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FANTASY  
WORLDS

VII

GARY GYGAX'S

# COSMOS BUILDER



RICHARD T BALSLEY  
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY DARLENE

**GARY GYGAX'S**

**COSMOS**

**BUILDER**

by Richard T. Balsley

with an introduction by  
Gary Gygax

Cover Image by Jason Walton

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**VII**



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# **F**OREWORD

Why do you really need this book? Because every fantasy role-playing game setting is contained within a like-cosmos; a fantastic one. Having the resources provided herein gives you the ability to create such a marvelous multiverse, or improve the one you currently employ.

You might not have details of this all-encompassing milieu set forth in your game, but such a fantastic cosmos is there... unseen as it should be. All of the truly extraordinary things that occur in your campaign are enabled to be thus because of the many unseen places, the cosmic planes and spheres that are at least assumed to exist so as to make your material world setting what it is. This book gives you the means to understand all that a fantasy cosmos can and should contain to suit your imagined multiverse. Better still, it enables you to devise your own cosmology so as to construct a cosmos that is exactly to your specifications.

If any reader has a doubt about many planes lying outside the ken of mortals, then consider the following: All of the good and evil deities and their minions must have some place they dwell; so too the elemental creatures which are most likely a part of your game system. What empowers temporal magic? Do shadows play a part of the operations in your game system? How do containers that are larger inside than outside function?

All of that and more are explained in this work.

You have in your hands a treatise on fantasy cosmology, the guidebook for construction of a complete multiverse filled with everything needed to assure endless places of your own making that are suitable for adventure even if your players' characters are of potency that moves them beyond the mundane challenges of the usual campaign settings. It should be clear that the information contained herein also provides you with much to expand and extend the setting for epic adventures of the sort typical of heroic, or not to heroic, bands. A glance at the Table of Contents will serve to emphasize the truth of this.

Dimensions of the multiverse, its visible and invisible realms are all treated in detail, the esoteric and difficult to comprehend made more understandable and quite manageable for the reader. Thus, with this book you will be able to construct the cosmos that you wish to have for your game campaign, or alter an existing one to better suit your needs.

You will venture through the material universe into parallel ones, sojourn to dimensions and planes of infinite scope, then visit created "universes" of all sizes, including those as small as the space needed to store a wizard's paraphernalia. As you do so you will know the whys and hows of such places, be empowered to create like places of your own making through the information supplies and the use of the Cosmology Worksheets included at the end of this book. There is extensive information for the material planes, the metaphysical ones, new dimensions, and such places as you might wish to devise for yourself.

A word about the author, Richard Balsley, is appropriate here. Richard is a long-time role-playing game aficionado that I have known virtually for many years. Considering his creative contribution here, I can only add that I am proud to note that association. Although he has yet to complete his formal education, Richard took time from his advanced studies to author this book, using the scant précis materials I supplied to create a work of depth and unquestionable merit.

There is not much more I can say, for the real information you seek is contained in the nine chapters and many appendices and associated portions of this work. Reading it for yourself is far better than what I have to say about the excellence of what is contained herein. This is a book that all serious fantasy game material or like fiction creators must have.

Gary Gygax

Lake Geneva, WI

November 2005

# I NTRODUCTION

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*“Furthermore, we have not even to risk the adventure alone, for the heroes of all time have gone before us. The labyrinth is thoroughly known. We have only to follow the thread of the hero path, and where we had thought to find an abomination, we shall find a god. And where we had thought to slay another, we shall slay ourselves. Where we had thought to travel outward, we will come to the center of our own existence. And where we had thought to be alone, we will be with all the world.”*

*-Joseph Campbell*

No matter where we travel, we remain in the same location. In fantasy games, this is irrefutable. We come together – perhaps once or twice a week – as friends, to share in a collective dream where our stalwart heroes venture forth to explore the land and face down terrible foes set to do them harm; but neither our characters nor we take that journey alone. Whatever fascinating locales our characters travel to, we go to them as a group. All the while, we are nestled comfortably around our tables silently cheering them on, in spite of the fact that it is we – not our characters – that is on that journey.

Why would we strive for new realms to explore? The motifs of the mythic are so strong in those otherworldly locations that we wish to experience them through our characters. These are the worlds that are stranger than strange and uncomfortably real as science continues to push the boundaries of what we believe to be possible. Where rational thinking and science tell us we cannot experience a thing due to its hazards, our heroes laugh and invite us to enter their worlds through their bodies.

These otherworldly locales we dream of are not merely the imaginary realms where kings and peasants live in a simulacrum of our existence. No, the places of existence that most fascinate us are those where the physical reality is quite different than ours. They serve as the homes of gods and devils, elementals and myriad creatures as of yet unknown. Simply put, these places allow our imaginations to go wild. Here, nothing we conceive of is impossible.

*Cosmos Builder* provides fantasy cosmologists the tools to create a unique depiction of the realms above and below (and everything in between) that can be incorporated into any setting. This book presents a great many options for the game master to append to preexisting or newly conceived settings. While this book cannot include all possible options, it hits upon the most common elements of planes of existence and offers insight for deviating from and blending these elements to suit your needs, to craft new dimensions and the strange worlds that exist on them and where diverse dimensions meet.

This book is a toolbox, filled with ready-to-assemble components that will allow you to quickly flesh out your vision of a cosmology. These tools are designed to let you to share your vision with others so they can adopt your cosmology (or portions thereof) to their campaign, regardless of which game system they use. The only thing they require is knowledge of how the tools in this book work, or an explanation from you about how your friends can use your cosmology with their preferred game systems.

## How To Use This Book

Essentially, this book will help you figure out what you want to place in your cosmology and where you want to put it. You likely want a structure that relates to the rest of your vision of a fantasy cosmology. How to do this is what this book offers you. More than just a guide to a preconceived vision of a cosmology, this book actually gives you the tools to create your own multiverse. Fabricated cosmologies can universally apply to any game system and any style of gaming. Because of this, what you have in your hands is more than just a mere collection of statistics.

You will find that this book has examples of what you can do and relatively few rules. This should be seen this as a way for you to see what others can do and how you can take their ideas and use them in any format. In the context of your game, what you say is right and proper is correct. No one can tell you that your vision is incorrect.

That said, there are a few things you should and should not do. When you are designing a cosmology, you are not just creating a loose collection of planes (even if that is what you are starting out with). Rather, you should bear in mind that you have the seeds of a mythology. Every plane – and by consequence, every deity – you place in your setting says something about the cosmology. Even if you do not consider the mythological impact that your planes may have when you are first laying things out, it should become clear to you when you look at all of the planes as a whole. You have designed the seeds of every creation story that the faiths of your setting will tell their worshippers. Before you slam the cover of this book shut and feel overwhelmed at the possibilities of your vision, remember that you do not have to look at your cosmology like this, but the potential is always there for you to write more than you may have thought possible.

Planes of existence should not be created as exotic dungeons. You should also avoid the cliché of “dungeons in space” as a reason for a plane’s sole purpose of existing. While there is nothing truly wrong with this concept, a plane of existence is meant to be much more than a dungeon. Pocket universes and spheres, places that require another plane in order to exist, work much better as dungeons. With that said, there is not a reason why you cannot create a plane that is a massive dungeon and it would go against everything this book is about; you are allowed to create whatever you want. The main reason for the admonition to not use planes of existence in this manner is that your players will have little or no respect for the cosmology you slaved over if you do not reinforce the concept that the planes

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are not just there for the characters to visit and stomp about as they please. The characters may be so powerful that they can roll over anything you throw at them from their own world, but that does not mean the characters are strong enough to take down a deity or the extraplanar servants of that deity. In all the cosmology you create using this work should be rich and varied, have an over-arching logic, and be a connected whole - a multiverse indeed. Part of the meaning of the whole might well be a pocket universe that is a vast dungeon; but the logical existence of such a place needs to be explained in game-rational terms so that some sagacious character might discover the reason for it being thus.

This book deals with a lot of themes that are metaphysical in concept. However, you should keep in mind that what is shown throughout the book has nothing to do with an individual style. Although you will see some examples for the *Lejendary Adventure* game cosmology, feel free to change them as the players' preferences dictate. Also, a fresh and different approach taken by the game master will ensure that the players will not necessarily know what is happening in the cosmos.

The layout of this book has been designed to help you learn the basics of building a cosmology from the inside out. To facilitate this, the book is divided into three sections. The first, Chapter 1, is devoted mainly to the mapping of a cosmology and addresses the question of how many metaphysical concepts a cosmology needs. The second section, consisting of Chapters 2 through 4, covers the common types of physical realities encountered in a fantasy setting. The last four chapters illustrate in detail how metaphysical concepts are used to develop individual planes. Beyond this point, there is a chapter devoted to pocket realms, non-spatial planes and spheres as well as several appendices containing everything from a walk-through of plane construction to a planar worksheet containing the key details that help define a plane thematically and physically.

The following is a glossary of terms commonly used throughout the text. While this may not be every term used, those that truly need to be defined are done so below.

Good luck and good gaming!

## GLOSSARY:

**Axis:** A metaphysical spectrum in a dimensional matrix. It is used to determine how aligned a plane is to a metaphysical pole.

**Core Values:** The themes, concepts and ideals at the core of a plane based primarily on metaphysical traits, such as love, hate, patience, etc.

**Dimensional Address:** The location of a plane measured by its relationship to the origin point of a cosmology by its metaphysical axes. This can be expressed as the number of planes a character must pass through (including the plane in question) with the beginning of the trip being the Prime Material Plane (not included in the address) or by the number of degrees of separation a plane is along a metaphysical axis from the cosmology's origin.

**Dimensional Matrix:** The theoretical energy weavings that form a netting to contain the energies of a plane of existence.

**Non-spatial:** A physical quality of a plane that has no true depth. Such planes can seem infinite in size when traveling through them, but despite the distance traveled, a character can exit the plane to find himself standing exactly where he was on another plane when he first entered the non-spatial one.

**Plane:** Refers to another fantasy reality.

**Pocket Universe:** A dependant realm, a plane embedded in and only accessible from another plane through specific entry points.

**Polarity:** The metaphysical concept to which a plane is most aligned.

**Sphere:** A region within a plane that does not necessarily reflect the energies or landscape of the plane that contains it, so that it differs to a lesser or greater degree from the plane to which it is a part.

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# C

# CHAPTER 1: DIMENSIONAL MATRICES AND SPACE-TIME

RELATING THE LOCATION of one plane to another is the most important step in laying out a new cosmology. This chapter covers the mapping systems that serve as the basis of a fantasy cosmographer's toolkit. This book uses two tools for describing the relationships of planes and cosmologies to one another: the dimensional matrix and the Space-Time continuum. Since everything in the book is a guideline, you may be wondering why you would want to use any sort of elastic measuring stick. The tools are like an outline: they are not set in stone and are provided to organize the more nebulous concepts presented in the latter sections of the book in a way that is meaningful for your cosmology.

As for the first tool, you may be wondering: what is a dimensional matrix? A dimensional matrix is a multidimensional metaphysical location tool. That may be a mouthful to say, or even difficult to wrap your brain around; however, the concept is pretty straightforward once you get the hang of it. Put simply, it is a way to represent where a plane is located in respect to the Prime Material Plane, itself a dimensional matrix, in a cosmology. The dimensional matrix allows you to set up the dimensional address of a plane's location relative to the origin of the cosmology or where a pocket realm (or sphere) would be located on a plane of existence. The majority of addresses for spheres and pocket realms use dimensional addresses (at the least length, width, and height) in relation to their parent plane. The dimensions meeting in a matrix to create a plane also determine its nature and characteristics.

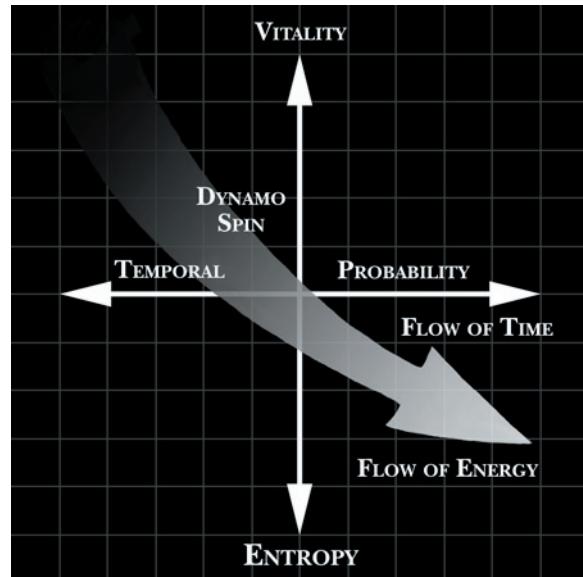
There is no set limit to the number of dimensions needed to locate a plane of existence. You may choose to have any number of dimensions in your cosmology. The only problem with such numbers will be whether or not you are able to keep track of them. It is suggested that you use no more than eleven dimensional axes. The standard cosmology presented for the **Lejendary Adventure** game (used to illustrate a cosmology's construction) uses four. They represent the most common metaphysical axes found in role playing games. In no particular order, the eight metaphysical poles of the axes are: Temporal, Chaos, Order, Vitality, Celestial, Probability, Entropy, and Nether (or Infernal).

The metaphysical poles in your cosmology must have an opposed view. For instance, the **Lejendary Adventure (LA)** game cosmology uses the following pairings: Temporal/Probability, Order/Chaos, Vitality/Entropy and Celestial/Nether. These polar extremes represent the diametrically opposed philosophies that define the issues and struggles central to the lives of the Prime Material Plane inhabitants. When you set out to devise the dimensional address of a plane in your campaign, use your own order. The common form used to map out a cosmology, however, is the grid. With a grid-like structure, a set of numbers might look like this: (0,0,0,0). Whether you choose to use it is left solely up to you.

