from one plane to another, there are three points where these "passport effects" can occur. A gate might make modifications to anybody or anything leaving and to anything entering, or a plane might influence phenomena within its jurisdiction.

For example, let's say that Laereal is a plane with strict border conditions. There are no conditions placed on arrivals through its gates, but rings are not allowed to leave. Any ring—finger ring, bracelet, necklace, buckled belt, whatever—will be randomly transported to another location on the plane. Removing a belt, unfastening a necklace, or otherwise breaking the closure will allow an object through. Of course, breaking the integrity of a magic ring or bracelet will often destroy its properties. Too bad.

Rings can leave the plane if exit is made via Onoeono, a plane parallel to Laereal. Entering Laereal from Onoeono, strangely enough, will cause all arrivals to be colored in noxious shades of yellow-green. Since this effect is a result of a change in reality for the colored objects and beings, it can't be affected by curse removals, nonprimal artifacts, and the like.

Finally, the plane itself has a planar constant that prohibits sound. No sound can be created or heard by any being on the plane. So, visitors to Laereal are advised to arrive through a gate, to depart by transferring to Onoeono, and to have a good grasp of sign language.

from The Book of the Many Ways of Raftafta, Student Edition with Annotations, 031:14

There is great risk in traveling to Joq. Beings entering the plane may experience a dramatic shift in their abilities. One who was quite clever with her hands might find herself clever with ideas instead. One who was strong, reasonably charming, and foolish, might find that he has become wiser, weaker, and an utter boor. This disconcerting effect only occurs to a handful of the travelers arriving, and only to those with two nostrils.

*from the
Encyclopædia Planographica*

The curious sonic properties of Laereal apply to sounds in the audible range of its inhabitants. (The question of why the natives have auditory organs, when such organs only work for those who leave the plane, is as yet unanswered.) Sounds above or below their organs' ability to detect are not suppressed. Many of the life forms have developed ways to sense subsonic vibrations through the earth, particularly certain herbivores, who can detect the panicked flight of other herbivores responding to danger.



from Proceedings of the MMM-CDLXXIX Conference on Planar Morphology

Much debate ensued, mostly revolving around the growth of planes in the metaplane in question. Many felt that the "growth" of planes—from their appearance as large structures, through their shrinkage, to their final disappearance as dust motes—simply represented an unusual planar life cycle. Other participants felt that this was a standard life cycle system, the only difference being that time was running backwards. Since none of the debaters were able to devise a way to determine the direction of time flow, or even to provide a good definition, the subject was eventually dropped in favor of a discussion of whether toroidal planes are more accurately represented by cake doughnuts or maple bars.

New Connections. What causes two planes to connect or disconnect is a process complex enough to be effectively random. Planes that are near each other, in whatever scheme the metaplane uses for "near" and "far," are more likely to make a connection, but some planes will even form connections between metaplanes. Whether or not a connection is formed will depend on the two planes: their constants, sizes, positions, conditions, and shapes. When the conditions are met, then a new connection is made. Connections can vanish the same way. As with so many planar phenomena, these things don't happen more than once every few thousand years.

Planar Growth

Mechanisms for the growth of planes seem to vary from metaplane to metaplane, but there are a few standard models that seem particularly popular: the steady-state, cluster, preordained, and unlimited models.

Steady-State. The simplest of planar growth models doesn't actually involve growth: the metaplane either came into existence fully formed, or has *always* existed this way, depending on whether you believe there was a beginning to the multiverse or not. The Lands of Ledúa are static. Their various sizes don't change, apparently never have, and probably never will. Exceptions include unusual events like spontaneous self-destruction and death by planar parasites or other external forces.

The Kaqxachle Chips are also steady-state planes. While each plane has a "life cycle," the planes do not change size once created, except when two run together or one splits apart. Most planes are the same size from the day they break from the Mud to the day they burn in the Blood. The total mass of the metaplanar ecosystem appears stable.

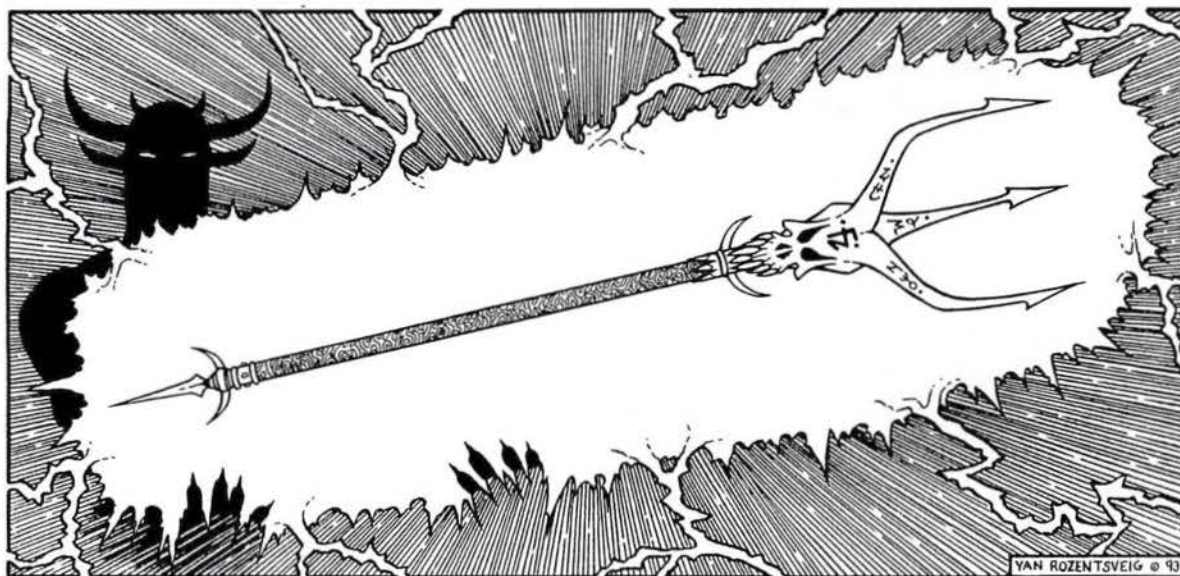
Cluster. The cluster model also has some variants. The basic cluster starts with the metaplane completely empty, or with dust. An empty metaplane will often spontaneously generate dust. Over time, the planar dust starts collecting into protoplanes: small chunks of semireal primal stuff. The process should be pretty clear by now. These bits keep collecting into larger and larger objects until something worthy of the term “plane” exists.

Some systems will end in one enormous, even infinite, plane within the metaplane. In other cases, planar dust is continuously created, so there are always planes of various sizes around. The oldest planes have different endings as well. Some systems just keep them around. Other metaplanes will actually eject them, forcing them to either form their own metaplane or join a new metaplane. Some metaplanes will simply erase planes above a certain size or prevent them from growing beyond a certain limit.

Preordained. The preordained model is often accompanied by droves of sentients on the resulting planes, perhaps because the life cycles are similar. The preordained growth model starts with microplanes, either spontaneously created by the metaplane or calved off an existing plane—the proverbial ‘chip off the old block,’ if you will. The small plane will grow rapidly at first, slowing with time, until it reaches some particular size. Usually this growth follows a precise mathematical curve, so the ultimate size of the plane is easily determined. Some planes will grow unevenly, perhaps due to local variations in the metaplanar environment. The Realms of the Tatagana are a good example of such planes. They’ve almost completed their growth phases, and the metaplane is not expected to see further changes.

Unlimited. The unlimited model isn’t an entire model of its own, but





from Realms of the Tatagana: A Study in Contrasts

The realms display a certain amount of growth each year. A new acre or two will appear randomly at times. This land, being previously unowned, is often the cause of some remarkable conflict, particularly on the more anger-prone planes. Many of the subcults of the various religions revolve around "new" land.

rather variations on the previous example. Planes may start out as dust, microplanes, or fragments. They may experience a growth spurt when small, although this is atypical. After that, they grow at the same speed, aeon after aeon.

The most common is the multiplicative growth, with one percent per millennium being the average growth. With this growth, it will be eighty-six million years before a miniplane that provides ten points of primal flux per day to an owner will grow to one hundred points. Another eighty-six million years will see the plane providing the standard one thousand points per day, and by the time a third of an aeon has passed (three hundred and forty four million years), the output is at ten thousand points of flux per day.

The Pearls of Planar Oysters

Once in a great while, an object surfaces that has truly phenomenal power. The Mortis Trident was one such object. Stabbing the trident into a corporeal body resulted in the disappearance of the trident to another location in the multiverse and the death of the person stabbed. The noteworthy part is that four gods were killed this way. Unlike ordinary, mortal-grade death weapons, the Mortis Trident was equally effective at destroying deities.

Its effectiveness at slaying the divine came from two traits. First, it could trace a deity's link to his or her primal base, and second, it was a linked planar artifact. This gave it access to well over one million points of flux, more than enough to bring death to almost anything.

There are two kinds of planar artifacts. The most devastating kind is in some way an extension of a particular plane, and can draw on the power that the plane has, including the reserves of base. The second

kind is independently powered. A plane has deposited primal base into the object over a period of time, but does not maintain an attachment.

What, precisely, causes a plane to make an artifact can vary from object to object. Some artifacts, particularly the independent kind, are formed when a plane experiences some kind of irritation, perhaps a kind of primal sand or primal termite. The plane's defense mechanism results in an accumulation of base, and a planar artifact.

The genesis of the planar artifacts that remain connected to the plane appear to be the result of a knot in the plane that is formed while it's growing; some aspect of the plane gets tangled and must be ejected from the plane to allow smooth operation. Commonly, a plane will not allow such an artifact back onto the premises. It has been theorized that these planar flaws could be the key to destroying a plane.

Two other methods are related to the way that planes will bend to the beliefs of sentients on the plane. If a significant number of sentients believe that some object has great power, the plane might alter reality to imbue the object with those powers. How much or how often an artifact is created this way will vary from plane to plane.

Planes might also grant powers to historically significant objects, even those no one on the plane recognizes as significant. For example, a country might revere a sword, since a country might revere a sword, since its inhabitants believe that very sword slew a horrible tyrant and broke a repressive government that had held sway for centuries. However, it was actually poison in a goblet that brought him down. No sentient alive knows that this particular goblet, sitting in the castle storage area, was so historically important. But the plane knows, and might give it powers commensurate with its importance in shaping present reality.

If you're going to use all of these types of planar artifacts, it's important to distinguish between artifacts created for the plane's sake and those created for its sentients' sake, or for the sake of its history. Artifacts created to deal with a planar disturbance will have to be extremely powerful, and thus will always contain some primal energy. These kinds of artifacts are what *The Primal Order* meant by the term "planar artifact." Artifacts created for belief or history can vary more widely in power level; some may merely be non-primal artifacts of planar origin, while others could be powerful enough to qualify as TPO relics. While I plan to borrow this useful term and refer to such objects as relics, you may wish to come up with your own name for them, especially if you're using a different method of relic creation.