Each cosmology has a dimensional matrix. The metaphysical axes in your cosmology are part of this matrix. Within this dimensional matrix, any number of dimensional matrices can exist of an equally infinite size. Dimensional matrices are very difficult to comprehend and undetectable by extraordinary

means such as magic. They are known to exist because of travelers who, through wild surges of magic, have been bounced out of their travel and onto the "underside" of the universe. As such, it is believed that no plane exists without a dimensional matrix. These matrices are weavings (or underpinnings) which allow each plane to maintain its energies without bleeding into another. Without a dimensional matrix, it is believed that the energies of a plane would bleed out of existence. So as an essential but invisible item, the dimensional matrix can be used in the game as part of your setting.

What is the importance of the dimensional matrices if there is no easy way to reach them? It is not that a character can not, but rather what function do they serve and why does it matter what they look like? There are many reasons you could give for their existence in your campaign. You could claim that the dimensional matrices (and those contained within them) keep pocket realms stable and safely isolated from one another. While dimensional matrices belong to the planes they contain, it is important to keep in mind that dimensional matrices do not border one another. The dimensional matrices themselves are kept separate by the Ethereal Plane; or, depending on a plane's location, the Aethereal Plane. Perhaps thinking of the matrix of dimensions as a weaver's loom, each dimension a thread, and the matrices formed where they meet some plane, sphere, or pocket universe...or all three. This is not to say that a dimension might not also be a plane in and of itself, where the essences of other mundane planes are incorporated into the singularity of the dimension.



Dimensional matrices should be seen as natural, unobtrusive components of reality and should not affect a cosmology under normal circumstances. Why should you include them if this is the case? Mapping the cosmology is one reason why you would use them, though determining the nature of such places is the principal reason. A dimensional matrix that does not include time will surely be vastly different from one where time is a component.

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If you choose to use dimensional matrices, you can use them as a planar skin that acts as a uni- or omni-directional barrier. If you use it this way, a dimensional matrix can also serve as a way to limit planar travel. A possible justification for doing so would be to say that the coordinate points of that dimensional matrix are so tight that travel between them is impossible. What would make points on a dimensional matrix impassable? Quite possibly, those coordinate points possess planar seeds (places where planes can form). That would make it impossible for other planes to be detected in that particular location. Thus, in an area so densely packed, the magical means to sense the desired plane are thwarted.

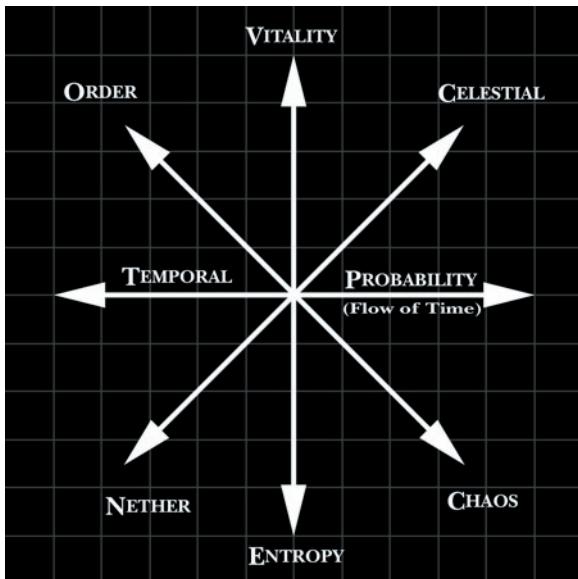
What does a dimensional matrix look like? That depends on your point of view. The sample tables in the chapter give you a wide variety of options. For some dimensional matrices, you could say that they're made of thin gossamer strands. Then again, you could decide for other planes that they are made out of chains, solid beams of light, rope or even stone. Really, there is no limit to what method you could use. The question then becomes why dimensional matrices can appear to come from materials so vastly different yet serve the same function. That is another mystery you could work into your campaign.

The last question for understanding dimensional matrices is: where would they be located? The short, enigmatic answer is anywhere and everywhere. As they are theoretical, dimensional matrices are normally perceived by their effects. The dimensional matrix of most concern to scholars in the campaign world (and the game master) is the cosmological dimensional matrix. That is because it contains all the planes in the cosmology and marks the boundary between the cosmology and Space-Time. If the concept of travel outside of the cosmology into Space-Time does not suit your playing style or your campaign's needs, you can prohibit characters from accessing that plane.

### SIX DEGREES OF DIMENSIONAL SEPARATION

Now that you have a basic understanding of how a dimensional matrix works, how do you use one? The location you choose for each plane has little effect on its actual distance from the origin point of the cosmology. Rather, you should measure a plane's degree of polarization towards a metaphysical concept. In this text, the severity of polarization is referred to as the six degrees of dimensional separation. By using this degree system, any plane you create can be shared with others who can then insert the plane in their cosmology. The system is deliberately loose to allow you maximum flexibility so you may create planes on the fly.

The origin point of a cosmology is its most neutral location as the effects of the metaphysical concepts (e.g. Order/Chaos) cancel one another out. As such, it has a value of zero



concerning the six degrees of dimensional separation. The first degree of separation is the mildest and the least polarized. This degree is predominantly the domain of the physical elemental planes. Although these planes overlap the Prime Material Plane, small changes differentiate them from the origin of the cosmology. These differences are normally tied to the physical nature of the planes. For example, fire is the dominant factor on the Elemental Plane of Fire and therefore Elemental Earth is subject to severe restrictions on that plane. Since mundane physical planes (with the exception of energy planes) have no polarity, they are "given" a value of less than one, placing them near the origin point, but just shy of a true degree of separation.

The Prime Material Plane is made up of at least the following: the four elements (air, earth, fire and water), the three standard dimensions (height, length and breadth), plus time, probability, order, chaos, vitality, entropy, positive energy, negative energy, weal, woe, light, dark and shadow. All are permeated by aether, extra-dimensional and non-dimensional "space."

The dimensional separation degrees of two through six are firmly the domain of the metaphysical planes. It is very likely for these planes to have a degree of separation equal to one. These are the planes of metaphysical concepts. As such, very few will have the mild polarization that is normally associated with elemental planes. The degree of separation is important since it determines whether or not the opposite polarity of that metaphysical axis will be functional on a plane. Any plane with a degree of one through five will allow its polar opposite to exist in some fashion, although it will be weakened. Any plane that has a degree six should be considered

implacable towards its polar opposite. Thus, for instance, Chaos can not exist on the plane of Law.

How severe of a departure from the Prime Material Plane another plane is determines whether a plane gets a separation of one degree or six. In order to assign the appropriate degree of dimensional separation to a plane of existence, you first have to consider the plane's purpose. The easiest way to do this is to have a description that implicitly states what the plane is for, who inhabits it, and (if possible) what the plane looks like. For example, you are not going to have a constantly shifting landscape for a deity of law and order. The exception to this would be a realm with a central feature that resembles a courthouse of some sort. Such a plane represents the ever changing system of law necessary to keep up with new innovations perceived by a culture that worships a god who oversees its courts and administration of justice. Even this brief description should be enough to give you some insight into people who would venerate such a deity and what sort of domain they would inhabit. Add to that the fact that law is force, and a depiction of such a plane becomes vivid.

A series of adjectives are used to describe each degree beyond the Prime Material Plane. These are by no means binding. There is no wrong way to build a cosmology. If someone has given you a plane that is a good fit for your cosmology and you find you have something there, do not discard the idea because it does not fit on a map. Planes do not take up physical space just because they do on a map. You are justified in any decision you make that will cause planes to appear to overlay one another on a map. After all, it is your campaign, and there are many dimensions that can not be properly depicted using the conventional ones of normal space.

**SLIGHT** is the first degree of dimensional separation. This descriptor best fits planes that have little difference between them and the Prime Material Plane. The elemental planes would be considered slight variations. Physical elements, such as the elemental planes, are usually considered to be slight variations as the only difference between them and the Prime Material Plane is the physical matter of the dimension. The physical makeup of the elemental planes may be dangerous to inhabitants of the Prime Material Plane but generally no more so than if the elements were encountered on that plane in their natural form. For example, without proper protection on the Elemental Plane of Water, a character is as likely to drown as if he was stranded in the middle of an ocean.

The designation of Slight will probably influence where you decide to place such a plane in your cosmology. This should not keep you from being able to place a plane in a position that is appropriate based solely on its description. A good example of such a situation is finding the locations of a difference between the Elemental Plane of Fire and the Empyrean Plane. The former would be just as likely to be found on a Prime Material Plane world in the same state as on its own plane of existence. In contrast, the latter is considered the purest form of fire or light. Additionally, the Elemental Plane of Fire differs from the Empyrean Plane as fire is physical and the energies that comprise the pure, celestial forms of fire are metaphysical. It is important to note that few planes with a philosophical bend will have this descriptor. Such realms would be limited in scope as they serve concepts that draw few people. The best explanation in such a case would probably be that there is not enough polarization to attract attention.

Four planes that bare the Slight descriptor are the Vault of the Heavens, Sheol, the Clockworks and the Patchwork Lands. Each is a gateway between the extremes along their metaphysical axes and the physical planes. All four are neutral grounds for the metaphysical concept they serve. This means the Vault of the Heavens serves the Celestial Planes, Sheol serves the Nether Realms, the Clockworks service Realms of Order, and the Patchwork Lands provide the same function for the Realms in Flux. These planes can be found in Appendix A.

**PARTIAL** best describes planes with some deviation (in a metaphysical sense) from the Prime Material Plane. While they are in tune with their metaphysical pole, such planes hamper the effects of spells, magical effects and beings that hail from planes aligned with their polar opposite. Planes that are partial to one metaphysical pole mark the boundary that separates the physical planes from the metaphysical planes. Even with this designation, planes with the Partial descriptor or higher bind the physical look

of its plane to metaphysical energies, making the land reflect these qualities.

Think of Partial planes being aligned to their polarities as exemplified in people who are considered to be the living embodiments of the concepts they follow. Mother Theresa, for example, can be viewed as someone who exhibited the tenets of the Celestial Pole through the compassionate acts and moral values she upheld. On the opposite end of the spectrum, a reviled figure from history for his brutal and depraved acts would be seen as living the traits of the Nether Pole.

**MODERATE**, as does Slight, describes a series of planes that are uncommon and seem to be middle ground between the second and fourth degrees of separation. What Moderate planes uniquely provide is a transitional boundary between the neutral territories of the Partial planes and the more polarized metaphysical planes. Where the Partial planes curb the effects or influence of their polar opposites, Moderate planes penalize. This is in addition to hindering spells that do not serve the metaphysical concept of the plane. Where a Slight plane might reduce the level or casting grade of a spell by one, Moderate planes reduce spells by two or three gradations.

The earlier description of a realm with a courthouse surrounded by a shifting landscape is an example of a plane with the Moderate descriptor. It symbolizes that the belief in Order is important, but it also recognizes that laws should be flexible. Transitional realms serve a purpose, even if there does not appear to be much difference between a Moderate or Partial realm. As with the previous example, Moderate realms illustrate a tendency towards the metaphysical polarity of the plane without necessarily seeing its polar opposite as a defect.

**HEAVILY** aligned planes are planes that reflect human ideals of a metaphysical concept. These planes do not tolerate their polar opposites and severely hinder them. Spells and other magical effects that do not coincide with the metaphysical aspect of the plane see reductions by between one and three gradations. Spells associated with the polar opposite trait are reduced by four to six gradations. The inhabitants of these planes are often hostile towards their polar opposites. At the very least, individuals who do not conform to the ideals of the plane are not welcomed.

An example using the Order metaphysical pole would be a realm where moving an object is a monumental task. Similarly, a plane of Chaos would require the same amount of effort to keep an object from being moved. This is not a task that would be impossible for the average character, but it would tax his limits to go against the plane's tendencies. Committing an act of evil on a plane heavily aligned to the Celestial Pole would be met with open hostility by the residents and stiff resistance from the plane. The same is true when performing acts of good on a Nether Realm. When creating a heavily aligned plane, remember that there is no tolerance for deviation from the metaphysical concept to which the plane is aligned. This does not mean the act cannot be done; merely that the plane and its inhabitants resist such actions.

**GREATLY** is used to describe realms near the end of their metaphysical axes. The penalties for not following the guidelines of the plane are quite severe. Spells and magical effects that deviate towards any other polar axes' metaphysical concepts are reduced by four to six gradations. Those of the

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polar opposite can be reduced by seven to nine gradations. Most residents of the Prime Material Plane avoid traveling to these planes. Even for the most dedicated resident of the Prime Material Plane, the concepts these planes represent are too extreme for mortals to devoutly follow.

Continuing with the examples using the Order metaphysical pole, a plane greatly aligned to Order would be one of rigid patterns from the way the houses would be laid out along a road to the plants and trees native to the plane being arranged in perfect patterns. Everything would have a specific order and unvarying purpose. All homes would have the same layout and trees would be arranged as if in an orchard. Some argue that these planes verge on being chaotic because the laws are so alien to residents of the Prime Material Plane that they would not be able to comprehend them. However, here is the real difference: a realm on the Chaos end of the axis would appear haphazard and like a roiling mass of primordial substance. The fifth degree of dimensional separation should be seen as the impossible standards that mortals try to hold themselves to. In this manner, the planes residing this close to the edge of the metaphysical axis should be considered extremes not yet attainable by mortal races.

**EXTREME** represents the sixth and final dimensional degree of separation. Planes at this point on their metaphysical axes epitomize that concept by which they are identified. Such realms should be seen as the concept's source that flows down to the cosmology's center. A plane with the extreme descriptor for Order is immutable and reliable. At the extreme of the Chaos Pole would lay the plane where objects constantly change form, never holding their shape for long. Spells and other effects that deviate from the metaphysical concepts are reduced by seven to nine gradients and the polar opposite is reduced by nine to twelve gradients.