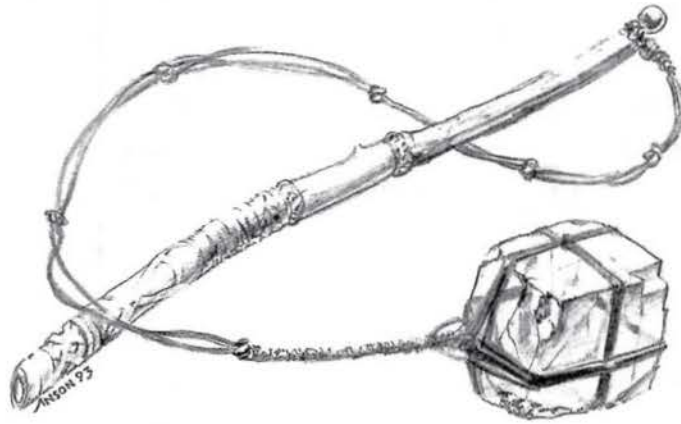
The powers that a planar artifact manifests tend to be random. Often the artifact is simply a rock, or air, with no powers whatsoever. The formative phase of a planar artifact can be affected by the nature of nearby objects or by the thoughts of passersby. If a sugar bush was the object closest to the planar disturbance, the result might eventually be a rod that promotes sweetness and blooming. A stone that was part of a

from Oueszis Malefiscacere

Of the knot, not much was known. Of the consequences, all was too clear. As the final twist was wrought, by those who knew no better, the flaw was fractured, and the plane was slain.

Those who knew no better were pleased, for they, correctly, felt they had accomplished their goal. Of the power, quantities were copious. Of the danger, none there knew. For the plane was helpless to affect the bleed, and power flowed without impediment. Those who knew no better came to know better when they found that the power flow increased year by year.

The plane was tied to the metaplane, and through it to the other planes of the metaplane, and all availed not to stop the flow. Conduits widened and widened, attempting to sustain the chaotic demand. Itself, the plane grew and developed, but knowledge was insufficient, and power was insufficient, and skill was insufficient. It was the flaw, and through its fracture, the plane died. The metaplane, in feeding the death, died. Of them all, only the book remains. Of the reader, knowledge is warning.



from a conversation between research magicians

"Observe. Press this little bump on the side, and the end of the wand emits a bright light."

"We've seen wands of light before."

"But this one has no magical signature."

A pause. "So it does not. Drawing on mental energies?"

"It works when pressed with a stick, or by magic, even at great distances."

"A creature."

"It shows no life aura, and does not eat or eliminate."

"A mechanical thing, like an incredible flint-and-steel device?"

"No noise, no vibration, no detectable moving parts."

"A device from that world that has harnessed the incredibly small elektron beast?"

"It was taken to that land, and failed to work. Also, researchers there claimed that the wand was solid wood, and their beasts must have metal for a home."

"A gift of the gods?"

"Much funding was used to induce a representative of Shal-i-kaar to examine the object. She claimed it had naught to do with divinity."

"My head hurts and I hate you. Go away."

fortress might transform into a gem that provides a shield against attack. A pane of glass in a city, receptive to the thoughts of the tenant, might metamorphose into a diamond that induces tremendous greed in nearby sentients.

There are, of course, planar artifacts that are possessed of only a few points of primal energy, or whose primal power source is poorly coupled with the effect. In these instances, the effect or power of the artifact can more easily be defeated. Often, weaker artifacts will go unrecognized, thought to be merely a wizard's creation. Unlike divine primal energy, the primal energy used by planes carries no signature, and artifacts created with it will show no sign that they are infused with primal. The only exception to this is if the plane creating the artifact is controlled by a deity, and the artifact remains linked to the plane. Since planes take on the signatures of the deities controlling them, a linked artifact made by a controlled plane would appear to be made by that plane's controlling deity. Whether or not they show a signature, planar artifacts will demonstrate remarkable durability, up to and including immunity from damage by lesser energies. So one way to find planar artifacts with no signatures is to completely obliterate the contents of a plane. Whatever is left is an artifact.

Relics are more likely to have powers appropriate to the circumstances that created them. The goblet mentioned above might have powers relating to beverages or death. The sword might manifest powers against tyranny and oppression. Relics created by belief will almost always have the powers people expect, and such a relic might even lose its powers if people forget about it. Those that gain power through significance are more flexible. Who's to say whether a certain plane cares about appropriate powers? A plane might change the object to a relic with powers related to the way it was being used at the time it had such an effect on destiny, or it might just slap some random zinger

ability, rather like a planar memo, so it can remember that this object was important.

Finally, keep in mind that there's no reason why a relic would have to have any primal energy at all. Since they're gaining power because the plane is changing its internal reality, the object could be magic, mentalic, mechanical, electronic, or other. It doesn't have to follow the rules, since the plane makes the rules for its reality and it can make exceptions. An object could work like magic but leave no magical trace, or use a different mentalic "frequency," or whatever.

The Master's Notes

Many GMs will have no need for this chapter. How often do you really need a justification for reality, or for your roleplaying world? Most of the time, such things are simply accepted. Aside from the pleasure of knowing there is a reason for some things, the main purpose for this chapter is to provide protection against rules lawyers. If somebody gets on your case about why something works here and not there, you can tell them that there is a reason. You don't have to tell them what the reason is, but if you've already worked out some planar constants, you're less likely to be inconsistent.

As you read at the beginning of this chapter, the GUPPE is one system proposed to justify the effects and phenomena of planes. You might want to come up with a different one or change this one around, especially since some of your players may have read this book.

Don't forget that almost all of the planes' effects, although powered by primal energy, do not have to be supremely powerful. A gate's transformation effects might be powered by just a trickle of primal, or by primal that has already been converted to magic. Not every gate has to be unbreakable.

Planar artifacts are especially susceptible to abuse. I've provided the idea to justify objects even the gods might quest for, but if you're not keen on the idea of something that powerful, you don't have to use it. This is a great opportunity to play with the minds of your players: don't ever have a planar artifact in your campaign. Mislead, misdirect, hint like mad, send them chasing wild geese to the far corners of the multiverse, but don't ever give them a planar artifact. After all, just because you have a copy of *Chessboards* doesn't mean your planes make planar artifacts.

On the other end of the scale, relics can be far more powerful than the prevailing system of magic allows, but still be inferior to primal energy. This is really useful for creating objects that do things not normally allowed under your standard magic system. Between relics and planar artifacts, you can explain away just about anything. For even more flexibility, you might use other ways to create relics as well as or in place of this system.

from Expositions On The Nature Of Reality, footnote 4325

This theory of shadow, while quite fascinating, is, in this author's opinion, flawed, in the questions it leaves unanswered or unasked. For example, if a Key Plane casts a multiplicity of Shadow Planes, what is the nature of the light? Is there a Light Plane that, if it were to be blocked or extinguished, would result in the nonexistence of the Shadow Planes?

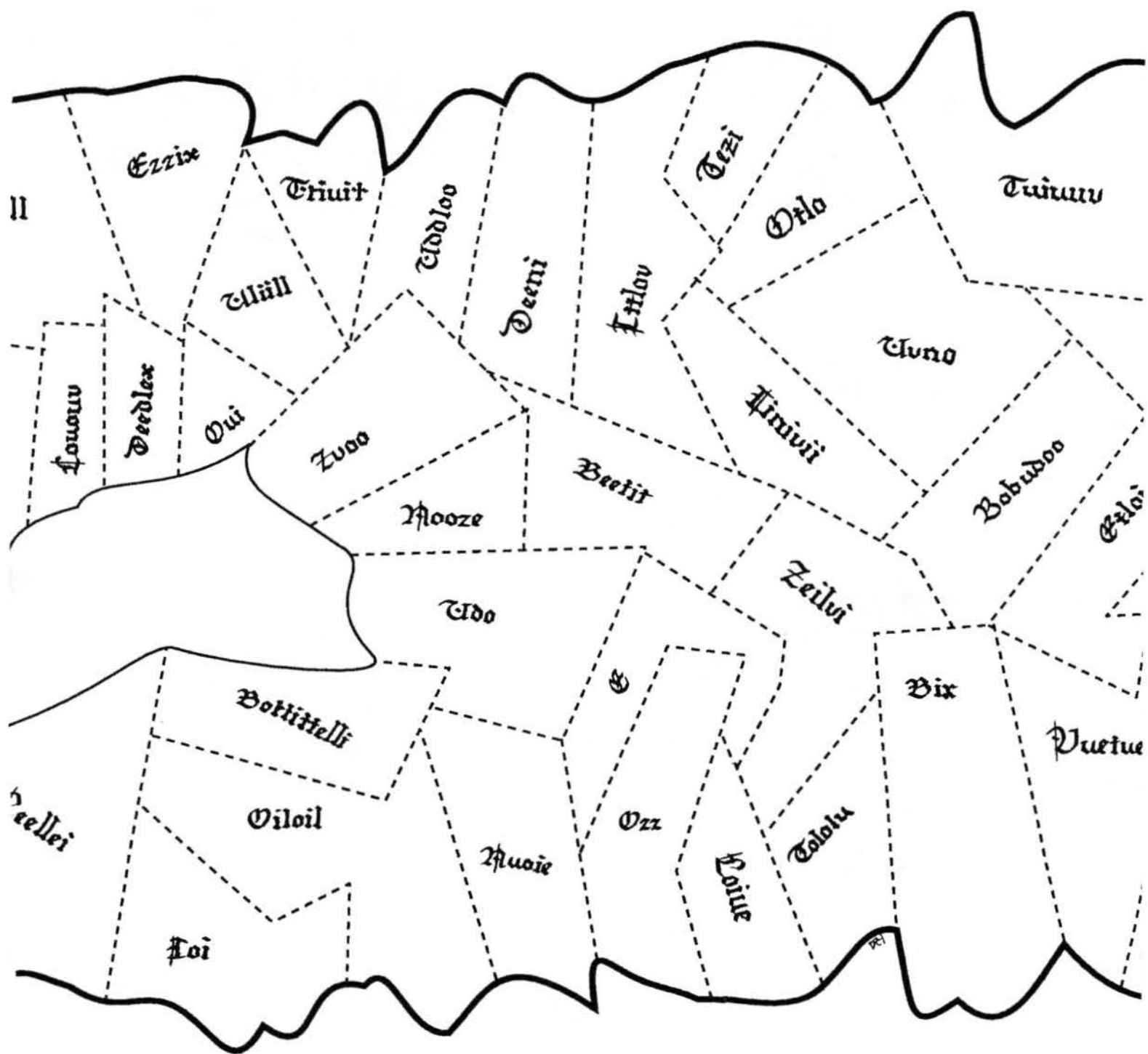
This chapter keeps mentioning deities and their desire for primal energy. You don't need them, though. If you've already got divinity in your campaign, primal energy can be used solely to explain planes and reality. You could rename it "planar energy," and assume it's totally unrelated to the primal that your deities may be using, or downgrade it to just another kind of magic, which means that even mortal magicians might be able to make drastic changes in reality.

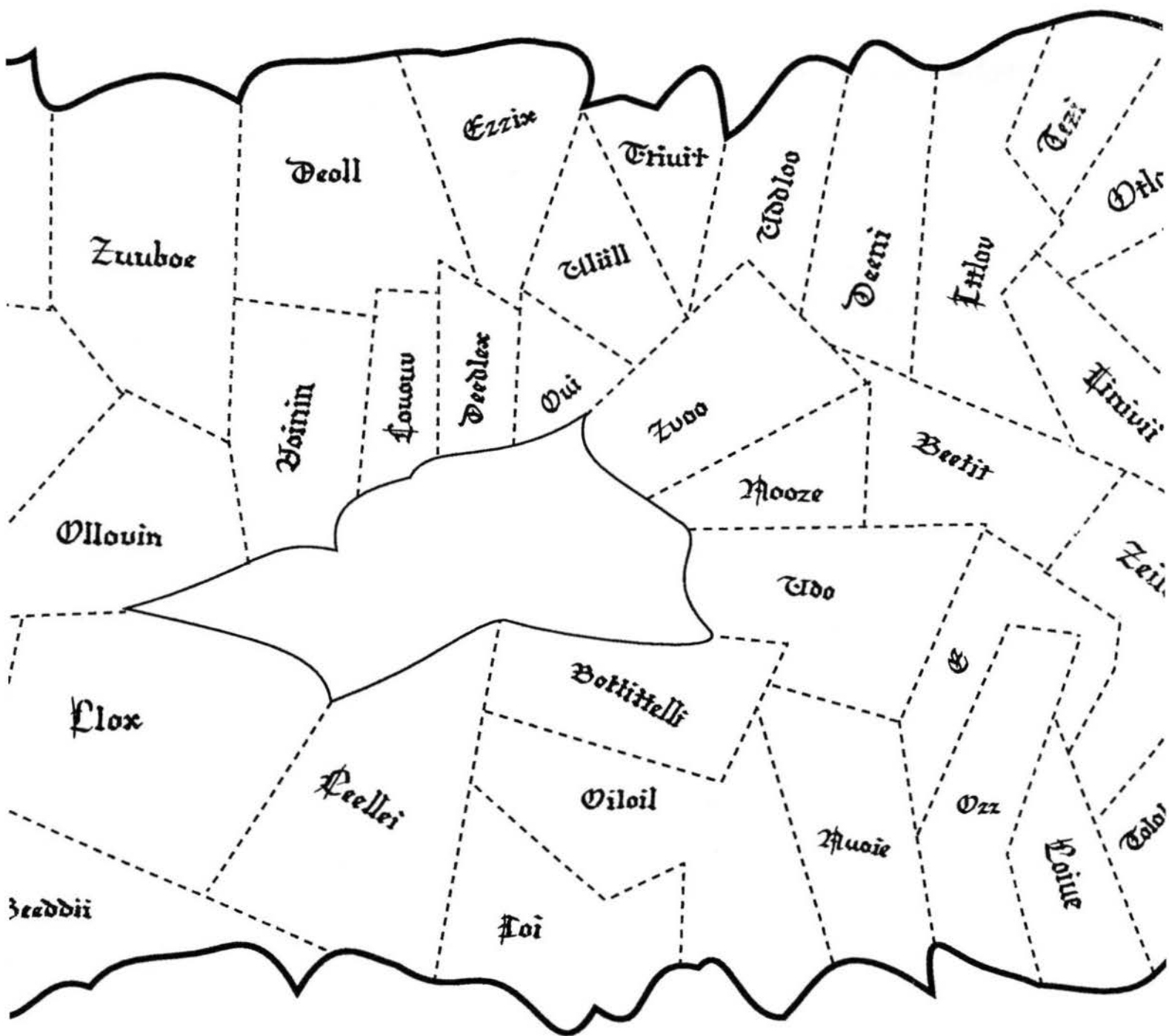
This happens to be the explanation for certain subtle contradictions between the GUPPE and *The Primal Order*. Primal energy in TPO is really "primal energy as used by deities," and planar energy was just casually mentioned. Whenever there seems to be a disagreement, just assume that TPO is referring specifically to divine primal energy.

If you like what you've got, but want the GUPPE too, you should be able to lay the GUPPE right on top of whatever you're using now. In playtesting, it worked well every time, with just a little nudging. You might have to make up a few new rules, but you shouldn't have to scrap many old ones.

There's no requirement that the GUPPE apply everywhere in the multiverse, either. You could use it on some metaplanes and not on others. Since the multiverse is supposed to encompass all possible places, there must be some where the GUPPE doesn't apply. As for what, if anything, takes its place, I've had enough highbrow planar theory, and I'm going to have some tea. Things are going to get exciting in the next chapter.

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Chapter 6: The Gods Must Be Crazy



from Judy's Book of Macramé
Projects You Can Make at Home

Weaving, twining, making knots,
hangers for our plants and pots.
Special gifts for all our friends,
spool of string that never ends.

Macramé, macramé,
making Judy's macramé.
Macramé, macramé,
all hail the name of Judy.

Owls made from beads and twine,
doilies that are so divine,
Covers for our cozy beds,
lumpy hats for lumpy heads.

Macramé, macramé,
making Judy's macramé.
Macramé, macramé,
all hail the name of Judy.

Charming things to hang on walls,
over doors and crossing halls.

Crafting a delightful chair,
making our own underwear.

Macramé, macramé,
making Judy's macramé.
Macramé, macramé,
all hail the name of Judy.

In this chapter we'll look at how planes and deities get along. From now on, you should be familiar with *The Primal Order*. Haven't read it? Well, I guess you can come along, but don't blame me if this section doesn't make much sense. This chapter will be dealing with the relationship between TPO deities and planes, from the planes' point of view.

The Sum of the Parts

Most planes, for whatever reason, are prone to develop sentient life. If you'll recall, sentients are life forms with souls. Souls have a critical connection with a plane's primal energy. This influence means that the sentients on a plane have an influence on the growth and form of the plane that is out of proportion to their physical presence.

Under ordinary circumstances, the interaction between a plane and its life forms is pretty subtle, since planes change slowly, and the sentients mostly react to any change. Only a consensual belief is likely to affect a plane significantly. If most of a plane's people feel that the universe is a clockwork, causal kind of place, then the plane will, more or less, fashion reality around this. While there are occasions when an idea will sweep a plane and cause relatively quick changes in the plane's reality, usually there are a lot of different people believing in a lot of different things, and the plane just charts its own course.

This feedback is the key that deities use to unlock the surplus primal on a plane. Judy, Goddess of Macramé, has run out of places to hang her planters, hammocks, and suspended chairs, and has found a delightful little plane with lots of trees. The local intelligent life forms are suitable as well, since they look rather like little potted plants just begging to be slung into cute hangers with tassels on the bottom. Judy, as you might have divined, is a fraternal twin sister of Joey, God of Basketweaving.

The first step for Judy is to check and see if there are any other deities involved with this plane. Finding that there aren't, she takes a point of her primal base and mingles it in with the plane's. This provides a scent, or identification, for the plane. If she's successful in later steps, the plane will start sending the primal overflow somewhere; making sure it's got her number is only prudent.

Next, those pot people. Behaving in an appropriately deific fashion, she starts establishing that macramé is the true key to universal happiness, and that "the Judy" is the one true way. Since there isn't any competition to speak of, it shouldn't take an active goddess long to spread her religion across the face of the plane. Soon the plane itself will be affected by so many of its sentients believing that Judy is supreme, and it will direct overflow through that link established some time ago. And that is that. Judy now controls the plane.

What if the plane—call it Mundus—didn't have any sentient life? Judy would seed the plane with her primal energy, and basically wait for it to notice her. The presence of the primal base allows her intent and desire to reach the plane. The actual amount of her primal present isn't relevant. If Joey and Judy were sharing the primal energy from a plane, it would be distributed equally. Shovelling more primal in won't get Judy any more primal out.

Also, this sharing thing only works if both deities are projecting nice, cuddly sharing thoughts into the plane. As soon as one of the deities starts sending "Give it all to meeee!" messages, the plane is being contested. There'll be more on contested planes in a bit.

Changing Planar Constants. Let's assume Judy manages a calm, uncontested claim on the plane. Now that the plane has established a link to her, she can influence its behavior and shape, much like a gardener can use wire and clippers to influence a bonsai tree. With patience and time, a deity can form a plane into a thing of beauty, or, for that matter, a pathetic wreck.

Influencing a plane requires speaking to it in its own tongue: primal. Canceling, changing, or adding primal constants means applying pressure toward that change by applying primal flux to the plane. TPO includes charts that detail how much primal is needed to effect the changes. In short, it can take one hundred to five hundred points of primal per day to coerce a change, and it won't take effect for three to ten years, depending on the size of the change. On the one hand, that's a lot of primal, since the amount being gained from the plane is usually only about one thousand points. On the other hand, when you think about the millions of points of primal that the plane uses every day, the cost of this change is almost free.

What changes can be made? Just about anything and everything can be changed. A plane might refuse to allow parallel connections with

from an interview with a plane

It's a pain, that's what it is. Why don't they pick on somebody their own size?

from My Son, the God

His interest in ice skating showed at an early age, but who knew he'd end up this way? When he won his third plane, he made it cold, flat, and ice-covered. Everyone skates. Even the birds have sharp little feet. The houses sail around, and anchor when they want to hold still. The most revered profession is that of the zamboni driver.

other planes; it might fluctuate gravity, or quadruple the length of the day. The sentients never die, they just fade away. There's a rhyme for the word "orange." The total amount of magic that can happen at any one time is limited. The total amount of magic that can happen during a day is limited. Once a spell is cast, it can never be used again. Money grows on trees. Beautiful farmers' daughters can spin flax into gold. Kissing the right species of frog turns the frog into a prince. The fruit of a certain tree brings knowledge of good and evil. Thinking happy thoughts allows you to fly. Beings' sizes may change depending on what they eat or drink. Objects in the North turn purple, in the South, red, in the East, blue, and in the West, yellow.

You get the idea.

Using Planar Base. When deities gain control of a plane, they not only get to tap some of the primal flux, they can borrow primal base: about 0.1% of the total on the plane. This is usually all to the good of both parties: the deities become more powerful, and the plane acquires new friends to help it stay healthy.

Under ordinary conditions, the fine print on this borrowing won't come into play, but then, how often are things ordinary when deities are involved? Although Judy has two thousand extra points of base on her books, the plane still counts it as planar base for purposes of growth and reality support. This base is effectively loaned to Judy, and as long as the plane is controlled by her, she can treat it as her own. If Judy loses control, or the plane has to burn all its base, then it will take back the base it loaned out. First to be reclaimed is any base assigned to Judy present on the plane itself. Then it will follow its link to Judy, and take base from her conscious form. If that still isn't enough, it will track the link from there to other places, like different locations of stored base or a home plane. Whether it finishes off one site before going to the next

from *The Book of the Many Ways of Ratafta, Student Edition with Annotations*, 005:25

Note: One might suppose that there would be tremendous winds on Vas, since the air would flow down the hill with everything else. It does not, however, and this discrepancy, which makes life on Vas so much more pleasant, is again the signature of Ratafta. Some scholars contend that this is simply a natural phenomenon, but the very inconsistency bespeaks a hand at work.





or drains them all equally varies from plane to plane. If the debt still isn't paid off, then the plane starts taking base from minions, artifacts, and the like. If the deity has burned the primal and the plane scavenges every last bit of base, completely destroying the deity in the process but not making up the full amount spent, the plane will give up. It makes up the rest from the conduit.

This is one of the many reasons that deities don't usually run their base down too far. The ramifications are bigger than just one measly god or goddess, though. If a plane scavenges a deity's primal from another plane, it may try to take every last point of primal. There must be at least one point of primal on the plane to sustain the link. Since the second plane is now having its link cut, it also calls in the primal it loaned to that deity. The two planes will get into a fight over who gets what is not already scavenged. Depending on the size, aggressiveness, and location of the planes, there could be some major shaking before the issue is resolved. Most planes will give up if it would cost them more base to win the fight than they'd gain by winning, but other planes, in some strange planar parody of fighting for "the principle of the thing," will burn every last point of primal on hand to take back what's rightfully theirs.

Contesting a Plane. Judy was lucky. Usually, when a new plane is found, everybody and their godlings' pets will come running to try to take the plane, or at least to make it a lot harder for someone else to get. In this case, all the other deities would have been too embarrassed to control a plane of pot people.