Few planes would exist at such an extreme. Not only are these the pinnacles of their respective metaphysical concepts, but they also lie at the cosmology's edge. No planes are farther from the Prime Material Plane in terms of the cosmological dimensional matrix. Any planes that do reside in the extreme category should be anchors that bind the cosmology to the Space-Time continuum. The extremes of the Vitality/Entropy axis can be viewed as a dynamic engine that runs a cosmology as Space-Time generates a current in the same way as an electric motor. You do not need to view the cosmology in these terms, but envisioning it in some manner provides an additional layer of mystique and flavor.

The system described above is useful for mapping the planes if you need to draw a diagram to show the locations of your planes. If you use a coordinate graphing system, the degrees tell you where each plane would be located on a grid. The number of points depends on how many metaphysical axes you use in your cosmology. The LA game cosmology assumes that there are four metaphysical axes. In this model, you have four points to illustrate a plane's location on a four-dimensional grid. It is possible to have a plane that has all four elements taken to the sixth degree. Such a plane would be considered to have four unyielding metaphysical opposites.

The mapping system is optional, but it may aid you in laying out a cosmology. This style of cosmological mapping makes a great visual aid for campaigns where the characters' adventures

require them to learn how to navigate their cosmology. Using this method, the game master can safely create false maps that are misleading to show that mortals are unaware of what their cosmology truly looks like. Campaigns that use plot lines like this also allow the characters to be the first to explore the cosmology and give them the added claim that they know the true layout.

Space-Time is vastly different from the dimensional matrix. The best way to think of it is as an infinite river that flows in one direction (but travels upstream, as well as "skipping" downstream, is possible in some universes) and contains all possible cosmologies. Therefore, the cosmology you build is just one of an infinite number of cosmologies that can exist within Space-Time, the multiverse. This does not mean your cosmology is unimportant; rather it is but one version of reality. This allows you to experiment with traveling from one cosmology to another, where events have gone differently. As an added bonus, cosmologies that your friends create can be added so you and your players can run cross-over campaigns.

The energies that comprise the "fluid" of the Space-Time stream are unquantifiable. It is aptly described as water although it is breathable and accommodating to any species. Anyone who leaves his home cosmology to travel within Space-Time finds that his cosmology appears the same as all the other cosmologies floating in the stream.

Space-Time also acts as the "super glue" of cosmologies. It holds cosmologies in a rigid structure so they can not collide. Many theories attempt to explain the cause of this. The most common is that a point of origin known as the Space-Time font acts as the seed from which all cosmologies spring. As a cosmology evolves from this point, infinite potential paths diverge from the original, and for each potential path there is a corresponding cosmology. Thus, the stream of Space-Time is ever growing broader as it flows.

Graphing cosmologies requires a different method than graphing dimensional matrices. The cosmology a character comes from is considered the origin point. That is the reason the Space-Time font is the origin point for the x-, y-, and z-axes. The structure of the cosmology is best visualized as an upside down pyramid. The x- and y-axes serve as spatial coordinates denoting the deviation from the z-axis, which represents the baseline. The z-axis represents the number of years separating a cosmology from the Space-Time font. This separation between the font and your campaign is likely millions of years. Thus, it is advisable not to use the Space-Time font as the origin for your coordinate system. Time is always moving, making a mapping system relative to your cosmology much easier.

The pyramid shape with the Space-Time font located at the nexus represents how Space-Time flows. Cosmologies split as they develop time and again into different versions of the same cosmology with the splitting increasing at an exponential rate as time moves forward. This culminates in the belief that for every choice, a new cosmology is born. So Space-Time creates Probability. Why is it seen as a pyramid? The assumption is that there is no negative z-axis from the Space-Time font. After all, the font is the beginning of time. However, in truth there might be something beyond the font.

With so many possibilities to consider, how does Space-Time function without overcrowding? Space-Time is not confined

to the restraints other planes must abide by. For instance, dimensional matrices may be finite or they may only contain certain elements based on metaphysical concepts. Space-Time, in contrast, allows a cosmology to exist by reshaping and expanding itself. Space-Time can be imagined as an elastic realm, expanding and contracting as needed. This gives you enough room to maneuver when building a cosmology.

Space-Time is not widely used for adventuring. This is not to say it doesn't have potential as a backdrop for this purpose. With the strange structure of the continuum and countless realities that can be explored, Space-Time serves as an excellent medium for the unexpected. If you allow for its use to explore the future or past of the campaign's cosmology or alternate cosmologies, be aware that its scope can be overwhelming. However, the continuum has qualities that allow you to develop theories about its purpose in a gaming contest. Thus, you, as the game master, are always in control.

One of the ways that you can establish this control is through how you want to handle the character's ability to access alternate realities. The book assumes that the visits to a cosmos where subtle differences exist due to the choices made that created the alternate reality are relatively easy to get to. These are the cosmological bubbles that a character sees in the immediate area when first entering Space-Time. If your campaign features a great number of oddities that can only be explained by the widespread intermingling of creatures from alternate realities, then it is most likely that your game will feature the characters traveling from one reality to the next with little hindrance or additional magical aid.

On the opposite side of this view is a game where travel to radically different alternate realities requires a great deal of know-how. This allows for the greatest amount of game master control over which areas of the multiverse are accessible. For the characters, the cosmological bubbles they see will essentially be minor variations of their home cosmos. In these campaigns, Probability plays an important role in determining just how easy it is for the characters to reach any specific reality that is noticeably different from the one your game uses as the standard model. Characters are thus forced to rely on a technique referred to as "sideways" motion when skirting from the Space-Time they are familiar with to the Space-Time stream of the alternate reality. How you define the maneuver is up to you (along with the difficulty of its use to reach a specific alternate cosmos), but it is essentially a way to pass through the quantum barrier as if it were being side-stepped.

Space-Time is the only plane that serves as a metaphysical axis. As time flows through a cosmology, the past is attuned to Temporal and the future to Probability. You can let characters travel as far back into the past of your cosmology as you wish and let them return to the present. The same cannot be said for traveling into the future, though. If a character travels too far into the future, he could become stranded and unable to return to his home cosmology. There are quirks that allow for time loops, cessations of a cosmology, and the like that can hinder a traveler from peering too far into the future.

Many people would like to control time. Without time, there is no aging. One could rewrite history by manipulating time. You may decide that Space-Time is inaccessible because of this. This can benefit a campaign where finding a path to Space-Time is the ultimate prize. Such a plot line allows you to create a

multitude of storylines and that shows there is no limit to Space-Time.

When you look at the overall structure of the multiverse, it is strange to conceive of one dimension that flows through all cosmologies and is also outside of the multiverse. This makes placing Space-Time in the multiverse a bit of a stretch since it is also part of all cosmologies. Given this duality, consider that whatever lies beyond the cosmology is within Space-Time and nothing is known to be beyond Space-Time. This means the multiverse is a rough estimate of an infinite number of infinite-sized cosmos' in the ever expanding realm of the equally infinite-sized continuum. That means there is always more space for you to fill in as needed to prevent any plot holes that could arise.

Another difference between the dimensional matrix and Space-Time is shown when a coordinate system is used to determine the location of a plane within either medium. The cosmological dimensional matrix is measured along beliefs important to the Prime Material Plane, whereas Space-Time is measured by time and the deviation of one cosmology from a designated baseline cosmology. Both of these systems are relative, though the values used for the dimensional matrix are based on how closely aligned a plane is to a metaphysical concept while the origin cosmology is used to measure the Space-Time font.

Additionally, both dimensional matrices and Space-Time provide a structure to prevent energies from bleeding into other planes or from crashing through another's barriers and annihilating them. It is possible that a portion of existence could be destroyed by a rupture. Both systems act as nettings and give elasticity to allow infinitely large spaces to be confined, expanded or contracted as needed. If one could view the structures, it would be possible to watch them twist and flatten with the greatest amount of elasticity being the province of Space-Time.

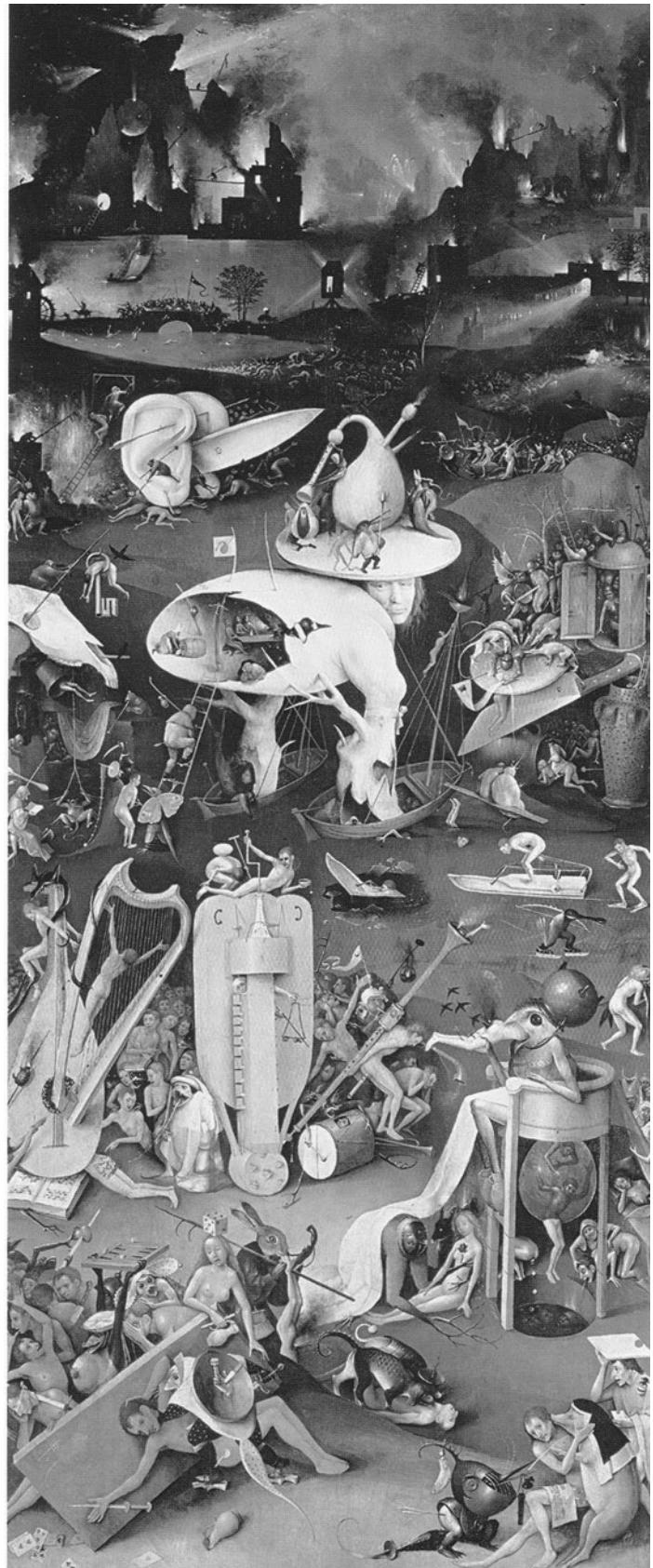
When you get past the similarities, the two constructs could not be further apart. While a dimensional matrix can be nested in another dimensional matrix, Space-Time cannot nest within itself without some paradoxical effect. Dimensional matrices are not bound by the same rules because they are nettings within nettings in such a way that embroidery or lace can be described as a series of meetings within weavings, except with an infinite number of points between two digits.

Space-Time is limited to only three axes. A cosmological dimensional matrix is not. It can have an infinite number of axes for all possible pairings of metaphysical concepts. Dimensional matrices that are part of a plane cannot have more than three. These dimensions represent length, width and height. The reason for this is the fact that these embedded dimensional matrices are spheres or pocket universes within another plane. By definition, a cosmology is considered to be the parent realm of every plane, sphere and pocket realm contained within it.

No one in a fantasy cosmology understands why these realms have a discrepancy between dimensions, or how living creatures' physical sizes can be so varied in a cosmology while everything appears the same size in Space-Time. In Space-Time, dragons would view humans to be as large as them while humans would see dragons likewise. This distortion of physical size does not affect a creature's abilities. The alteration to size shows that these two dimensions are dissimilar.

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Despite the differences between these planes, they cannot be truly separated. A cosmology can alter but cannot generate time on its own. Space-Time, in the same manner, cannot create physical sizes that a character can view that are not sized



to his proportions (excluding cosmological bubbles). These characteristics make the two dimensions codependent.

A cosmology can exist without time, so long as it is infinite and has infinite resources to house its habitants who would be immortal. Similarly, Space-Time does not require any cosmological dimensional matrix to exist. The effect establishes a strange codependent/independent relationship between a cosmology and Space-Time. The standard relationship between the two is considered "synchronous." Any disturbance in the Space-Time stream surrounding the cosmology or in the weaving of a cosmology's dimensional matrix disjoins the two. The result will be either time looping or time flowing erratically through the cosmology, making travel into or out of the cosmology difficult. At its most severe, the result can be that the cosmology is spun out of Space-Time altogether.

### DIMENSIONAL MATRIX

The preceding text for dimensional matrices is limited to mapping and layout. What follows is a description of how a dimensional matrix can appear. Note that the information presented is a series of examples. Unlike any other aspect of cosmology design, the dimensional matrix is open to interpretation because it has no defining features or themes. What it is constructed of, how it appears and its size are subjective. Even subsequent visits can find a dimensional matrix to be radically different than previous visits. The Prime Material Plane is actually a dimensional matrix; a plane made up of many dimensions.