A more common scenario goes something like this: Foon-ling stumbles across a new plane. He does his best to keep it a secret, but before he takes complete control, Alikhaba finds out what he's up to and comes running to contest. Foon-ling may have been followed, or someone

from Memoirs of a Minion

I hadn't realized until then just which powers I'd been granted permanently, and which were temporary, dependent on my lord and master's primal to sustain. The cheapskate had made few of them permanent, as it turned out. I also hadn't realized how much I'd come to rely on those powers. When the overextended ninny bit the big one, and the whole house of cards came tumbling down, I lost it all: the powers, the status, the fast life, my friends, my health. Hurt like the dickens, too.



on his staff might have leaked the news. Foon-ling had been making good progress in convincing the Pentapuses, a five-tentacled race, of his effulgent omnipotence, but now conflicting sects are breaking out all over. One of the first things Alikhaba tries to do is burn out that point of base that Foon-ling put into the plane.

A quick aside about mixing divine primal base with planes: deities have two choices when giving base to a plane. They can place their base *on* the plane, or *in* it.

The first method involves imbuing it into some object native to the plane: a rock, mountain, hut, teakettle, or the like. The usual rule that normal objects cannot hold primal energy without breaking doesn't apply here, because the plane is aware of wh?t's going on and can take some responsibility for holding the object together. The advantage of this option is that it's easy to protect this primal. It's all in one spot, and can be guarded. The downside is that the object itself is probably accessible to minions, mortals, or other riffraff. The properties of this object will not change in the slightest, except that it now shows a primal signature. It can still be broken, and doing sufficient damage to the object holding the primal frees the base. What constitutes sufficient damage must be decided by the GM.

To put base into a plane, the deity uses the same technique as placing base in an object, except the "object" is reality, alias the plane. While hard to describe, it's obvious to primal-wielding deities. Once the base has spread through the plane, it's unreachable by any but those who wield primal. But now a rival deity can find and destroy that base with a primal blast from any point on the plane. Luckily for the defender, the base is so diffuse that it'll take a measurable period of time for the attacker's flux to reach the base and cancel it. Usually we're only talking about a couple of seconds, but that's enough time for the owner to put more base into the plane—not necessarily a good idea, as this could be

throwing good base after bad, so to speak—or to attempt to prevent the attacker from completing the destruction. Some planes seem sticky about base, and it may take some minutes for the point of flux applied by an attacker to reach and eradicate the point of base in the plane. Since primal is a quantum energy, if the flux point is withdrawn before the point of base is completely gone, then the base remains intact. Burning 0.9 points of primal is the same as burning none. The total amount of primal in the plane does not change how long it will take to destroy it all. If it will take ten seconds for a deity to cancel one point of base with one point of flux, then interrupting after just eight seconds leaves that point of base in the plane. The same deity attacking ten points of base with ten points of flux will have canceled eight base points. More on the quantum nature of primal is in the following chapter.

The strategy involved in contesting a plane differs greatly depending on which method of base placement is used. If Foon-ling's base is in the plane as a whole, then to break his hold on the plane means Alikhaba has to appear on the plane with enough protection to survive the seconds it takes to cancel the primal. If Foon-ling puts it in a specific place, then Alikhaba has to find out where the primal base is, and arrange to blast it or break the object imbued with the base. If the plane being claimed is likely to be contested, most deities find that putting their "introductory" base into an object is more prudent. This approach also is more likely to foster skullduggery and sneakiness, instead of a frontal attack. You may want to allow only one of these methods for introducing base to a plane.

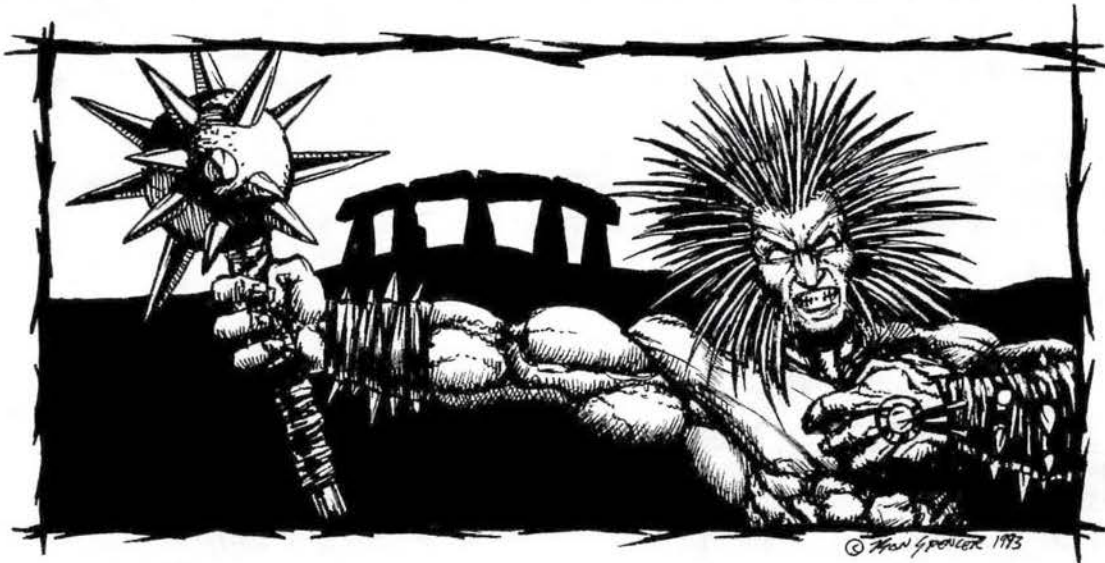
To make things more complex, more than one deity can have introductory base in or on the plane at one time. The five-year countdown to controlling the plane starts when there is only one deity's base left, or when the deities represented are attempting to share control, and when the other conditions to controlling a plane are met. Once a plane is officially controlled, it will not accept introduction base.

After a couple of months, Alikhaba has gained some ground, and Foon-ling is really starting to sweat. Well, actually he's exuding slime in greater than usual quantities, but that's because he's a slug god. Then another minor deity shows up, then a few more. Pretty soon there are fifty different religions on the plane. Some of them are working desperately to convert everybody, some are working to eliminate rivals, and some are just there to make things difficult for others. Eventually, depending on who gets help from their pantheon, who tries the hardest, who is distracted by other interesting planes opening up, and who can no longer afford to muck about, one deity may be able to gain an overwhelming majority of support from the sentients. Ninety percent for one god is usually the minimum required commitment in order to gain control of a plane, and it's usually higher. Then the lucky deity or deities must keep their introduction base with the plane for five years without anybody

from a council memo concerning a contested plane

With the successful conversion of the Rhugga tribes, FVWS has moved to the dominant position. DGRK is still creating trouble for QV/KM in the Shubploon district while holding solid in the home sectors. LDMV has slipped behind after the unfortunate desecration and obliteration of his or her (we're not sure which) main temple. While the cults in the western provinces might provide a method for staging a comeback, we figure at this point LDMV's chances of locking it up are pretty poor.

In other news . . .



from a sermon

"Hear me, O my people! Our god has forsaken us! He hath failed to claim the land and all its people, and another has done so. To worship him further would bring him power, and opportunities, and the means to contest the control of our land, and return to us the former days of glory and war and strife and terror, and we don't want that, now do we? Verily I say to you: tear down the walls, and burn the temple, and smash what won't burn, and pee on what won't smash. For we have been shown the true path to peace, and it leadeth to our neighbor's temple. I say unto you, 'Get out while the getting is good,' and also, 'Will the last person to leave the temple please knock over the candles.' Go, and sin like crazy.

from the

Encyclopædia Planographica

Unfortunately, the relative ease with which the plane may be reached is countered by the fact that there aren't any noteworthy places to visit. The surrounding metaplane consists almost entirely of chunks, specks, and flecks of protoplanar material. The plane itself is basically a big rock, and the primary use of the metaplane is as a training ground for would-be forcers of planar growth.

blasting it, and without their total number of worshipers dropping below the threshold. Some planes will allow the primal to be invested in an object that can be taken off the plane, but this is unusual.

Once a deity has control, life gets much simpler. If Alikhaba eventually gains control of the plane, Foon-ling can't bring the plane back into contest unless he manages to bring worship of Alikhaba below the threshold for an entire year, or keeps some of his primal on the plane for a year. Neither is going to be easy.

Even more annoying is the fact that the two thousand points of base Alikhaba gained for controlling the plane won't be open to direct attack as long as Alikhaba keeps it on the plane. That base is loaned from the plane, so to speak, and while it remains on the plane, the plane will treat it just like the rest of its planar base, which another deity can't attack without destroying the plane. Alikhaba *can* move that base off the plane without breaking the link between divinity and geography, but once the base leaves the plane, the plane won't be able to protect it anymore. If Alikhaba puts more than two thousand points of base on the plane, the plane won't bother protecting the extra base; for purposes of divine attack, treat the extra as introductory base.

Forcing Planar Growth. Encouraging a plane to grow or shrink is a good trick. Let's assume that Mundus provides the standard one thousand points of flux per day. Judy feeds her one thousand points of primal right back to the plane to provide extra power. Since it has extra power it wasn't expecting, the plane will cut its demand from the metaplane, but only by 90 the extra Judy's providing: nine hundred points. Thus, the plane will still draw one hundred points more base than it can use. This goes into the reserves, and the plane is now "bigger." Ten days of this, and the plane will start providing Judy with 1,001 points

of flux, and it'll probably increase its physical size by the corresponding 0.01%.

This only works to a certain extent. When Judy cuts off that extra primal, the conduit must have enough extra capacity (the 1% to 10% mentioned earlier) to handle the increased demands that the newly-added reality will present. If it doesn't, the plane will have to burn planar reserves of base to make up the shortfall until the conduit "stretches" enough to provide all the needed primal; depending on the size of the plane and the amount of overfeeding, this could result in anything from no discernable difference to a *reduction* in the size of the plane and much excitement and catastrophe. The math for feeding the plane is quite complex. You'll find it in an appendix.

There's a close relationship between the amount of base a plane has on hand and the amount of reality for which it takes responsibility. If a plane loses more than about half of its stored base, the loss of the corresponding flux that base was providing means that even a ten percent overload capacity conduit can't quite make up the difference, and reality will be shaky for a couple of days until there's sufficient primal to meet demands. Reducing the strength of reality to much more than ninety percent of normal is rarely done. If a plane doesn't have the power available to provide at least ninety percent of the normal primal for reality and have some left over to build up reserves, then it is highly likely to shrink down until it can afford to support what's left. With mature planes, such an incredible shortfall is almost unheard of.

While forcing growth isn't really cost effective on mature planes, it can be very effective on microplanes, as long as you don't go too fast. For example, Judy finds another plane about the size of a single garden. She names it Macula. Macula is generating about two points of primal per day; we're talking a *very* small plane. This reflects total usage of two thousand points for sustaining reality, and base reserves of four thousand points. Macula's primal conduit can handle overload demands at a generous ten percent. Judy claims the plane in five years, and starts force-feeding it one thousand points of base per day. Demand from the metaplane drops to 1,100 points per day, and the plane is picking up an extra one hundred points of base in its reserves.

The amount of growth that can be forced is limited by the speed with which the conduit can expand. With Macula the growth will stop in twenty-one days, since the conduit is providing its normal quota of primal base and Judy's extra thousand is sustaining the new reality that the plane has added. If she stops, most of the new reality will disintegrate, since there isn't anywhere near enough primal to sustain it. The actual numbers for this process are in an appendix. Suffice to say that the best approach is to force only a little growth at one time, allowing the conduit to expand before forcing the next bit of growth, and so on.

from The Planar Prowler's Guide to the Multiverse

The Crazy Eddie plane gained its name some time ago, when the deity who owned it at the time felt a compulsive need to make it bigger. She would force-feed the poor plane right to the gills, then get distracted or occupied and forget to keep up the growth treatments. To its inhabitants, life was full of new places popping into existence and old places vanishing in turn, along with a reality that wasn't as real as it ought to be.

The plane is much more peaceful these days, but the name has stuck. Rumor has it that chunks still vanish away every now and then to this very day, just for old times' sake.

Planes and Conflict

Until primal-wielding deities hit the scene, the plane itself was more or less top dog. Anything that is done by magic, mentalic, or related power is done only with the tacit permission of the plane. Pure primal, as wielded by another being, represents a higher authority; it does not require the support of the plane for an effect to occur.

Between Planes and Deities. Most primal phenomena don't conflict anyway, since the constants involved are usually permissive. What happens if Judy wants to take some marvelous papyrus home with her from a plane that has the constant "No native things may leave the plane"? Most planes will put their feet down, so to speak. For every point of primal Judy expends to take those reeds, the plane will counter with a point. Other planes will tolerate the breaking of constants in a limited area. Judy might find that it takes one point of primal to whisk away one kilogram of reeds, four points to take two kilograms, nine points for three kilograms, and so on. Clearly she can't export reeds by the ton with any economy.

On the other end of the scale are planes so wishy-washy and compliant that they have a special planar constant, "Primal energy overrides constants," so deities can do whatever they want. Such planes are rare and highly prized.

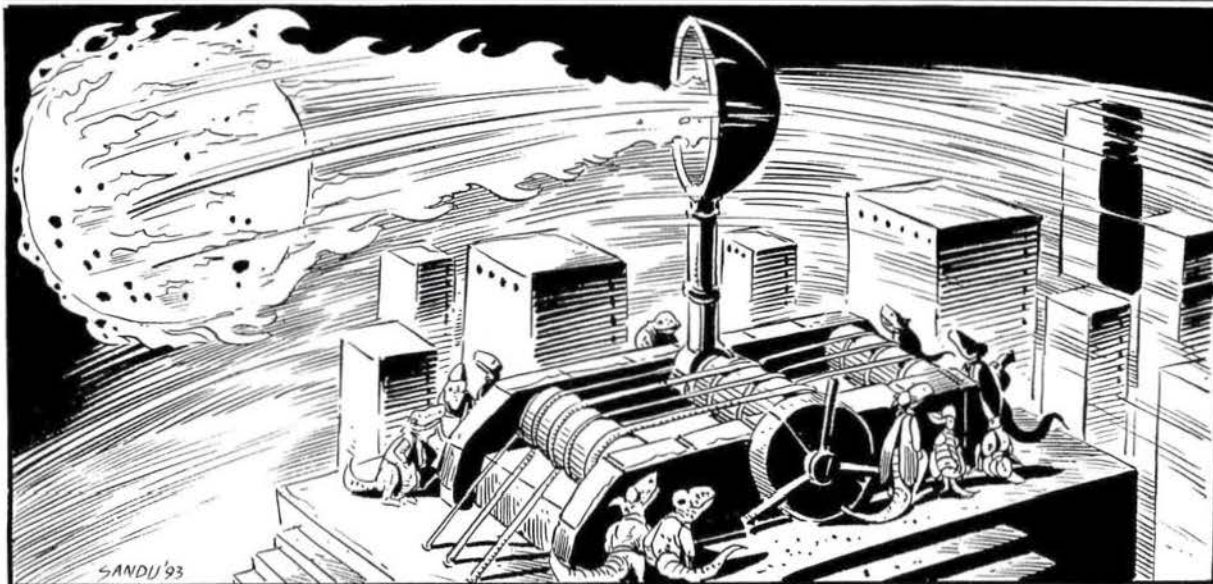
The ultimate in such planes are those that actually boost the use of primal. While they won't send their own power off-plane, any use of primal on the plane might be doubled, or multiplied even further. Changing constants on such planes is trivial, and often requires only a fraction of the time. Naturally, the limits of the plane's reserves and conduit determine exactly how much help occurs before damage to the plane itself is the result. Planes that enforce extra-reality effects are born, not made; such planar constants can't be made by a deity controlling the plane. To be more precise, most planes will not allow a deity or other outside force to create a constant that involves the direct use of the plane's primal energy. Boosting magic, yes. Enhancing psi powers, all right. Multiplying primal blasts, absolutely not.

Between Sentient Planes and Deities. With sentient planes, the same principles apply, but the results are likely to vary. A sentient plane might allow an exception at first, but then change its mind. Other, crabbier planes might counter any use of primal on their premises with double the points back, or just squash the miscreant entirely. Sentient planes can be so unpredictable.

Between Deities on Planes. When two or more deities get into a spat on a plane, usually the plane itself won't get involved except to patch up unauthorized changes in reality. Scorching acres of ground and calling

from the
Encyclopædia Planographica

The last time a booster plane was discovered, the fact of its existence was spread far too fast for the discovering deities to claim it. The ensuing contest, with all the deities involved wielding vastly enhanced powers, reduced the plane to scraps in a very short time.



up volcanos is usually considered typical reality, especially if done with primally laced spells instead of pure primal; however, wishing that a castle had never existed might not work if the plane is touchy about tampering with past reality. Most planes aren't too concerned about the state of their reality as long as the constants aren't broken and the size remains the same.

The Master's Notes

Don't let the bit about a plane "fashioning reality around the beliefs of its sentients" throw you. If all the inhabitants think that the universe is some kind of cosmic clock, that doesn't mean that the plane has to go with a cause-and-effect, deterministic, no-free-will sort of world, just that it has to *appear* that way. The reality might be dancing primal pixies that pull things as gravity would, and the sun being lobbed by a catapult instead of fastened to a heavenly sphere. It just has to *look* like it's a clockwork world. The difference comes when deities try to change things. Primal pixies might be much easier to influence than a true deterministic force of gravity, which is more likely to be an imperative constant.

If your players are deities and are giving you a hard time, remind them that one of these days they may accidentally stumble on a plane where everybody is an atheist. Think about it. Nasty, huh? One vicious way to do this, without bending rules like mad, is to allow a deity onto such a plane, and then have the plane fry the primal on their person. They either have to leave the primal home or send an avatar. Another way is simply to prohibit access to anything carrying primal.

How easy it is to acquire a plane depends on how many planes your corner of the multiverse has, how well the god or goddess can keep a secret, whether or not you allow one deity to "follow" another when

from Rules and Regulations for Divine Activity, Volume MCLXXIX

54.3.45.12.7a The conquering of planar structures will take exactly five times the Multiuniversal Standard Year, ref Multiuniversal Standard Year, Book XCII, Part 23, Section 19, Subsection 5, Paragraph 1, Subparagraph 1a, to Book XCIII, Part 4, Section 12, Subsection 54, Paragraph 531, Subparagraph 35j.

from unpublished notes of the author

*To change the color of the sky: 130/day;
to change the color of the sky and clouds:
140/day; to change the color of the sky
and the sun: 145/day; to change the color
of the sky only on weekends: 120/day; to
change the color of the sky as suits the
deity's present emotions (a "mood sky"):
180/day; to change the color of the sky
when...*

they travel, and even how long it takes to claim a plane. Five years is just a recommended time, and a rather vague one at that.

TPO breaks the basics of changing planar constants down into some tidy steps: minor, major, and greater. These aren't actually backed by theory, they're just good for gaming. Realistically, the values could be anything in between. I considered a table showing costs, but decided against it. You can either use the table in *The Primal Order*, or make up numbers based on gut instinct.

That amazing cascade where losing a plane results in the death of a deity on good. The pot people leap into the air at night to sleep on the lower branches of trees. Why? Who cares, they just do. When you step on a phone vine, you cut off the call that might be going through it. Oh, and the phone vines reach all over the plane. Never mind about how these vines get over the mountains, or live at freezing altitudes. The issue probably won't come up, and if it does, we'll cite some natural antifreeze in the vine.

This does work, especially happens if the deity has been burning base, and at the time the plane is lost has less than one plane's worth of base on hand. What a way to go: ripped from the very fabric of the multiverse, with planes fighting planes in your wake.

How you handle new planes will heavily influence your campaign. If there are no new planes but a passel of deities, divine politics becomes a subtle dance of influence over uncontrolled planes, and quiet scheming to put controlled planes back in contention. Unless the number of uncontrolled or uncontrollable planes is high, representing many worshipers who can choose their deities, the control of a plane and the souls on it will be the primary source of primal.

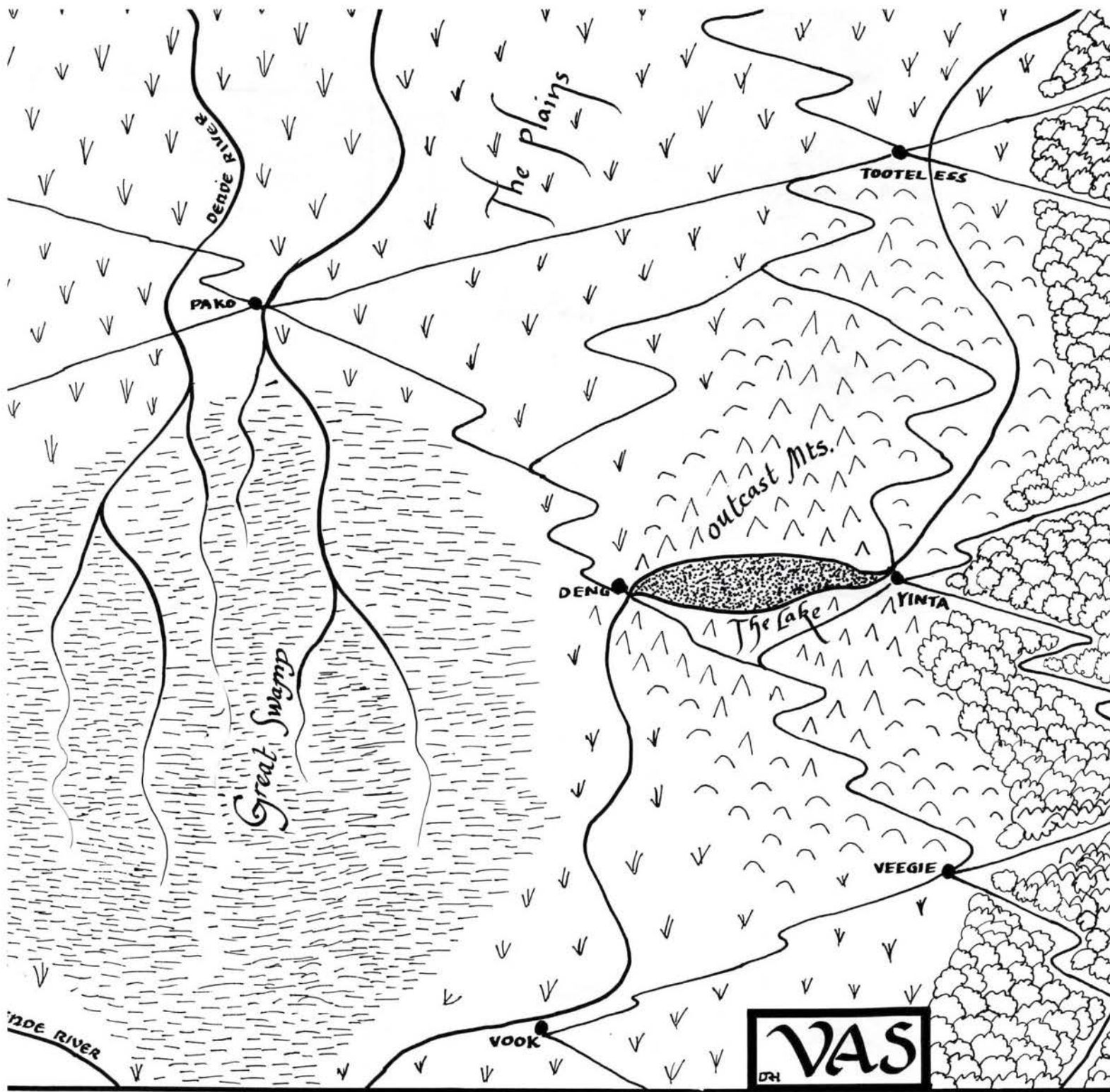
With a few deities and lots of planes, subtlety goes out the window. Everybody is ascending heroes, wizards, dweebs, whatever, in order to send them after planes and boost their pantheons. Poor, confused sentients flock to Shooparuu's religion because miracles and wonders are the order of the day. But just when things start settling down, all the wonders stop, the clerics are without their spells, and prayers go unanswered. Shooparuu is off to claim another plane.