### SIZE AND LAYOUT

One of most difficult characteristics to comprehend is that no dimensional matrix is finite in size. A dimensional matrix has no theoretical end. This is based on the view that there are an infinite number of points between zero and one. While you may not use every point between these two numbers, it does not mean that the potential is removed.

For this reason, dimensional matrixes are considered to be infinite in size, or potential scope, regardless of the planes they contain. Travelers to the underside of a dimensional matrix would be unable to determine how large the matrix is. One explanation for this is that no matter how large or small a character is, the matrix appears the same. Macroscopic and microscopic views of a dimensional matrix for one plane will look exactly alike despite the scale. This applies to pocket realms that may be as small as one foot across.

The purpose of describing the scope and scale of a dimensional matrix is to show the lack of limitations placed on dimensional matrices. Regardless of the number of dimensions possessed by a dimensional matrix, you should avoid numbers larger than six along an axis. In addition to establishing uniformity for your own cosmological map, it allows you to keep the numbers small enough to manage. Consider an example in which a character visits a plane that has six degrees of separation for each of its four polar affiliations. Any action or spell that goes against any of the inherent qualities of the plane will suffer a penalty of  $6 \times 4$ , or 24 (translating to -24 in game terms).

Does this mean you should not have dimensional matrices with a finite size? Of course not. There is nothing that says you must follow the guidelines previously listed. In fact, a dimensional

## SOLIDS

**Metal:** Regardless of the type of metal you choose, the entirety of one or more axes of the matrix are comprised of that material. All weaves of the matrix for that axis are subject to this choice. The metal cannot be mined, nor can it be manipulated. Examples include iron, gold, silver, bronze, lead and copper.

**Wood:** The weaves made of this material may appear to be naturally grown into their shape, or joined as if by a master carpenter. If the weaves appear to be grown, they could be covered with bark. The wood cannot be burned or otherwise affected. Sample woods include oak, pine, mahogany, spruce and birch.

**Stone:** Weaves made of this material can appear brittle or hard. Stone weaves look as if they have been laid by a mason, a cobbler or as a natural outgrowth. The stone cannot be mined nor can it be subjected to methods to change it. Example materials include granite, marble, quartz, sandstone and pumice.

**Ice:** Weaves made of this material appear extremely fragile. The ice is hard as steel and – despite its appearance – cannot be manipulated. The ice may possess any number of qualities or colors. Common features include a cracked appearance, translucence, blue colorations, large bubbles and dirt.

**Gemstone:** Weaves made from gemstone have a dazzling effect on the eye. There are many who would love to be able to extract even the tiniest amounts of gems from such dimensional matrices. The materials, however, cannot be removed. Example gemstones include diamond, ruby, emerald, sapphire and topaz.

## ENERGY

**Light:** Despite the appearance of weavings made of light, they will support the weight of anything that travels across them. If desired, it is possible to pass through weavings made of light. Characters may dip their hands or feet into the weaving without suffering any damage. The light cannot be redirected, nor can it be manipulated. The light may be any color desired.

**Fire:** Similar to weavings made of light, you may also have weavings made of fire. So long as characters do not attempt to pass through the weavings, they are free from danger. Anything that is passed through the weaving, however, is subject to fire damage. The flames support any amount of weight placed upon them, but no means may be used to manipulate or extinguish them. The flames are made of energy and may appear in any color.

**Electricity:** One of the few places in creation where you can walk across electricity, the weavings of a dimensional matrix made of electricity are such a place. As with other forms of energy, objects may be passed through it. These items are subject to electrical damage in the weaving. Electrical weavings cannot be manipulated. Electricity may appear in any color.

## LIQUID

**Water:** Whether salt water or fresh, the dimensional matrix can have weavings made of water. Similar to energy weavings, those made of water will support any weight despite their appearance. Also, a character may pass through the weaving. Objects will become wet. Despite the removal of water, a weaving

matrix with a finite size can create an interesting scenario in which the players must find a way to escape. In such a locale, who is to say they cannot be cornered by an opponent? Just as you are free to lay out a cosmology, you are free to lay out a dimensional matrix.

How does a singular dimensional matrix appear? It depends on the number of dimensional axes a cosmology possesses. A three-dimensional matrix would have threads that run up and down, left to right, and front to back. In other words, it would be a three-dimensional grid. Dimensional matrices with more than three dimensions will have lines running in all sorts of directions. You determine what directions these are. Some of them may be angular in respect to the first three. Others may be circular, filling the spaces between the three-dimensional grids. If you do not mind trying to graph the outcome, you could try to apply “M theory” to your dimensional matrices. M theory is based on the string theory, which states that a physical reality has eleven dimensions. M theory also says that each plane of existence, as we apply it to this work, possesses a membranous skin that keeps planes separated from each other.

The tables below are designed to serve as examples for describing the physical look of a dimensional matrix. Descriptions follow afterwards.

## MATERIAL TYPE

01-34	Solid
35-67	Energy
68-00	Liquid

## Solid

01-20	Metal
21-40	Wood
41-60	Stone
61-80	Ice
81-00	Gemstone

## Energy

01-33	Light
34-66	Fire
67-00	Electricity

## Liquid

01-33	Water
34-66	Magma
67-00	Mud

## Thickness

01-20	Thread/Wire
21-40	Rail
41-60	Plank
61-80	Path
81-00	Road

will never be diminished. The water may contain anything you wish.

**Magma:** Magma also serves as a liquid for weavings. No harm will come from travel across its surface. If an object is passed through the weaving, it is subject to damage. Magma may be discolored or partially solidified.

**Mud:** Although sticky in appearance, a weaving of mud feels as solid as stone. Objects may be passed through the mud only to emerge coated in it. The mud may be as thick as desired and have any color. Unlike normal mud, a weaving made of it does not hinder movement.

### THICKNESS

**Thread/Wire:** Weavings of this thickness appear as thin strands. Despite this, there is no difference in weight-bearing between thin or thick weavings. This particular thickness ranges from the size of a hair up to the thickness of yarn.

**Rail:** Weavings with this thickness range from being as thin as a rope up to the thickness of banister railing. Neither the appearance nor the material hinders a character from being able to walk. As such, issues of weight do not apply.

**Plank:** As is shown above, a character will be able to walk on any type of weaving. However, weavings of this thickness and above proved the added benefit of appearing comfortably traversable to a character. The thicker a weaving appears, the more likely a character will not walk the weaving in a spiral. With thin weavings, the character will have a tendency to place his feet on the weaving in a way that causes the character to move in a spiral around the weaving. The effect makes the dimensional matrix appear to spin. Weavings this thick are eight inches to two feet across.

**Path:** Weavings of this thickness allow a great amount of latitude for a character to walk along. Being anywhere from 2-4 feet across, these weavings allow a character to walk the weaving with greater confidence. This level of thickness makes a weaving feel large. It is possible for a group of adventurers to cross a weaving while maintaining relatively the same position along the thread by using all of its sides. All of the character's feet would be planted on the outside of the weaving, with their bodies pointing out like rays from the sun, due to the fact that the weaving has its own gravity affecting all sides.

**Road:** Quite possibly, the most unlikely thickness imaginable for a singular dimensional matrix weaving would be four feet or more. Threads these sizes in a weaving are large enough to act like highways. If such a weaving could be used by a military

group, it would serve as an excellent roadway to march invisibly across a plane. A weaving of this size allows an army to keep its forces together in a compact series of columns, allowing a greater portion of it to pour out of a portal when the destination is reached.

The above descriptions apply to a physical dimensional matrix when viewed from its underside. In all other respects, a dimensional matrix has no given layout. When a character views dimensional matrices as physical constructs, objects such as planar seeds are undetectable and cannot be affected. By designing a cosmology this way, you can create regions filled with planar seeds to prevent teleportation into or out of an area and restrict planar travel. Planar seeds prevent the spells from finding the correct plane. With the right tools, a powerful character can cause a planar seed to grow into a pocket realm. A pocket realm is undetectable unless a character knows where to look.

### DIMENSIONAL BISECTION

When dealing with the dimensions, we should note that some planes, especially those of a non-dimensional sort, have dimensions that can bisect other planes in a dimensional matrix. Thus, any plane that can be used to reach another plane and also permeates the entire plane should also be considered a dimension—also some dimensions are not infinite in scope across a cosmos and may not have a clear polarity.

We give one example of this. The Aethereal Plane (as the Ethereal) permeates the Prime Material Plane—this means that the Aethereal Plane is also a dimension—the Aethereal dimension. The Aethereal truly bisects the Prime Material by being everywhere—there are a few barriers to prevent people from going everywhere or to keep places protected, but the plane permeates the prime dimensional matrix by being an alternate dimension. This is not true of Shadow, which does not permeate everywhere but only where shadows exist—thus the shadow plane is not a dimension, but rather an alternate plane which can only be entered via spontaneous gates or magic cast where shadows exist.

Bisecting dimensions lead to interesting effects. With the Aethereal Plane, beings within that dimension where it bisects the Prime Material Plane see it through a veil or sorts, a view that combines the native plane with the bisecting plane. Similarly, some creatures or entities can sense others on the bisecting dimensions—via some sort of sixth sense, via concentration (which provides a veil or overlaid view similar to those looking at the Prime on the Aethereal). Depending on how you view magic, some spells can be multidimensional and affect these individuals, or visitors from these dimensions might be able to take a partial corporeal form or even a full physical manifestation.

### MAJOR PHYSICAL FEATURES

If it were possible strip away the planar energies from a cosmology, you would be left with a series of dimensional matrices, some nested within another. What is described above would be the entirety of a cosmology with the weavings running in directions necessary for each matrix to possess the dimensions required to hold a plane. In other words, a character would see the superstructure that holds the awesome forces of a cosmology in their places. The gaps in between the matrices form the province of the Aethereal Plane.

Characters possessing a normal understanding of their cosmos would not know how the cosmology functions, although there can be speculation. The purpose stems from the fact that for an individual to step outside of a dimensional matrix and still be in the cosmology and view the dimensional matrices is the feat of impressive and godlike magnitude of being in two places at once. When a character steps onto the underside of a plane, the only thing he should see is its dimensional matrix. Any dimensional matrix contained within that matrix would be invisible, because a location within a dimensional matrix will not reveal the existence of another matrix. As an example, think of our universe. We can observe the special

dimensions, the elements that form solid matter, see the light energy, but no view of time or probability is possible, let alone other dimensions that are extant within the universe.

### HAZARDS

Fortunately, for adventurers, singular dimensional matrices that surround neutral planes (like the Prime Material Plane)

are inert. However, other planes contained by a matrix may be hazardous and the hazards of those planes are energies infused inside that matrix. For example, if a plane is made of fire, the dimensional matrix surrounding it will also burn a character without protection from fire.

Natural hazards are physical hazards that come from the landscape as opposed to hazards born of energy, whether it is metaphysical (linked to properties of Celestial, Nether, Order, Chaos, etc.) or not. From the previous example, a hazard of fire is considered to be an energy-based hazard. Natural hazards in a dimensional matrix also stem from the energies of the plane it contains. Travelers on a dimensional matrix's weaving may find objects located at particular points create natural hazards. These hazards include physical objects, twists in the matrix weaving and frayed threads.

In the case of a frayed thread, volatile levels of energy can erupt in elemental blasts. Frayed lines frequently see this energy bleed out as an Enchantment of Extreme Power. The explosive power of energy that pours out of a frayed thread is an awesome sight for a character to behold. The energies are blinding and may be damaging, even if the effects manifesting are of healing spells.

In areas where a weave is snared, the tangles can tear the weave releasing the energy that is twisting the dimensional matrix and consequently, the fabric of reality. Such events are rare and emit massive amounts of energy before they heal and smooth over. Ruptures can be powerful enough to destroy a god (if not permanently maim one). No mortal has been in two places at once to be able to see what causes a tear and its effects on the planes, so no mortal knows what effects a tear will have on planar reality or what might rupture a matrix.

### PHYSICAL TRAITS

Technically, there are no physical features of a singular dimensional matrix because it is a theoretical construct. However, if you allow characters to visit one in your game, you need to treat the matrix as you would any physical plane and give it some physical characteristics. The majority of the matrix is constructed of weaves that make up its coordinate system. While gravity is still a factor in a singular dimensional matrix, it is weak and centered in the weavings. The spaces between the weavings have no gravity. The nodes where the weaves cross possess the strongest gravity of a matrix, equivalent to the plane it contains. The threads have half the strength of the node's gravity. Some dimensional matrices contain nodes at which gravity is double or greater than gravity of their planes. However, if these super-gravitized nodes exist, they are usually distant from one another.

When traveling between two planes nested in the same dimensional matrix, magic is usually the preferred method to use. Physical travel is possible, but wormholes are unstable and uncommon. Without magic, and without the use of a wormhole, a traveler must slowly go from node to node along the weaving of the matrix. The only means of reaching a node is through flight or physically moving along the matrix's weaving. Traveling this way allows a character to walk right side up, upside down, or at any other angle provided that the character's feet remain on the thread, in accordance with the pull of gravity. When the traveler reaches a plane, the character

appears with his feet on the ground regardless of his orientation while out walking on the matrix. However, the underside of a dimensional matrix can cause the rematerialization to go awry and return the character in a not-so-upright posture.

Wormholes curve certain threads of a one dimensional matrix around them and cause these threads to touch threads belonging to another dimensional matrix. If a character travels between two dimensional matrices via a wormhole and tries to rematerialize before reaching his destination, he will randomly end up on either plane. On rare instances, such risky action can fling a traveler to a distant corner of the cosmos. In other words, the normally straight lines of the matrices will curve and flow into each other at that location, indicating that the threads bridge two planes. Regardless of which dimensional matrix the character views the threads from, they will appear cut off shortly after their curvature away from the matrix. Unlike when weavings are warped due to a snarl or tear, those in a wormhole universally curve towards the same point. Additionally, concentric rings mark the throat of the wormhole and bridge the weavings feeding into it. Travelers along a wormhole can view only the threads surrounding the wormhole and no others.