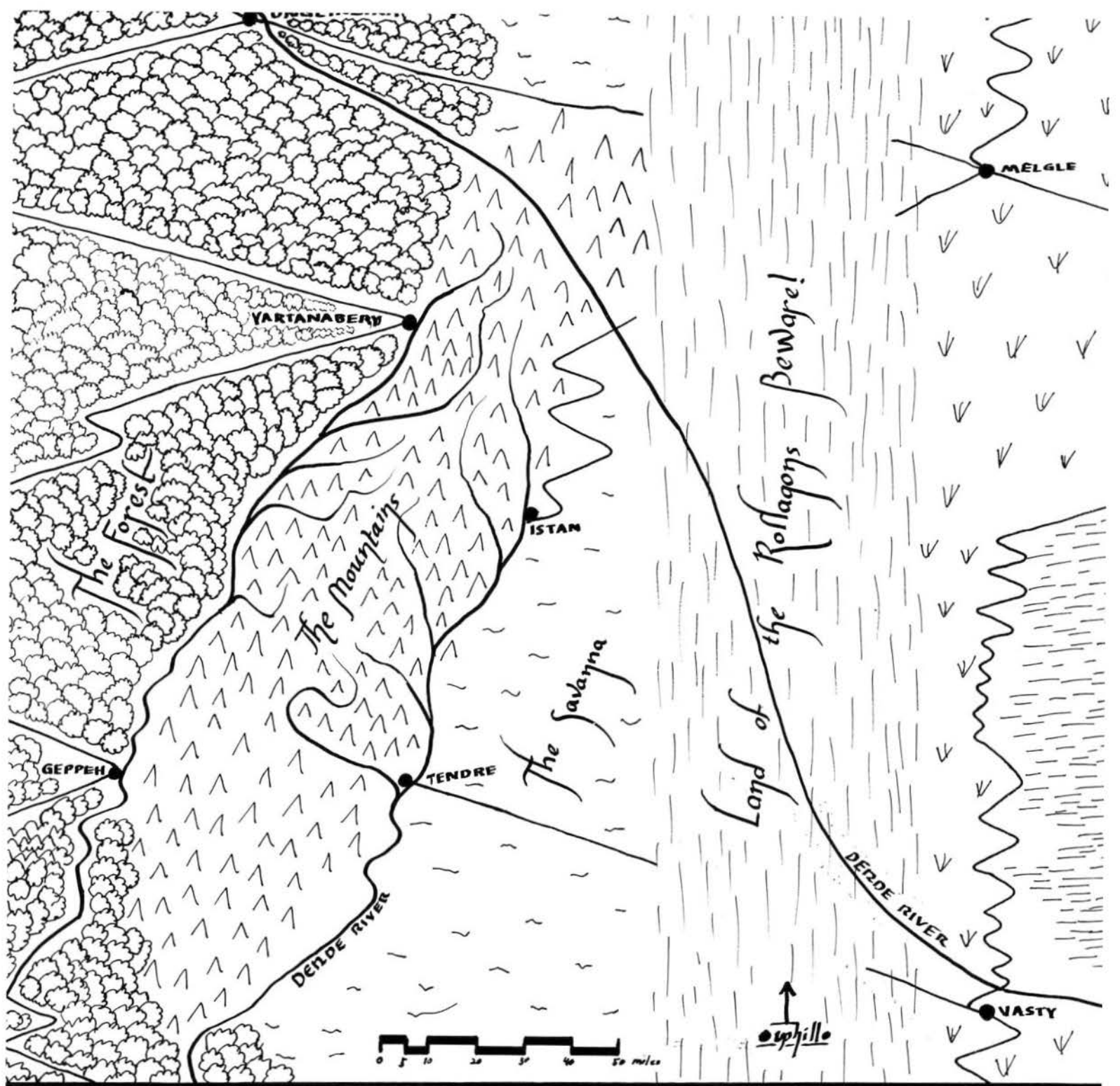
If your players have divine characters, they will be kept busy setting up opposing pantheons, controlling a new metaplane with about twenty planes in it, and following instructions from the boss about how to control as many planes as possible while denying control to others. This is especially recommended for Machiavellian players, although it shouldn't be too hard to find something in this for the zap-'n-slash types.

The issue of growth is basically a fascinating ramification of the GUPPE. It will rarely, if ever, come up during play, and you might even want to consider ignoring it. Just say that for every point of primal that is stuffed back into the plane, it imports one less point. In other words, the conduit will cut input by one point for every extra point of primal on the

plane, instead of only cutting back ninety percent, as presently stated. The almost-but-not-quite conduit response is there because some of you reading this book are going to feed the formulas into a spreadsheet and create and destroy planes for hours—just because you can. Isn't being a GM great?

Of course, if you've got one of those planes that boost primal effects by adding their own, well, you'd better be pretty familiar with that spreadsheet. That's another risky rule. If you really want things to get wild, allow deities to make planes reinforce primal, and watch them run around sucking primal from planes like cosmic vampires, leaving inconsequential specks behind. Could be fun!





Chapter 7: Tying up Loose Ends

So, now that you've got this tool kit of universe wrenches and continuum hammers, what are you supposed to do with them? Welcome to the "Suggested Guidelines for Use." In this final chapter, we'll take a closer look at the quantum nature of primal energy, add details to Mundus, Judy's plane, as an example of plane-building, and provide a checklist for writing up planes.

Quantum Primal

It's been pointed out that primal energy is a quantum energy. While this might sound dangerous, it simply means that there will never be fractions of a point of primal. While this is handy for bookkeeping purposes, it has some rather odd side effects. Any use of primal, no matter how trivial, must use an entire point. It's possible to say that Effect X will use a point of primal an hour, but if the effect is used for two and a half hours, it's up to the GM to decide how to handle the third point. The easiest is to simply declare that the third point only did half a point of work, although the entire point is spent. Or you could say the effect reverses to the two-hour mark. Miscellaneous bits of primal simply vanish, perhaps absorbed by the metaplane in the same fashion as larger quantities of loose primal.

This indivisibility can sometimes cause problems with calculations. The formulas given for compounding primal in TPO don't include handling the round-offs needed, since it makes the math a nightmare. It's recommended you not worry over-much about this, since this aspect of primal energy gets more complicated the closer you look.

from the journal of an inhabitant of Mundus

I cannot express my joy at the experience of accepting Judy as the beacon of my life. To be lifted from the squalor of the earth, suspended above such base concerns by macramé of my own making, fills me with bliss beyond comprehension. Suspended tables and chairs, bookshelves and pet carriers, shelter from the rain and sun—all things come from Judy. At the coming Festival of Loops I intend to craft a cover for my holy book out of macramé as my homage gift. Imagine the pleasure of having a copy of Judy's Book of Macramé Projects You Can Make at Home bound in the holy work itself! I am beside myself with excitement.

Synthesis

Hopefully, by this point you've read at least one idea that seemed really interesting. One idea does not a campaign make, unfortunately. Let's see about tying some of these ideas together, and make a new plane.

The Purpose. This is an excellent place to start. Why are you making a new plane? If it's just because it's fun, then you won't have to worry so much about whether or not things are sensible, or playable. If you're planning on adding it to a campaign as a destination for roleplayers, you'll want something pretty interesting, complex, and a good setting for adventuring. If it's going to be a power base for a deity, then you might want to concentrate on the constants, management, and connections of the plane.

Let's take a look at Mundus, Judy's new plane. First, it's supposed to support a deity. Let's try to make it a fun place to adventure as well. A good way to do that is to provide variety. Earth has an almost ridiculous

variety in terrain and climate. We may not want to go that far, but it shouldn't be just a plane of eternal trees to hang plant holders from.

Since we're also making this for Judy, let's start by making some nice places for her. Forests would be nice, to hang things. To add variety from the normal forest, we'll say on Mundus trees don't, or can't, grow close together. Trees are never closer than ten meters, and usually it's more like fifteen. Now our forests are very open spaces.

Maybe we should draw a map of the plane. In the interests of keeping things manageable, we'll make it about the size of the North American continent. It will be mapped to that impossible torus map, where you walk off the left and reappear on the right. Since it's not that big, we'll forgo major seas and just have some big lakes and lots of rivers. For another subtle point of variety, let's have the plane expand and contract over long periods of time, resulting in rumples in the plane. There are a lot of hills that run north to south.

Mundus is now more wrinkled than Earth, and forests are spaced widely apart. There won't be much swamp, since there isn't much flat area, and lakes look like sausages. Judy might want to add a planar constant that causes all plants to contain long fibers, eminently suitable for making rope and string, but we won't make that inherent in the plane. She's got to do some of the work.

For it to be a good plane for adventure, there will probably need to be areas not directly under Judy's control. The local sentient life, those pot-people, are all worshipers of Judy, so there must be wilderlands where they don't live. The problem with a divinely controlled plane is that only a very sloppy deity will have tribes of savages that haven't been assimilated into the church wandering around. Perhaps the civilization was much larger at one time, before the Coming of Judy, leaving ruins and such lying around. Some of these ruins might even have artifacts of

from The Planar Prowler's Guide to the Multiverse

Blerkalonquer is a plane where sentients can't get closer to each other than about four feet. Houses are big, sports are non-contact and not watched by big crowds, and the baby bit is a real bummer. Not Recommended.



other religions, the discovery of which and eradication of same might make Judy grateful.

More landscaping should be done, and the ecology needs to be developed. In keeping with the stringy nature, lots of vines might be nice. Perhaps some kind of vine that covers incredible amounts of area, and is used like some kind of bio-telephone by some people.

But enough of the specifics. The point is the detail involved to avoid having a plain plane.

Plane as Jigsaw. To plan Mundus, I decided on a few basic differences from the standard Earthlike plane and went from there. This process can be taken to extremes, by making a few simple changes such as the plane's expansion, and extrapolating everything from there. We might conclude that ecosystems tend to change rapidly east to west, since the wrinkles tend to provide a barrier. Since hunting grounds are long and thin, species might concentrate on speed or camouflage, since it's hard to go "around" a predator. Would landslides be a problem? Would glaciers be common? If a small number of predators can completely block a north-south valley, other species might develop a sacrifice mentality. If they have to get from the north to the south, during a migration for example, they might all travel together. The predator can only eat so many at one time, letting the others go free. What are the ramifications of this? Lemmings?

You get the idea. Careful extrapolation from a very few facts, leading to a plane where everything fits with everything else. Circles within circles, and all that jazz.

from a conversation with the Red Queen

Really, things were quite calm around here until that little girl showed up. All of a sudden nobody's getting beheaded, jurors are getting knocked about, reptiles are shooting into the air, and all manner of goings on. Why, you'd think we were all here just for her amusement!