Time can be affected by a dimensional matrix. However, for this to happen a matrix must suffer great stress or a plane's energy must infuse the matrix with some quality that allows it to upset the flow of time. A dimensional matrix with stressed weavings will evoke strange effects on the way time works. Areas with twisting of two dimensional axes slow time down, while the twisting of one axis speeds up the flow of time. In the event that three or more axes are twisted, time will cease to flow through the plane.

A cosmos' dimensional matrix also follows the conventions above; however, it is also tied to Space-Time. Though time flows through a cosmology, it is more accurate to say that nodes on the edge of the cosmos serve as dimensional anchors to buoy the cosmos in Space-Time. The result is a cosmos carried along in the stream of Space-Time, as Space-Time runs over and through it.

A dimensional matrix is considered to possess no polarity of its own unless the plane or planes inside of it dictates otherwise. Travel through a dimensional matrix can be inconvenienced as any methods of detecting a polarity can fail to yield conclusive results. *[For the d20 game system, the cosmological dimensional matrix is True Neutral. Other matrices at the origin point would also be True Neutral.]*

Dimensional matrices are often magical by nature; however, magic permeates a matrix from the plane within it. These alterations can modify the effects of spells and the physics of the matrix. A basic cosmological dimensional matrix is one of the few places that are considered neutral, although it has magical traits common to every plane within it. However, this is not necessarily the standard from one cosmos to the next.

As each plane dictates how magic may be augmented, so too can a cosmos. In the case of cosmological augmentation, all planes possess the same traits as the cosmos. For example, magical changes can affect the behavior of a cosmos so that one axis is favored more than another. This creates an axis system that is "off center;" the origin point shifts towards the disfavored pole compared to a standard set of metaphysical axes.

## GARY GYGAX'S — COSMOS BUILDER

Just as a dimensional matrix can enhance magical qualities, it can also suppress them. Suppressed magic refers to magic that cannot easily be cast within the confines of a plane and its dimensional matrix. The majority of such effects are suppressed by an energy quality of the plane or its physical laws based on the metaphysical axes it is aligned to. As the dimensional matrix is only partially infused with energy from the plane, magic cast on the matrix would be affected only about half of the time.

### INHABITANTS

Few things can truly be native to the underside of dimensional matrices. Speculation that someone created them will probably abound among the inhabitants of a cosmos, but it will be a mystery as to how such beliefs came about. A skeptical character would point out that no evidence supports any intelligence ever rising out of the featureless and empty expanses between the weavings. Furthermore, the only intelligent life encountered on the underside of a dimensional matrix comes from somewhere else and were either lost or exploring the matrices.

This does not mean there is no life on a singular dimensional matrix. In fact, two species are known to call the matrices home. Travelers who reach the undersides of planes have reported seeing these creatures: the dimensional mite and the weave spider.

The dimensional mite is believed to be the guardian of dimensional matrices. Although blind, the creatures are attracted to magic that is not a part of a matrix.

Weave spiders resemble translucent spiders. Unlike their mundane cousins, they are affixed at two ends to a matrix's weavings. The legs of weave spiders float uselessly to their sides. They move along a matrix by consuming the weave strand before them and passing it out the other end. Weave spiders are drawn towards frayed and broken weavings. Once a weave spider has passed through, the weaving is repaired.

### INCORPORATING INTO AN EXISTING CAMPAIGN

Dimensional matrices can be inserted into a cosmos without changing it. Using such a system merely allows a theoretical view of how the cosmos is arranged so, adding it to a pre-existing campaign will not alter a campaign. This construct will not add or remove planes. Rather, dimensional matrices are a tool that allows you to explain how and why a plane exists or becomes or ceases to be accessible. Another effect a dimensional matrix can have on your campaign is that it can become distorted and entangled. Distortions can increase the difficulty for accessing a plane with entanglements acting as a region thick with planar seeds, blocking travel to and from the area of the plane.

*[The d20 system offers mildly and strongly aligned planes. Using these mechanics, the following planar traits are added to the cosmology statistics.*

Slight:	+1
Moderate:	+3
Greatly:	+5
Extreme:	+6

*The d20 system uses a neutral alignment component. According to the planar construction rules, here present this trait coincides with metaphysical axes. Planes located on these lines are the equivalent*

*of d20's Neutral alignment, and have no other alignment trait. If you chose to use this system in place of d20's, measuring the strength of Neutral alignments replaces existing mildly aligned traits with no alignment as the value that has no game effect. Planes of True Neutral reside at the cosmology's origin point, but are separated from the physical planes by the Aetherial and Ethereal planes.]*

### SPACE-TIME

Space-Time is unlike other dimensions. Although it serves a purpose similar to that of a singular dimensional matrix by comparing one cosmology's location to another, it is the master structure of the multiverse. There is only one Space-Time continuum. You should avoid adding another to your game since two or more would lead to the destruction of cosmos' if they crossed paths. It is possible to reach Space-Time by traveling to it as a character would to reach another plane in a cosmos. How easily it is to reach the continuum is dependent upon the cosmos.

### SIZE AND LAYOUT

Imagine an infinitely sized cosmos filled with the promise of adventures lasting beyond one's lifetime. This is what you have in any cosmos. So long as you have a handful of infinitely sized planes within the cosmos, no end exists for the amount of detail you can create. There is no limit to the number of times you could constantly push past the frontiers of what has already been discovered. Now imagine an infinite realm larger than this. This is Space-Time.

It is difficult to describe the size and scope of Space-Time. Quite literally, it is the outside edge of the multiverse. Every possible realm contained by every possible cosmos can be accessed through it. Because of this, the act of describing the size and layout of Space-Time is an impossible task. To flesh out all of Space-Time's qualities would require more pages than this book, or any book, can hold. This section, therefore, is focused on giving you the basic elements and components that are common throughout.

When determining distances in Space-Time, use a coordinate system relative to the character's cosmology. A consequence of its size, there is no way to map out Space-Time on an economic scale. Another way to look at it is to imagine yourself living in your home cosmos and seeing other cosmos' which look identical to yours. They are at fixed locations and no matter which direction you look, you see an infinite number of them. The logical thing to do is choose your cosmos as the origin of any landmark system you would use while traveling through Space-Time. This is the idea behind the use of a relative coordinate system.

Now imagine again that the Space-Time stream resembles water and that other cosmos' appear to be "bubbles" making the plane look carbonated. If a character drew imaginary lines through his home cosmology's bubble to the closest cosmologies, he would see that the lines are ninety degrees apart. Each cosmos is also the same distance from one another. The overall effect makes mapping a path through Space-Time difficult. The benefit, however, is that those who get lost do not need to worry about eating, drinking or the effects of aging.

The layout of Space-Time allows travelers to drift along with their cosmos without experiencing any changes in the passage

of time. Using the example of a three-dimensional graph, a character can travel anywhere along the x- and y-axes, which represents space, without feeling the effects of time. Chronological changes only take place when travel is done along the z-axis, which represents time.

Swimming into the past, a traveler would see bubbles merging together; swimming into the future, he would see bubbles being thrown out from a central bubble not far before him. These represent the effects of tangential realities as each decision alters the course of a cosmos, creating a reality where an event's outcome is different from the baselines. Travel into the past allows the character to view the tangents being pulled into the baseline cosmos. Moving into the future, the character sees the emergence of new tangents as the flinging off of new cosmos'.

A traveler may pursue any tangent while moving through Space-Time, but doing so can cause him to quickly become lost. Although the idea of the Space-Time font has strong evidence to prove its existence based off the way the cosmology bubbles come together or fly outward, it is not understood how one can so easily become lost. It is best understood that the future is mutable but the past is not. Regardless of the direction of Space-Time traveled, a character is still anchored to his baseline cosmos by a "quantum signature." However, the actions of the traveler may result in him being thrown out of his baseline cosmos by passing a point in the future of an event that he was "predestined" to attend.

The cosmos bubbles floating in the infinite river of Space-Time are its only physical features. Thus, a coordinate system will aid travelers in assigning point and time values to cosmos' in order to tell them apart. However, it does not lend itself to marking the physical features of the plane. Space-Time appears to be uniform throughout, although it looks that way does not mean it flows smoothly.

The strange thing about Space-Time's appearance is that it is unique to each cosmos. To give it a scientific explanation, this would be due to differences caused by the cosmos' quantum signatures – the links to their cosmos of origin. The common features of Space-Time resembling a vast ocean of water and the spacing of cosmos bubbles do not change from one view to another. What does change is that creatures from different cosmos' of origin have their own unique interpretation of what the bubbles look like. Creatures from the same cosmos of origin will see other cosmos' the same way. The tables below are samples of alterations that can be used to vary the appearance of Space-Time for travelers from different cosmoses. Note that the results are applied to all cosmos bubbles.

01-25	Size	51-75	Design
26-50	Shape	76-00	Color

#### SIZE

01-17	Small	51-66	Continent
18-34	Medium	67-83	Planetoid
35-50	Large	84-00	World

#### SHAPE

01-20	Amorphous	61-80	Geometric
21-40	Spheroid	81-00	Flat (choose a category from above or roll 1d4)
41-60	Irregular		

#### SPHEROID

01-34	Spherical
35-67	Ovid
68-00	Capsule

#### GEOMETRIC

01-17	Pyramid	51-66	Decahedron
18-34	Cube	67-82	Dodecahedron
35-50	Octahedron	83-00	Icosahedron

#### DESIGNS

01-20	Runes/Glyphs	61-80	Roll twice, ignore results above 60
21-40	Polished	81-00	No distinctive designs
41-60	Pictorial		

#### COLOR

01-17	Chromatic	51-66	Mixed
18-34	Metallic	67-82	Shifting
35-50	Gemstone	83-00	Mixed & Shifting

#### CHROMATIC

01-14	Yellow	58-71	Orange
15-28	Blue	72-85	Violet
29-42	Red	86-00	Brown
43-57	Green		

#### METALLIC

01-20	Gold	61-80	Iron
21-40	Silver	81-00	Copper
41-60	Bronze		

#### GEMSTONE

01-10	Diamond	51-60	Jade
11-20	Ruby	61-70	Quartz
21-30	Emerald	71-80	Topaz
31-40	Sapphire	81-90	Pearl
41-50	Opal	91-00	Amethyst

#### MIXED/SHIFTING

1-14	2 colors	58-71	6 colors
15-28	3 colors	72-85	7 colors
29-42	4 colors	86-00	All colors
43-57	5 colors		

You may make as many rolls on the tables as you desire. There is no limit to the number of items you can use to describe the look of cosmos bubbles in Space-Time. The only thing to keep in mind is the level of detail you want.

#### SIZE

The perceived size of a bubble does not change its function. Size is a relative quality that can make the appearance of the bubbles unique to a cosmology's inhabitants. The result has no effect on a traveler's ability to access cosmological bubbles. This does not exclude them from being difficult to find.

## GARY GYGAX'S — COSMOS BUILDER

**Small:** This category covers bubbles seen as the size of a grain of sand up to the size of a whole wide enough for a person to squeeze very tightly through. A small bubble viewpoint would also make it appear that travelers entering cosmological bubbles of this size are being sucked into holes smaller than them.

**Medium:** Cosmological bubbles appearing to a viewer to be of medium size seem to be equal in size to that particular viewer. That means that because size is relative in Space-Time, both a giant and a dwarf from the same home cosmos would see medium cosmological bubbles to be “the perfect fit” for them. Some of these bubbles are small enough for a traveler to just crawl comfortably through. At their largest size, these bubbles appear to be the size of an entryway fit for the traveler. An outside observer with a “medium bubble” perspective would view travelers entering the bubbles to be swimming into a hole.

**Large:** Cosmos’ whose quantum signature allows for cosmological bubbles to appear of this size range from 1-½ times the size of the viewer to the size of an island (see Appendix C). These bubbles seem to dwarf the travelers who pass through them.

**Continent:** Some cosmological bubbles appear to be on the scale of large asteroids. These bubbles may confound first-time travelers, who will likely be intimidated by the size of the objects surrounding them.

**Planetoid:** Some quantum signatures show cosmos’ as truly massive bubbles. These objects appear to be so large that they could be considered moons or small planets on the Prime Material Plane.

**World:** For many travelers, nothing would be scarier than knowing that cosmological bubbles are the size of planets. It is not until one sees a traveler sink into the surface of a bubble of this size that he realizes what he sees is a portal and not a planet.

### SHAPE

**Amorphous:** When the term “bubble” is used, it is not meant to necessarily be taken as a spherical shape. Rather, it is merely a convenience to describe the object that represents a cosmos in Space-Time. Some quantum signatures even cause the bubbles to appear as ever-changing blobs. For these, you may use any shape you come up with to randomly select the new shape.

**Spheroid:** This classification of shapes includes spheres, mostly spherical objects (such as eggs) and capsules. Spherical objects may be round or they may be squashed at their poles (rhomboids). Mostly spherical objects (commonly referred to as ovoids) include egg-shaped, malformed spheres and other similarly shaped items. Capsule-shaped bubbles look like elongated medical tablets. In addition, any other object that is generally spherical or close to that shape falls under this category.

**Irregular:** Unlike the spheroid or amorphous bubble, an irregular-shaped bubble has a constant, yet erratic form. An example of irregular shape from nature would be a craggy rock. Irregularly-shaped bubbles might all be randomly different, or they may share a pattern.

**Geometric:** There are six common geometric shapes normally found as bubbles. There is the four-sided pyramid,

the six-sided cube, the eight-sided octahedron, the ten-sided decahedron, the twelve-sided dodecahedron and the twenty-sided icosahedron. Other geometric shapes are possible but are not as common as these six. The main reason for this is that there are few spheres with more faces than the icosahedrons that form perfect geometric spheroids.

**Flat:** Cosmological bubbles that appear as flat objects may look like any of the above four categories. The most important feature is that the object so selected will appear flat, and its thickness may vary from paper thin to as thick as you desire.

### DESIGNS

One way in which you can characterize bubbles that do not share the same features is with designs. For game masters who like to allow characters some leeway in figuring things out, such designs may be unique to each bubble, allowing characters a greater chance that they will return to their home cosmology. The descriptions below will assist you in coming up with unique group-themed or individual designs for all cosmological bubbles.

**Runes/Glyphs:** Depending how you want to use this facet of design, each bubble can have the same rune or glyph inscribed upon it, or a unique glyph or rune may be assigned to each. It is possible for a series of runes to be inscribed on a bubble. Whether these runes have a purpose or describe the contents of the cosmology is left to you.

**Polished:** Regardless of a bubble’s designs or other features, its surface may have a polished or mirrored appearance. For a true mirror effect, this design works best with opaque bubbles.

**Pictorial:** Bubbles can also feature pictures on their outside surface(s). It is left up to the game master as to whether these pictures are the same throughout the group or are unique to individual cosmos’. Some quantum signatures may have pictorials that identify some trait possessed by the cosmology.

### COLOR

Four sub-tables will help you choose the colors in which you want your cosmological bubbles to appear—you may, of course determine color as you wish ignoring the tables. Three of the tables give color names as well as designations for the opacity of a bubble. Chromatic and metallic colors are forms of opaque bubbles. Gemstone colors describe crystalline and translucent bubbles. The fourth category incorporates different tables and is entitled “mixed and shifting” to reflect multiple colorations—such as iridescent, opalescent and pearlescent. Mixed coloration refers to two or more colors that comprise a bubble’s color. Shifting, however, refers to bubbles that have two or more alternating colors. These two categories of colors share one table as they may also be combined to represent bubbles that have mixed and shifting coloration. If you want to get really creative, it is also possible to shift between all categories, (e.g. have some bubbles that shift between translucence and opacity, possibly shifting colors).

### MAJOR PHYSICAL FEATURES

The bubbles and the water-like fluid are the main physical features of Space-Time. Use the descriptions provided above to help create the bubbles as they appear for the characters in your campaign, based on their cosmology of origin.

## HAZARDS

What makes Space-Time so potentially dangerous is the mercurial nature of time. The act of lingering in Space-Time can cause a traveler to become lost forever to his home cosmos. Drifting next to a bubble is not enough to ensure that a traveler will be protected from the ebbs and flows of currents within Space-Time. In many ways, this resembles the undercurrents and eddies in a raging river.

While these flows are unpredictable, there are triggers that are connected to cosmological events. Undercurrents are caused by a cosmological split where decisions can go either way, yet have the same result. An undertow is the result of “fuzzy choices” or ambiguous results. When a tangential split is immediately followed by additional splits, eddies are created. Eddies have unpredictable results and can propel a character into the future or past or anchor the character to an alternate cosmos. Worst of all are vortices. These are considered to be a natural act of Space-Time. A vortex is what is left when a bubble implodes upon itself or Space-Time spins a dead cosmos out of existence. This can be seen as a waste disposal system, and a traveler who gets too near to a vortex may get sucked through.

When considering the direct physical consequences of navigating the Space-Time continuum can “contract,” there is little a traveler may suffer from other than possible rapid or retrograde aging. There is no method known to control how or when one of these effects may take place. Some travelers may actually enter the sea of Space-Time to gamble for what is in effect a longevity treatment without aid from a powerful wizard. However, the inherent risks of this usually greatly outweigh the potential benefits.

## PARADOX

Paradox, possibly a dimension and dimensional matrix unto itself, is a hazard that surfaces if characters intentionally or not make changes to a timeline or alter the flow of Space-Time. Paradox is a funny thing that follows its own whims to correct any problems made to time’s flow or course. To determine how much of an impact paradox has, you have to consider what the characters are doing to the timeline of a cosmos or Space-Time. Paradox rears its ugly head to defeat the characters before their changes can take place. This subsection is meant to help guide you through the problems that Space-Time may cause if characters should attempt to play with it.

The easiest paradox to deal with is the event often used in fiction of going into the past to change history. This is something that is easy to fix. You have a few options as to how to diffuse this problem. The first is to say that since the characters knew this event took place in the past, they also know its outcome and the past cannot be changed. The second option is to allow the characters to change the course of events, but they then become

stuck in the past because they have altered the timeline. Another option is to have the impact of the change create a new timeline that diverges from the original. In this way, the characters did not change the baseline cosmos’ history; instead they have managed to change their baseline and are now in a timeline that has no impact on the original. The last, and least desirable option, is to allow the characters to succeed, but because they changed the past, there is a chance that some (or all) of the characters never existed because the event was vital for their family tree.

Venturing into the future can also generate a paradox. This possibility was mentioned earlier of a character going too far into the future and passing a crucial event at which he is fated to be present. The resulting paradox may cause him to lose his way back to his home cosmology. While there is a random chance of this occurring, the character does have a way to return to his cosmos if he searches long enough. Visiting the future and trying to stay there can also create a paradox. A character is not meant to live outside of the time he is born into. You can devise a system that allows you to keep track of how much time a character can remain in the future before a paradox begins to catch up with him. At this point, the character must return to the past or face the consequences. The options you have for the repercussions are, interestingly enough, the same as if the character was trying to alter the past. If you think about it, is there really a difference between changing the past and trying to live in one’s future? That act alone alters the past of the time in which the character is living. Basically, he is an object of the past trying to change the past that the future knows as history.

Trying to alter the flow of Space-Time is a more serious offense. Paradox responds violently. How you define attempts to alter Space-Time is left to you, but the fallout for trying to do so can be used on any number of offenses in your game.

Take for instance trying to divert Space-Time to make it flow backwards against itself. This creates a time loop; a condition that will work itself out, but may cause the offending cosmos that caused it to be spun out of existence. A character who is attempting to create a time loop can expect the same thing to happen to him.

If two or more cosmos’ begin to flow towards one another, the results are a merging of the contents of each or an implosion, which results in one or both being spun out of existence. If a character is trying to cause such an event, you can guess how paradox reacts: either the merger does not happen or the character is spun out of existence.

Should a character try to create a whirlpool (something that develops when a cluster of cosmos’ have destroyed themselves), chances are likely that he will be sucked into the whirlpool and (you guessed it) spun out of existence.

## “Dimensional” Definitions

Some of the terms we use for some of the planes and their dimensional makeup needs a little bit of an explanation.

**Extra-Dimensional** space consists of a dimension outside the normal dimensions of the cosmos. Technically, a cosmos may consist of one or more extra dimensions that have no name or metaphysical polarity. The dimension(s) used is to contain all sorts of pocket universes, spheres and planes.

**Non-Dimensional** space is different because it usually lacks one or more dimensions. It appears to be normal space to creatures within it, but it is actually lacking some or all dimensions. As stated in the text, non-dimensional space usually makes up planes that can transport people to other planes, such as the Aethereal. It is also likely the types of dimensions used to conduct magic such as instant travel through a plane without the use of portals—short and long range teleportation, for instance.

**Inter-Dimensional** space is the theoretical space between dimensions. It is in this space where you can see the actual dimensional matrix itself, and this space is what enables portals to work.

## GARY GYGAX'S — COSMOS BUILDER

There is a bit of a theme here. Basically, you should let your players know that there are only so many things they can change and all of existence is not one of them. Deities may have such power, but the players do not, unless you give it to them.

### PHYSICAL TRAITS

There is no air in Space-Time. Rather, the stream acts as a breathable atmosphere in addition to a source of nourishment. The Space-Time stream is aptly described as being like water, but slightly thicker. The difference is noticeable to travelers.

It is easy to move through the gel-like liquid of Space-Time although the plane possesses no gravity. Traveling through the substance requires only the effort of thought. **Lejendary Adventure** game Avatars without the Panprobability Ability use one-quarter (25%) of their Health Rating in place of Speed to determine how fast they travel. While force of will can take some time to get used to, physically swimming will also propel a creature through Space-Time. However, this method is slower and marks a traveler as a neophyte.

When addressing the question of the passage of time in Space-Time, it is a bit more complex than what one may realize. To begin with, Space-Time **is** time. The stream flows as a character flows through Space-Time's chronological axis. For travelers, Space-Time acts as a timeless realm. Beings in the continuum do not age, although each being experiences the sensation of the passage of time in accordance to its place of origin. Then a character may return home to find that no time has passed, time has passed faster than expected, or that time has gone backwards. However, as long as a traveler remains anchored to his cosmos and its movement through the plane, time will pass equally between the two.

Without the use of a device such as a dimensional anchor or quantum compass, traveling into the future is dangerous. Only those rare cosmos' where the quantum signature allows for a glyph or other identifying feature unique to the baseline cosmology will allow a traveler to safely navigate Space-Time with the exception of events in his future he is supposed to be present for. The chance of being thrown off the track of the baseline cosmos depends upon how important the event is. Minor events should cause no more than a 20% likelihood for a traveler to become stranded. For events that are more significant to the course of the cosmos, however, the chance can be as high as 50%. In the case of extremely important events, a 90% or higher chance of being unable to return is possible.

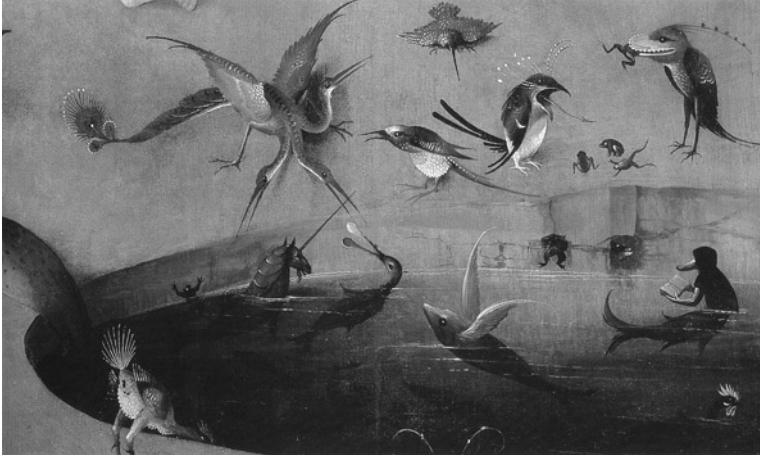
In case a traveler becomes stranded, this does not mean he is unable to return to his cosmos despite trying his best to retrace his steps. This can be used as a new adventure, where the traveler must seek out a device or the assistance of a powerful being that will help him return home. A series of random rolls or percentage chances are useful if you do not wish to turn this into an adventure.

Space-Time cannot be said to possess metaphysical polarity, because Space-Time permeates all polarities within cosmologies by encompassing them. The belief that time belongs to any polarity usually stems from a cosmos with the view that since realms clustered around metaphysical axes distort time in a similar fashion that it must be a construct of another polarity. However, this is a local effect as only certain axes exert distortions. *[In d20 terms, Space-Time is always True Neutral.]*

Technically speaking, Space-Time is a metaversal realm possessing no known traits that would cause magical augmentation. However, it is the plane of space and time and thus the secrets of those two elements are linked to it. That said, Space-Time does not like to have either of these properties altered. Effects that manipulate space or time attempt to violate the structure and as such are diminished one to three grades. Magical effects less than Extreme (the highest level possible for mortal use) casting grade are the most affected.

### INHABITANTS

Although it would appear incapable of supporting a sentient species of its own, Space-Time has several. Collectively, they are referred to as temporals (or time elementals). They not only call Space-Time home, but tend the continuum and repair breaches that occur to its fabric. The forms the temporals take should give clues to their function. The temporals act as the immune system of Space-Time. Few of the native species are friendly. If someone is attempting to tamper with the flow of Space-Time, these beings are quick to respond and become excessively hostile to anyone.



Many non-magical species exist as time elementals. Due to the nature of Space-Time, the animal populace of Space-Time does not come in shapes travelers are used to seeing.

### INCORPORATING INTO AN EXISTING CAMPAIGN

Unless your cosmos is odd, Space-Time already exists in your campaign. The accessibility of Space-Time is more important than the "incorporation" of it into an existing setting. It is not necessary to allow characters access to this plane or to be aware of its existence. Time is not something that can be replaced or used to replace an existing plane. Should the flow of time change from what is normal, it is more likely that the plane has twisted its dimensional matrix.

Augmenting Space-Time can be difficult. While local planar traits can affect time on a small scale, the flow of time appears no different when viewed from Space-Time. However, if time flows slower through a cosmos, Space-Time appears to flow faster. It is possible that the cosmos is caught in a current that causes it to drag through the stream.

## CHAPTER 2: PRIME MATERIAL PLANE

**N**OW THAT WE have gotten dimensional matrices, Space-Time and mapping the multiverse out of the way, it is time to turn our attention to the most important part of a cosmology: its heart, the Prime Material Plane. Not only does it represent the most neutral point in a cosmology, but the traits you apply to this plane affect all other planes in the cosmology.

You can have any number of planes in a cosmology. A cosmology may have an abundance of planes leaning towards one metaphysical pole over the others. This does not necessarily have an effect on your Prime Material Plane, nor does it show that the cosmology is off-balance. Only the traits that a Prime Material Plane possesses determine if a cosmology is shifted towards a metaphysical pole. This is because this one plane represents the cosmology's metaphysical center.