Plane as Die Roll. The opposite of this is creation by whimsy. Just make up something that sounds good. The pot people leap into the air at night to sleep on the lower branches of trees. Why? Who cares, they just do. When you step on a phone vine, you cut off the call that might be going through it. Oh, and the phone vines reach all over the plane. Never mind about how these vines get over the mountains, or live at freezing altitudes. The issue probably won't come up, and if it does, we'll cite some natural antifreeze in the vine.

This does work, especially if the players aren't going to be spending tremendous amounts of time here. More interesting things can be fit into a small space if you don't worry about the ramifications. If a really annoying paradox does crop up, there are always planar constants to justify it.

The best approach is usually somewhere between these two extremes, as shown in the example of Mundus. Specific interesting things were made, like the pot people and the phone vines, then other parts of the plane are extrapolated, keeping an eye on the fun bits we made up so they'll fit together reasonably well.

last words of a criminal on Mundus before being de-potted

But I don't like making knots! Is that so bad?



We still haven't set up connections to other planes. A good guideline is to make a plane parallel to one or two other planes, and adjacent to a few others. The parallel planes are going to allow some flexibility for travelers who get stuck somehow, but travel in general will be limited by what kind of adjacent travel methods are available. Gates might be far away, or risky; nose-twitching might be unreliable. The connections of a plane become more important as player character travel gets easier, so consider them carefully.

The Well-Rounded Plane

Mundus still has a long ways to go before it's ready for visitors, but I think you get the idea. Making a plane is an exercise in world-building, except there's more to do because of the connections to other planes and such. Designing a world, with geology, climatology, biology, cartography, and on and on, is probably worth a book in its own right, and I certainly don't have the space to cover it here.

What I *do* cover makes an excellent checklist for making your own planes. Whether you're preparing a module for professional publication, writing up a plane for a friend, or just jotting notes for yourself, use the chapters as a guide to make sure your plane is complete.

Chapter 1 covers the highlights of a plane. On your plane, the first thing to mention is stuff that's important. Why you made it, what the best parts are, and other bits that are especially relevant. This chapter is the thinking-about chapter.

Chapter 2 is the design of the plane itself. Round or square, large or small. This is where you think up and write down all the little details of the plane.

Chapter 3 is the connections to other planes. Once you've finished designing the plane itself, you know how a parallel relationship might

from The Planar Prowler's Guide to the Multiverse

Some people think there's no air on Ghengalaur because it's full of water. Actually, the opposite is true. On Ghengalaur, gases are forbidden by the laws of nature, so it's full of water by default. If you're going to visit, you'll need to find a way to breathe water. Techniques for trapping air in a bubble around your breathing orifice won't work here.

from *The Planar Prowler's Guide to the Multiverse*

When travelling, take a good guide book and a towel. The towel, of course, is for when you have time to kill. Unraveled, it provides plenty of raw material for macramé projects. You can make a hat, or a brooch, or a pterodactyl...

the end

work, or the best places to put gates. This chapter deals with a plane's place in the multiverse.

Chapter 4 means it's time for planar constants. You probably thought of some of them when you were working on step two, but this would be the time to write them down officially, if they're going to affect game play significantly. This is particularly important if your plane is going to be used by someone else, since planar constants can really wreak havoc on someone's spells. You probably don't need to worry about Chapters 5 or 6 unless you're using *The Primal Order*. This is when you figure out how much primal is available to deities, the existence of planar artifacts, who controls the plane, and all that other high-level stuff.

The Final Knot

This book, as you may have noticed, is really packed with ideas. These rules—no, let's call them guidelines—provide a structure and system for adding more gaming real-estate than anyone could ever use. The main text has been setting out the main structure, and the margin material has hopefully sparked new ideas that you can use when developing your own planes.

Because of the quantity of material here, you may have to make an effort to keep yourself from getting carried away, drawing up new planes and metaplanes for every corner of your game universe. I know I have to watch out for this myself. Remember, it's really easy to add new planes if you decide you made your part of the multiverse too small; perhaps the D-Hopper always did have a setting that would take the adventurers to Vindalah, but it didn't work until the proper forces recently aligned. But it's a lot harder, though not impossible, to take planes away once your players have learned about them.

So hey, think of yourself as dining at a five-star restaurant, not a buffet. Rather than heaping your corner of the multiverse with piles of everything, linger lovingly over all the possibilities. Ponder just how big a headache your players will get if you create *this* kind of gate, or how long they'll be lost if you add just one more plane with *that* kind of parallel connection. Carefully season already existing planes with the occasional relic or subtle planar constant. Cook slowly over an even heat, and serve up a single fascinating world from the planes of possibility.

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Appendix of Planar Growth Formula

This appendix contains the formulas needed to model the growth of planes. It's presented as it came out of the original spreadsheet, with cells and their contents. Dollar signs indicate absolute cellular references.

Days since calculations started.

A1: "Day"

A2: 0

A3: = A2+\$P\$4

Add the step size to the previous day number to determine day. Setting step size (P4) to other than one will make the results inaccurate, but can be instructive nonetheless.

Primal base presently possessed by plane.

B1: "Base"

B2: = P2*2

B3: = MAX(B2-J2+MAX(K2-D2,0),0)

The first entry figures out how much base the plane is starting with based on what the initial demand on the plane is. After that, base is the previous day's base, minus the amount of base burned yesterday, plus (the total amount of base imported yesterday minus the amount used yesterday). The amount in parenthesis should only be positive if the stored base isn't up to its normal levels, and there is extra capacity available.

Total conduit capacity.

C1: "CCapat"

C2: = (0.8*\$P\$2)*(1+\$P\$3)*(1+A2*0.000027397)

C3: = C2+C2*\$P\$3*
MAX(MIN(1-((C2/(I2+0.001))-1)/\$P\$3,1),0)
/365*(A3-A2)

The first day (C2) calculates the conduit based on

1. what the base on hand won't generate, times
2. the percentage of overload capacity, times
3. 1% per century (if the day count doesn't start at 0)?

The total capacity equals the demand plus the overload rating under normal circumstances.

Thereafter, size is figured as

1. Previous size, plus
2. A percentage more if the actual extra capacity is less than the extra capacity called for in the planar stats.
 - 2a. divide capacity by actual base flow. This will be 1 if the conduit is maxed, and greater than 1 if the conduit isn't delivering every last possible point. Normal values would be around 1.01 to 1.1 (more or less), depending on how much extra capacity the conduit is supposed to carry.
 - 2b. subtract 1, so that the value's range is from 0 on up.
 - 2c. divide by the conduit overload percentage. Whatever value represented a normal level (1.01, 1.1, whatever), has now been scaled so that values from 0 to 1 mean that the conduit has insufficient overload capacity. Values from 1 on up mean it's carrying less than it is capable of under normal conditions.
 - 2d. Subtract this value from 1. Now the values go from 1 down into negative values. 1 means 100% of the overload capacity is in use. 0 means only the normal capacity is in use, and less than 0 means even the normal capacity isn't being fully utilized.
 - 2e. Clip values greater than 1 to 1. The conduit shouldn't be able to get such numbers, but better safe than sorry.
 - 2f. Clip values less than 0 to 0. This prevents the conduit from shrinking when it's lightly loaded.
3. We now have a value between 0% and 100%, which is the amount of overload capacity being used. Since the overload capacity is supposed to not be used (except for emergencies), the conduit needs to grow until this value reaches 0%. Multiplying this value by the ConduitGrowth value (which is %change per year), tells us how much the conduit should expand relative to its current size. Since this value is per year, it must be divided by 365 to get growth per day, multiplied by the number of days since the last entry, and multiplied by the present conduit size. This gives us the number of points to add to the conduit's size.

Total primal needed to sustain planar reality.

D1: "Demand"

D2: = P2

D3: = IF (L2<0.9, D2*(L2+0.1),
 D2+MAX((K2-D2-E2)/2, 0))
 +(D2*\$P\$6/365/100*(A3-A2))

If the total primal available yesterday was less than 90% required, then the plane shrunk in an attempt to not have more reality than could be reliably supported. If the minimum demands were met, then today's demand

equals yesterday's demand, plus if there was extra primal yesterday beyond the amount needed to sustain present reality, then the plane will grow, adding new reality that it can now afford. Usually this is because somebody pumped extra primal onto the plane. Furthermore, it may also add reality (thus increasing demand) just as a natural part of planar growth. This last part of the equation reflects a growth scheme where the plane increases by a certain percentage every century. Dividing by 365 and by 100 converts growth per century to growth per day, and the A3-A2 compensates if the previous row was more than one day ago.

Amount of base needed to restock plane.

E1: "Stor"

E2: = -MIN(B2-(D2*2), 0)

Since a plane should normally have base in stock equal to two day's needs, if base in stock minus two day's demand is less than 0, the plane is short that many points. Negating that gives us a positive number that will be added to the total amount of primal needed for that day.

Flux generated from base in stock.

F1: "PFlux"

F2: = B2/10

That two day's base sheds flux at 1 point for every 10 points of base. The plane will use these points to help meet the daily demand.

External flux.

G1: "EFlux"

G2: normally 0

This is where flux entering from outside the plane is added in. Deities feeding their plane to stimulate growth will cause this number to become greater than 0. Deities aren't allowed to steal flux, so never make this negative. It is not a formula.

Conduit load.

H1: "CLoad"

H2: = D2+E2-F2-(0.9*G2)

This is the amount of primal that the conduit is being asked to deliver. It is the amount needed to sustain planar reality (D2), plus the amount needed to restock planar base reserves (E2), minus the amount of flux generated by the base already in the reserves (F2), and minus the flux arriving from divine feedback. Because deities aren't really supposed to stuff primal back into a plane, it does not fully compensate for this unexpected source of primal. Thus the 0.9 in the equation.

Primal base delivered by conduit.

```
I1: "CBase"
I2: = MAX(MIN(C2,H2),0)
```

This is the actual amount of base delivered by the conduit. It is equal to either the maximum conduit capacity or the amount required by the plane, whichever is less. If someone jams more primal onto the plane than it can possibly use, the extra flux is not stuffed back up the conduit. It just vanishes.

Amount of planar base reserves to burn.

```
J1: "PBase"
J2: = IF((F2+G2+I2)/D2)<0.9,
      MIN(B2,(0.9-(F2+G2+I2)/D2)*D2),0)
```

If a plane can't meet demand, it will let reality get shaky. However, it won't support reality at less than 90% of the total needed. If the total primal available will meet less than 90% of the amount needed, base will be burned to bring it back to 90%. If there isn't enough base, it will burn what it's got.

Total primal raised.

```
K1: "Total"
K2: = F2+G2+I2+J2
```

This is the amount of primal energy available to meet all demands.

Percent of total demand met.

```
L1: "Final"
L2: = (K2/D2)
```

This shows how shaky reality is. On a healthy plane, this should be 100%

Amount of primal flux shed by plane.

```
M1: "Shed"
M2: = INT(D2*0.001+0.00001)
```

This is the number of points of flux that a deity would get from this plane on this day. It's rounded since primal energy is a quantum energy.

Constants and starting conditions.

O2: "Starting Demand"

P2: <amount of primal that plane needs on day 0>

Q2: "primal base"

O3: "Conduit Overload Room"

P3: <range 1-10 normally>

Q3: "(in percent)"

O4: "Step Size"

P4: <number of days per spreadsheet iteration>

Q4: "days"

O5: "Max Conduit Growth"

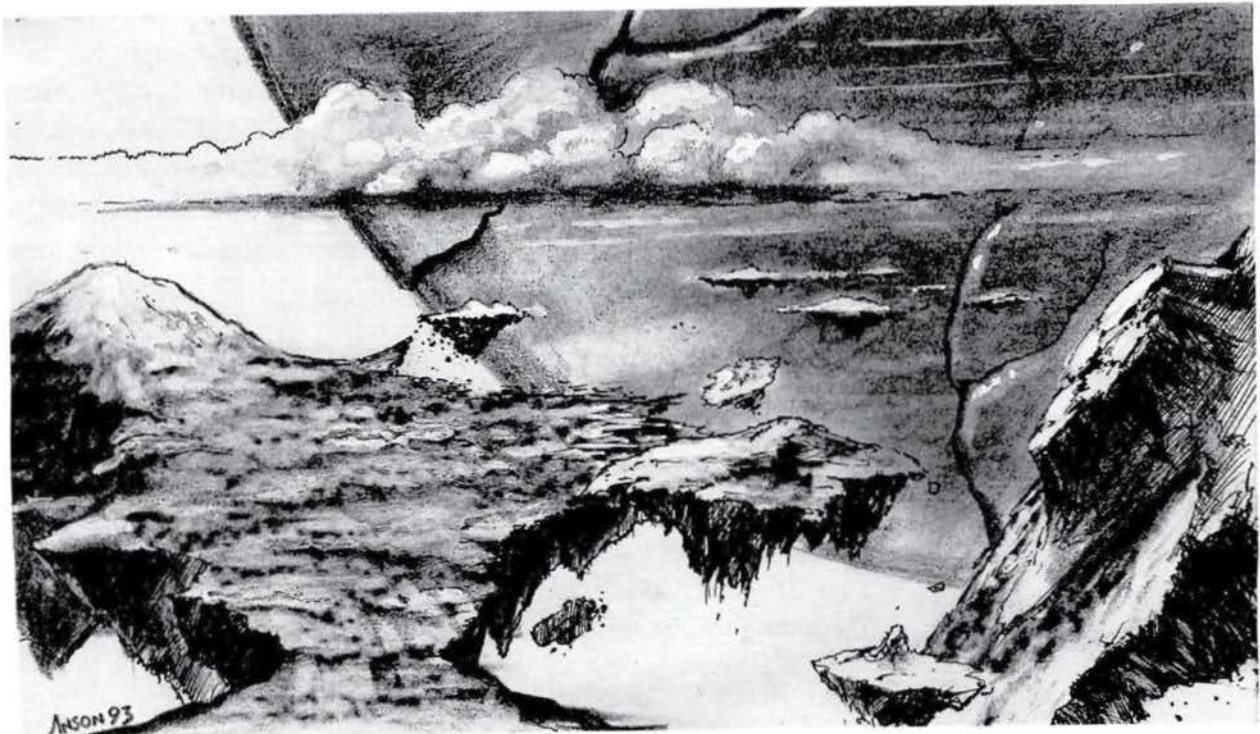
P5: <decimal value>

Q5: "per year"

O6: "Max Planar Growth"

P6: <decimal value>

Q6: "per century"



Bibliography

If you don't feel you've had enough, there are a number of books that, mostly unwittingly, provide excellent study material for the planar scholar. This is not an exhaustive list by any means, but does represent a good sampling. It also shows where quite a bit of inspiration for this book came from.

Asprin, Robert. *Another Fine Myth*. Nelson Doubleday. The *Myth Adventures* series has the D-Hopper for parallel travel and various gates for adjacent travel to the various planes that make up the series.

Baum, L. Frank. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Pennyroyal. There are twelve books in this series by Baum, and just about every mode of travel is used sooner or later. People teleport, location morph, fall, sail, blow, fly, gate, and walk to and from Oz. In principle, Oz lies somewhere on the surface of the Earth, and was hidden from view when airplanes were invented. Nevertheless, the planar constants are clearly very different.

Carroll, Lewis. *Alice in Wonderland*. Pennyroyal Press. The classic work takes on a rather different look if you consider all the doors and rabbit holes that Alice uses gates. Whether the Tea-Party and the Croquet Grounds are the same plane or not isn't as important as what could have happened to Alice if those gates hadn't been so well behaved.

Chalker, Jack. *Midnight at the Well of Souls*. Del Rey. The *Well of Souls* series was in no small part responsible for *The Primal Order*. As well as spending some time describing how the universe might be based on a "primal energy" (which differs from how our primal energy ended up in several respects), it also describes in great detail a planet that is a metaplane, tiled with hexagonal planes. The planar constants vary dramatically from hex to hex, and the hexes are usually connected to their corresponding neighbors. Another great series for finding ideas for new planes.

Chalker, Jack. *Soul Rider Book I: Spirits of Flux and Anchor* Tor. The world described in the *Soul Rider* series has a science fictional basis, but the way it works fits very well into the GUPPE. Flux, the metaplane, is susceptible to some individuals' power of will to form planes, small islands of stability. Anchors are larger planes that are inherently stable, not subject to an individual's will. Planar constants are as malleable as clay. The series spends a lot of time exploring human degradation, but the setting for the stories is unusual and interesting.

Cherryh, C. J. *Gate of Ivrel*. DAW Books. Cherryh's *Morgaine* series has the protagonist on a quest to close the gates that lead to other worlds.

One gate holds her for seventy-five years. Though it's one of Cherryh's earlier work, the series still remains a good, classic treatment of gates in fantasy.

DeChancie, John. *Castle Perilous*. Ace. This is a lightweight fantasy about a castle with a reputed 144,000 doors, windows, and other gates to other planes. Some gates are stable, some are not. Later books contain problems with holding one end of a gate, that is summoned by a spell, problems with planar constants that prevent desired effects, and the destruction of the metaplane.

Donaldson, Stephen R. *The Mirror of her Dreams*. Del Rey. Very little of the *Mordant's Need* series is actually concerned with planes, but the ability of the protagonist to planewalk via mirrors is interesting.

Feist, Raymond E. *Magician*. Bantam. The number of planes involved in this story is small—two—but the work required in crossing back and forth is clearly described, as are both planes. The *Riftwar Saga*, like all the books in this list, is also a pretty good read.

Hardy, Lyndon. *Secret of the Sixth Magic*. Del Rey. This is the second book in a set of three (so far) that provide remarkably logical frameworks for fantasy. The first book provides some sensible magic systems. This book introduces a metamagic that governs magic, and goes into more detail on other planes. Now that you've read *Chessboards*, you should see that the metamagical principles would be properties of the metaplane, limiting the forms that normal magic can take on the planes. This book is a great source for seeing new creative ways to use metaplanar constants and interplanar travel. For even more on planar travel, the third book in the series, *Riddle of the Seven Realms*, is also excellent.

Juster, Norton. *The Phantom Tollbooth*. Random House. This is yet another fantasy that starts by transporting an ordinary person in a very ordinary life into fantasy land. It's in this list not so much because it's a great example of planar theory, but because it's such an amazingly cool plane. The gate is unusual, though: the protagonist gets a small tollbooth, sets it up in his room, gets in a toy car, drives up, drops in the play money provided, and drives through.

L'Engle, Madeline K. *A Wrinkle in Time*. Scholastic. It is from this book that the basics of warp travel are culled. Referred to as traveling by tesseract, the basic principle is to get from here to there without passing the parts between.

LeGuin, Ursula K. *A Wizard of Earthsea*. Bantam. Another classic series. The first book in the series has the protagonist, Ged, opening a gate and

summoning, well, something. The last book in the trilogy, *The Farthest Shore*, deals with how a door between the main plane and the plane of the dead was opened, and how the planar constants were distorted by that.

Lewis, C. S. *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Collier Books. This book, the first in the Narnia series, starts out by transporting children through a magic wardrobe to Narnia. While gates to magic planes are as common as unicorns in fantasy, what makes Narnia different is how this information is developed throughout the series. *The Magician's Nephew* has sort of a central switchboard of magic pools that are gates to an indefinite number of other planes, and other books in the series show the creation and destruction of the plane called Narnia.

Pratchett, Terry. *The Colour of Magic*. Signet. Quite a bit of *Chessboards* was based in part on this book. This is the first book of the Discworld series, where all the adventures take place on a flat, circular world. A light, fast read, it's an excellent place to look for what might happen at the edge.

Zelazny, Roger. *Nine Princes in Amber*. Avon. This is the first book in the well-known *Amber* series. This is the primary source of the location morphing method of travel, although Zelazny uses pretty much the same system in such books as *Changeling* and *Roadmarks*. Also note the Trumps, which are an interesting form of gate.

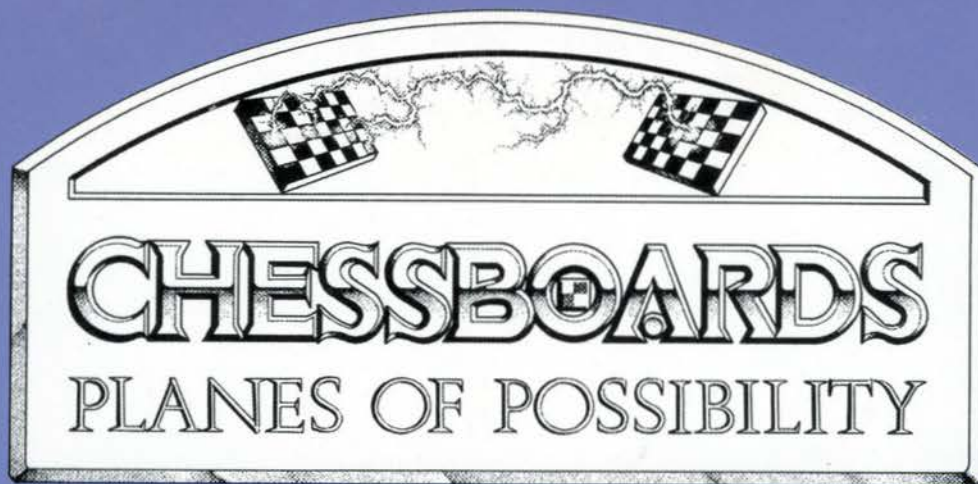
Works of Casual Reference

The following works do not necessarily have anything to do with planes, but were directly or indirectly referenced somewhere in the text. They are presented in no particular order, and some were referenced more than once. References to folk tales, sayings, or other material in the public domain are not represented here. Other references are to books listed above. The first person who can send a list of all the references in the book drawn from materials listed in this bibliography will get something cool. I don't know what, but it'll be cool. Good luck.

Publisher's Weekly magazine, *Lord Valentine's Castle* by Robert Silverberg, the Kzin and *A Gift from Earth* by Larry Niven, Piers Anthony's *A Spell for Chameleon*, the Moomintroll books for children, the television series *I Dream of Jeannie*, *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien, Dr. Seuss's *Horton Hears a Who*, *For Love of Mother-Not* by Alan Dean Foster, *Song of Sorcery* by Elisabeth Scarborough, *The Little Prince*, the movie *Ghostbusters*, *Magic Kingdom for Sale: Sold* by Terry Brooks, the movie *Airplane*, *The Armchair Tourist*, Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville, the computer game Wumpus, the movie *Labyrinth*, M&M's candy, *Star Wars* by George Lucas, *The World of the Dark Crystal* from Brian Froud, *Peter Pan* by J.M. Barrie, Disney's movie *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams, the television series *Bewitched*, *Dragonsinger* by Anne McCaffrey, the *Zork* games from Infocom, the television series *Land of the Lost*, Barcalounger recliners, the movie *A Wizard of Speed and Time* by Mike Jittlov, William Shakespeare, the Holy Bible, Superman, the Willy Wonka stories by Roald Dahl, the Dr. Doolittle books.

cue evil chuckle





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