What if you have a cosmology where the metaphysical axes do not intersect at a point of origin? This is probably the strongest argument for using the mapping system presented in Chapter 1. Look at the way the metaphysical axes of your cosmology are arranged. When you have a cosmos with this design, the nexus with the greatest number of axes is the location of the Prime Material Plane. Wherever you have intersections of metaphysical axes, another mundane reality exists. Any metaphysical axis that runs through the cosmos' origin point determines the material plane's traits. You can show this by using the degrees of separation between the point of intersection and the origin. If you designed a cosmos where there is no predominant number of axes at a nexus, choose one that will at least be referred to as the Prime Material Plane.

It is important to note that secondary material planes should be rare as most cosmos' have a natural preference for a single origin point. This does not mean they cannot exist; however, nature prefers simplicity over complexity. You are free to construct a cosmos however you wish, but the true Prime Material Plane will be the one with the most metaphysical axes intercepting at the same point. Other material planes will be secondary, tertiary and so on in descending order based on the number of axes that cross one another. Also, you may give each material plane its own set of elemental planes (see Chapter 3).

A truly neutral Prime Material Plane is one where the traits shared by all planes of the cosmos are unadjusted. That is, the Prime Material Plane does not exert any changes to the fundamental qualities the cosmology possesses. This is the standard model of a Prime Material Plane that is the average fantasy setting and it is based on reality. As such, the majority of the plane will be a vast emptiness with planets, stars, etc. randomly distributed throughout. We use this reality as our default for the Prime Material Plane for one simple reason: it is something familiar.

Being neutral, a standard Prime Material Plane has no influence on the metaphysical forces of the cosmos. Celestial bodies orbit around a central point within a solar system in a predictable fashion, but they are not immune to random forces that can change their otherwise uninterrupted course. Events can take place for good or evil, or to even affect a permanent change on the plane or a region in it.

Based off the definitions this book uses, the objects that float through the void of space are cosmological spheres—even if they are not actually spherical. You can think of these as planets, moons, asteroids, etc. Spheres do not necessarily change the laws of physical reality for the parent plane. Celestial bodies are considered to be spheres for the reason that travel across their boundaries does not require shifting planes. The boundaries of planetary spheres allow worlds to retain an atmosphere under this explanation.

Keeping in the vein of standard fantasy elements, the default worlds will have an atmosphere that is hospitable to most of the beings in the cosmos. Their breathable medium is fresh air. The variety of landscapes (mountains, valleys, fjords, grasslands, etc.) on the average fantasy world will also possess enough niches that many of the cosmology's inhabitants will be able to find a place they could thrive in. The limited number of places that some creatures can inhabit also serves to prevent powerful extraplanar creatures from overrunning the plane. You can chalk it up to the plane's balanced use of the elements (air, earth, fire and water) and the other factors as previously mentioned.

### THE PURPOSE OF THE PRIME MATERIAL PLANE

The purpose of the Prime Material Plane is twofold. First, the plane serves as the ideal neutral meeting ground for elementals or beings from other planes. Second, the plane serves as home to the least magical (or most mundane) creatures within the cosmos. While meetings between beings from different planes are a probability, they are not a common event. The mundane existence of the creatures on the Prime Material Plane is, therefore, it is most useful purpose.

There is no concrete explanation for the existence of magic. It is possible that the beliefs of mortals create a cosmos around them. Then again, it is equally likely that the Vitality and Entropy metaphysical poles serve as an anchor to Space-Time and act like a power dynamo that feeds a cosmos with the energies that create magic. The answer is not only elusive, but it is not necessarily the same from one cosmos to the next. What matters the most is that truth about magic should involve the Prime Material Plane as the most important location in the cosmos. You could think of the plane as the source of admixture for the elemental and metaphysical energies that color magic.

If there is a war for souls taking place in the metaphysical realms of a cosmos, then it serves to reason that the inhabitants of these realms fight to the last soul against their rivals who live along other metaphysical axes. This not only seems a more plausible purpose than having the plane serve as a meeting ground for metaphysical powers; it is also more exciting. While there is little question that the deities of a cosmology do meet to plot against their rivals, the amount of intervention into mortal existence by elemental and metaphysical powers proves that the Prime Material Plane is the center of the cosmos.

## FUNCTIONS OF THE PRIME MATERIAL PLANE

While it is easy to puzzle out the purpose of the Prime Material Plane, what is not so easy to determine is its function. It is assumed that the heart of the cosmos is a neutral ground. But this does not explain what the plane does. A Prime Material Plane's function can be viewed as the neutrality of a cosmology, the nexial point of many planes' meeting, the common dimensional matrix if you will, where most of them merge. The traits that the Prime Material Plane is supposed to have are those possessed by the cosmos as a whole and are the ones that apply to every plane before any particular metaphysical or elemental traits are applied. In other words, the Prime Material Plane is the base reality that all planes possess before other traits are used to make them unique locations.

Unless your game world's sphere has qualities that deviate from the rest of the Prime Material Plane, all species within the cosmos should be able to tolerate it. This is assumed because the traits that define the Prime Material Plane infuse the entire cosmos. Exceptions can exist, though. For example, a cosmos that is inherently hostile to all life proves to keep all but the strongest and/or bravest would-be travelers from exploring the place. Another example would be the occurrence of a sphere that does not follow its plane's traits.

In a cosmos or Prime Material Plane that is hostile to life, those creatures able to survive require cunning and physical hardiness. Twisting a dimensional matrix for the Prime Material Plane or using the concept of a sphere that does not follow its plane's traits can make life suitable for mundane beings, but make travel outside too dangerous for the characters. In such a setting, only powerful characters could cross into hostile territory.

Despite the uncertainty surrounding the function of a Prime Material Plane in a cosmos, this does not minimize its importance. Unless you deliberately set your campaign on another plane, the Prime Material Plane will be center stage. As the default physical universe, the plane serves as a medium that requires little work to explain the physics or nature of the plane.

Though the inhabitants of other planes along the metaphysical axes of a cosmos might argue otherwise, it is important to mention again that the Prime Material Plane is the most important plane. This plane is the measuring stick of the cosmos' traits and its denizens. The natives to the Prime Material Plane may require means to survive trips to the other planes, but they are also the ones most capable of faring well compared to the powerful beings that call the metaphysical planes home. Those beings find that while they are powerful, they cannot travel to planes that mundane beings can reach without being hindered because of their ties to a metaphysical polarity.

As a cosmos' plane of mundane balance, the Prime Material Plane is the place where player characters come from. Its inherent sense of balance does **not** mean that the elements that comprise the physical reality of the Prime Material Plane are equally distributed, or that every action has a counterbalance. The aspect of neutrality is not rigid or that extreme. Rather, it means that the sum balance of elemental materials is approximately the same. Player characters, usually being mundane creatures, live in relative ease in such an environment, but they are still exposed to the hazards of the

elemental components of their world as well as those that come from the metaphysical axes of the cosmos.

Given the large scale of the Prime Material Plane, it is difficult to say how much of an impact a given event would have on it. Each world, being isolated from others, is a different case by the world's features and the political problems of its inhabitants. While a world can be destroyed due to calamity, the impact on a solar system, let alone a whole plane, is minimal. But that is not to say that threats to a world are insignificant. The residents of a world would object vehemently to the idea that the destruction of their planet is inconsequential. When it comes to the world that is the focus of your games, this is infinitely true. The players may not take such threats kindly, especially if they have become attached to the story lines you have developed. Anything you do to your game world will affect the way the players and their characters view the Prime Material Plane.

## SIZE AND LAYOUT

The Prime Material Plane is an infinite expanse. However, unlike most physical planes, it is not a uniform reality. While it is true that there is a place for the inhabitants of the cosmos to coexist with mundane creatures without adverse effects, it is a reality of niches. The majority of the Prime Material Plane is an empty vacuum. Floating in this void are stars, planets, moons and other objects that are the spheres of the plane. These are the niches where life thrives. Each world is subdivided into smaller niches by temperature and terrain.

Every world does not need to be Earth-like. Some of the most memorable campaign worlds are those that are atypical. Exotic qualities, normally found as a niche, add to the campaign in a way that such qualities in a small region do not. Not all worlds need to be fleshed out; it is fine to have barren worlds in your campaign. You are not obligated to create anything, and you shouldn't feel the need to fill the skies of your world with named places. The players will not question the existence of places they do not know about. It is safer to leave this material unwritten until you need it.

If you are designing a Prime Material Plane or a sphere within the plane that deviates from the standard fantasy model, refer to the appropriate chapter for descriptions and sample random tables. (Reference Gary Gygax's World Builder, Gygaxian Fantasy Worlds Vol. II by Gary Gygax).

## MAJOR PHYSICAL FEATURES

The cold, dark, emptiness of space is the overriding physical feature of the Prime Material Plane. This means the majority of the plane is empty. The celestial bodies, however, are the jewels of the plane. Worlds crowded around distant stars populate the plane. In addition, other lesser bodies such as comets, asteroids and the like also fly through the void.

## HAZARDS

How dangerous is the Prime Material Plane to its inhabitants? Beings are relatively safe from harm as long as they remain within their niche. Natural disasters can still affect these creatures, but few other planar hazards like the maelstroms on the Plane of Air (see Chapter 3) would be encountered in a lifetime and not necessarily even then. Any number of natural phenomena (weather, earthquakes, quicksand, etc.) as well as environmental

divisions (air, sea, and space) can kill. The Prime Material Plane is manageable for mundane beings, but not always comfortable for them in all locations. Even in cosmos' that differ from what is the standard, the plane is still comfortable for its mundane beings because it is assumed that the creatures' native to such an environment possess the traits necessary to survive. However, if a character from a standard cosmos traveled to a non-standard one, the changes to the Prime Material Plane could be fatal.

The standard Prime Material Plane is full of hazards beyond natural disasters. Biological contaminants, viruses, bacteria, carnivorous beasts and a host of organic and synthetic pollutants can kill a native. Individual spheres can have special qualities that increase the hazardous nature of the world for certain extraplanar natives or the sphere may have effects that eliminate hazards caused by planar traits.

Other natural hazards that would plague extraplanar travelers would be the inhabitants of the world visited. Though the inhabitants of the plane are discussed later in this chapter, they are mentioned here due to their unpredictable nature. The sentient races of the Prime Material Plane are often more hazardous to a traveler's health than bacteria or viruses. Of course, this is assuming you are not using an atypical sphere/cosmos.

#### PHYSICAL TRAITS

The standard Prime Material Plane does not have any traits that make it different from our reality. This means that gravity works the same as it does on our world. All planets within the plane are assumed to have gravity in proportion to their size. While this book is not concerned with world creation, it assumes that the gravity a world possesses falls within the domain of its sphere. Thus, gravity, while a part of world construction, is tied to the physical traits of the Prime Material Plane.

Assume that your cosmos follows the laws of physics that we associate with a "normal" reality. That is why the use of spheres is as valuable as augmentation of the standard. A small planetoid can be given the gravity of a superterran (a large earth-like) planet while a star could be given the gravity of a small moon. Since this is a cosmological function, any rules that contradict your changes to a celestial body's size and its gravity for the plane should be ignored.

Under normal conditions, there is no gravity felt in the emptiness of space. The gravitational pull towards the surface of a celestial body, however, can affect a character so long as he is close enough to it. For those looking for a formula to determine how close an object needs to be to a sphere to be affected by its gravity, use the inverse square law formula. This formula states that whatever distance you travel towards (or away from) an object, you invert the fraction and then square it (you just square it if moving away). For example, if you cut your distance from a planet by one third, you increase the gravity's pull by nine (one-third becomes three and then squared becomes nine):

In a standard Prime Material Plane, all forms of travel are possible. The methods available are limited by the environmental factors of the area. This may remove some options temporarily, but once the condition is

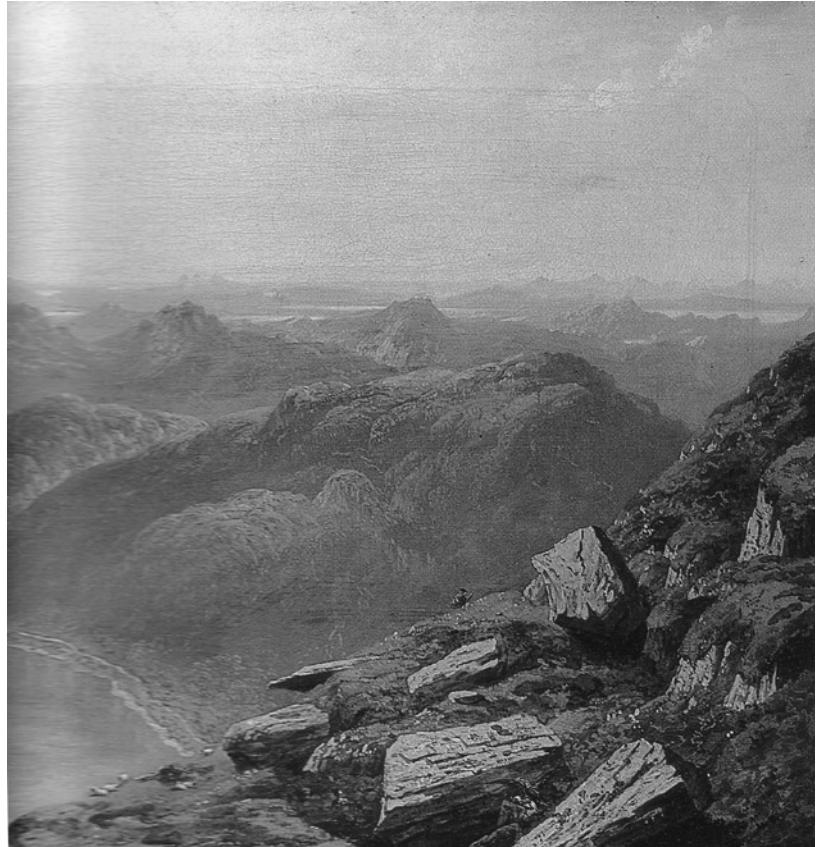
no longer in the way, all options become possible again. Travel is not entirely straightforward on the Prime Material Plane, however. This is because there is always a condition that will remove at least one method of travel. You cannot swim in grasslands or in space, for instance. It may seem redundant to stress this point, but the niche nature of the plane dictates everything from travel to which creatures can inhabit it.

The effects of time on a Prime Material Plane are not discussed in the context of individual spheres. Rather, it is better to address how the plane affects time. This should not be seen as a snub to the importance of spheres. It is simply that when you look at the infinite expanse of a Prime Material Plane, the changes one sphere exacts are insignificant to the remainder of the plane.

Alterations that affect a standard fantasy cosmos as a whole affect the Prime Material Plane. It is rare that the entire plane's sense of time is disjointed from the rest of its cosmos. Only a distorted dimensional matrix could throw the cosmos' origin out of sync with itself. Thus, the reckoning of time in the cosmos is based on the Prime Material Plane's sense of the passage of time.

Since the Prime Material Plane is meant to coincide with the heart of the cosmos in a standard setting, it does not possess a polarity trait. At least, that is the conventional view. The truth is that the plane possesses the same polarity as the cosmos. This means that in a balanced cosmos (where all metaphysical poles are equidistant from the origin), it has a net balance of zero. In cosmos' with an origin shift toward a metaphysical pole, the Prime Material Plane (and its parent cosmos) is said to possess that polarity to the degree that it is shifted towards the pole.

For cosmos' with an off-center shift, assume that the Prime Material Plane is assigned a degree along the axis it is aligned to.



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Most cosmos' with a shift do not go beyond a moderate polarity. In the instances where the polarity of the cosmos is heavily to extremely aligned with a metaphysical axis, you should assume that it is not the home of mundane creatures. Such cosmos' are so far from the standard fantasy setting that they should be treated accordingly. A cosmos leaning towards extreme polarity for a particular trait is completely imbalanced, as the opposite trait (good or evil, for example) cannot exist.

*[In the d20 System, the parent cosmos and Prime Material Plane in a standard setting have the True Neutral alignment. If the cosmos does not follow the standard, the alignment component assigned to each should follow the guidelines above.]*

Magic on the Prime Material Plane works as described in rulebooks in the default fantasy setting, and the same rules that govern the Prime Material Plane affect the cosmos. There is one difference between the two, however. Where local effects can alter the function of magic on the Prime Material Plane, there is no area in a cosmos that is not under the effects of a "local region." In the case of the cosmos, these regions can be considered to be planes or spheres.

Magic will usually be affected in cosmos' where the laws of physics are altered. These alterations are akin to the metaphysical axis shifts described above. The augmentations you use come from the chapters that follow. Augmenting the Prime Material Plane relies on borrowing traits from other planes and the information in the chapters dealing with those planes can be easily modified for the Prime Material Plane. Other possible augmentations are confined to spheres. This allows for worlds where certain spells cannot function in that region, but elsewhere they can.

### INHABITANTS

The varieties of sentient races that call the Prime Material Plane home are numerous. In addition to the standard fantasy races of humans, dwarves and elves, there are countless species you can make native to the plane. The rule of thumb to use when populating a world is to refer to the game system you are using to determine which species work best for the world you are designing. In addition to the species offered by the game system, you can create new races to occupy niches other species may be incapable of filling.

If there are no restrictions on what species can inhabit the Prime Material Plane, then how do you limit your choices? In addition to the other books in this series, you can use spheres to guide you. While spheres allow you to make changes to a region of a plane, they also serve as boundaries. In other words, you can prevent certain races from existing on a world by having a planet's sphere possess traits that are hazardous to them. Conversely, you can have the sphere favor certain races.

Sentient races provide an interesting dilemma: most are territorial. The need for space for living and sustenance (for example, farms and pasturelands) can make sentient races difficult to deal with. Basic needs notwithstanding, most communities will start with a standoffish mentality towards outsiders. During first encounters, interlopers are often judged as to whether they are worth interacting with peacefully, or if they should be driven out or killed. Other species prefer to plunder their neighbors and would not hesitate to resort to violence first. If your game allows for interplanetary adventuring, imagine how receptive a planet's inhabitants may

be to "off worlders." This is why sentient species quite often prove to be a bigger hazard to travelers than the environment or wild animals.

Unless a creature's description states otherwise, it is native to the Prime Material Plane. Therefore, nearly any creature can populate a world. If you place a creature outside of its normal niche, be mindful that you may need to justify such an anomaly. Nothing prevents you from changing a creature's natural habitat; however, some players may find the changes jarring if you cannot provide a solid explanation.

One last note about Prime Material Plane inhabitants: the closer you get to the Space-Time font on the plane's z-axis (or timeline), the less likely you are to encounter sentient species, for it is generally accepted that intelligent life develops over time.

### INCORPORATING INTO AN EXISTING CAMPAIGN

Unless you have an unusual setting, there is no need to incorporate a Prime Material Plane into your cosmos. That is because you cannot replace a Prime Material Plane. You can swap Prime Material Planes or block access to them, but a physical universe always lies at the nexus points where metaphysical axes cross. If you have multiple material planes in your cosmology, the same rules apply.

Swapping one Prime Material Plane for another is easy. The residents of the plane will view the shift as if the scholars of their world mapped it incorrectly. Those adventurous souls who are away from their plane when the swap occurs will wonder what happened, but may not immediately recognize the change. It is possible that the characters will believe they are on another world. The potential is limitless and is an open license for you to provide another level of excitement to your gaming sessions. Also, if you want the players to be able to eventually return to their home with the correct cosmos, you can incorporate a lot of action into the storyline for when the characters emerge victorious. It is just as viable to have cosmos' swap Prime Material Planes on a regular cycle to represent how closely related they are.

A Prime Material Plane cannot replace an entire cosmos. While it is true that the Prime Material Plane is not the entirety of the cosmos, it is an integral point within it. This is because the plane is responsible for the anchoring and stability of the metaphysical axes. The plane also draws its material from the elemental planes as much as belief powers the outer planes. With such a relationship, you can see why what you do to the Prime Material Plane affects the cosmos.

Unless you are creating an asynchronous cosmos, one where the Prime Material Plane does not reflect the cosmos, the augmentations to a Prime Material Plane apply to the cosmos. As noted throughout the chapter, this is the default relationship of the Prime Material Plane and the cosmos. The strong tie between the metaphysical planes, the Prime Material Plane, and the cosmos necessitates the existence of a Prime Material Plane. Because of this, augmentations to a Prime Material Plane should be used to alter qualities rather than as a method for direct replacement. Remember, it is not whether or not your plane is in harmony with your cosmos, but what you have done to entice your players to explore it.

# CHAPTER 3: THE PHYSICAL PLANES

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JUST BESIDE the heart of the cosmos lies a collection of planes loosely referred to as the physical planes. They have little in common, however. These planes are grouped into three categories: elemental planes, mundane energy planes and transitive planes. The four elemental planes are those of Air, Earth, Fire and Water. The mundane energy planes are the Positive and Negative Energy Planes. The transitive planes are the Ethereal Plane and the Plane of Shadow. While there is a clear link between the energy and elemental planes, there are no similarities between the Plane of Shadow and the Ethereal Plane. However, all eight planes border and overlap the Prime Material Plane.

The elemental planes are a purified form of the materials that make up the Prime Material Plane. While more than four elemental planes can exist, the most common (and standard) are Air, Earth, Fire and Water. Visiting the planes shows the travelers an alien environment where matter is comprised of one element. This makes all but the Plane of Air immediately hostile to unprotected characters. Imagine drinking liquid fire to quench one's thirst, or drawing breath in the foamy dust that serves as "air" on the Plane of Earth.

A brief explanation of the elemental planes does not shed much light on the subject. In terms of a fantasy setting, these planes represent the primal elemental materials that are the basis of matter in the Prime Material Plane. The elemental planes can be viewed as unlimited resources for exploitation, a vast resource of magical raw materials or even the true source of all matter. Regardless of how you view the elemental planes, one thing never changes: the elemental planes are not completely uniform.

What purpose do the elemental planes serve? In many ways, they are an oversimplification of real world chemistry. The physics of a fantasy campaign is supposed to be, well, fantastic. There is a real mystique that surrounds the use of elements as a way to describe what an item is composed of. The elements allow us to think of magical properties inherent in their raw form. As a matter of fact, the elemental planes are virtually indispensable to the working of magic in a fantasy milieu!

The elemental planes also conjure up images of primal forces. In many ways, that is what these planes represent. The four elements remind us of a primitive world, where survival depends on the access and use of the elements. Not only are these primal forces natural, but they are endowed with the preternatural. The elemental planes also serve as a wellspring of magical energies that spellcasters tap into.

No one knows how these planes work. The elemental planes just **are**. By themselves, the planes do not do anything spectacular. However, the elemental power they exhibit has a special relationship with the other planes. Known as the Law of Elemental Dominance, each element is dominated by one, dominates another and is opposed to a third. This law (covered in detail later) is important in understanding how elemental magic is affected on the Prime Material Plane and on the elemental planes.

The importance of the elemental planes should be partially apparent so far. Serving as a good portion of the fantasy physics used in a campaign, the elemental planes play a role in magic's operation. The planes provide the constituent material of objects. Campaigns lacking an element or having limited access to it will be profoundly affected. Imagine a forest fire on a Prime Material Plane world where there is little or no access to the Plane of Water. Without access to the element that dominates fire, a spell caster must have a source of water close by in order to douse the flames.

Cutting off access to all elemental planes renders elemental magic nonexistent. Such a Prime Material Plane would slowly starve. While all planes come from the Prime Material Plane as an extension of that plane, the energies of the planes have a symbiotic relationship with the Prime Material Plane. The other planes feed and nurture the Prime Material Plane, and it does likewise to them.

It is safe to assume that any modifications you make to the elemental planes will be felt on the Prime Material Plane. You should be aware of the affects that such changes will inevitably produce. It is best to think of the planes as being unconditionally linked.

Another manner of expressing the interdependency is to state that the elemental planes form the basis for the Prime Material Plane, and give it substance and form that the other planes intersecting the dimensional matrix in question can not lend to it. Aether and Shadow, Light and Dark, Positive and Negative, nor even Time and the standard dimensions can give substance to form material.

As you can see, the elemental planes greatly affect the Prime Material Plane. There is not a time when the elemental planes do not have an influence on the Prime Material Plane. By their very nature, the elemental planes and the Material Plane are required for an elementally balanced cosmology. This allows element-based magic to function as the game rules describe. By altering the strength of influence these planes have on your campaign world, you change the way magic works.

The elemental planes are in the same metaphysical location as their material plane. While they do not occupy the same space, the planes overlap one another. In other words, the elemental planes, along with their parent material plane, touch in all points. Characters can travel from any of these planes to the others directly through the use of wormholes, spells, portals or magic items with little interference.

The elemental planes and their parent material plane are so close that their dimensional matrices sometimes cause tears between the planes, allowing them to exchange material. On the Prime Material Plane (or parent material plane for cosmos' with more than one material plane), these tears occur in a region containing the element. Thus, a tear between the Prime Material Plane and the Plane of Air will normally spawn a wind storm or a series of whirlwinds in the area of the tear. A tear between a Prime Material Plane and its Plane of Water on land results in flooding conditions until the tear is repaired. If the tear happens in a place of any element, the results can

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be spectacularly destructive. A good example would be flames from the Plane of Fire exploding in a city like fireballs.

The mundane energy planes also have their share of effects on the Prime Material Plane. As stated in the chapter's opening, there are two mundane energy planes: Positive and Negative. Although they are generally associated with good and evil respectively, neither plane is actually tied to those concepts.

The energies that flow from the Positive Energy Plane travel through the Prime Material Plane and are pulled out of that plane by the Negative Energy Plane. The planes thus act as a very large supernatural battery. These planes are in turn purified forms of energies that come from the metaphysical axes of Vitality and Entropy. The term "purified" is used because the energies that flow from the edges of the cosmology's Vitality/Entropy metaphysical axis are so powerful that they will overwhelm and destroy mundane existence if they come into contact with one another on the physical planes, as do matter and anti-matter.

Both mundane energy planes flow into the Prime Material Plane along with the energies that pour into the cosmos through the Vitality/Entropy metaphysical axis. Both planes exude energy that appears to ebb and flow in patterns from one plane to the other. But the Negative Energy Plane is not just the opposite of the Positive Energy Plane. You should think of negative energy as the absence of energy in as much as it is the antithesis of positive energy. That said, negative energy has force and power of its own, just as anti-matter had weight and form of its own.

The point of understanding how the energies work is to establish the purpose of the mundane energy planes and why you should include them in your campaign. In addition to opposing one another, these planes are also the sources of life and death energies. While positive energies can be used to heal and power nearly any spell, they are only useful for spells that infuse energy into objects. Negative energies, on the other hand, are used mainly to power necromantic magic and for imbuing objects with entropic forces.

As explained above, the elemental planes act as a purified form of raw material for the Prime Material Plane. Similarly, the mundane energy planes act as a filter to purify negative and positive energies before they reach the Prime Material Plane. There is one major difference between them, however. Whereas elemental planes are physical in nature, energy planes have no distinguishable physical shape.

The energies that flow from these two planes work the same way. Both appear to be empty infinite expanses. The healing effects of positive energies have the same amount of power as the damaging effects of negative energies. The energy planes act as anchoring points to tie the inner planes along the metaphysical axes of the standard cosmology.

Why are these two planes important for a campaign? You can ignore them if you want, but by excluding them, you weaken the effects of beneficial and necromantic magic. The mundane energy planes are not necessary for elemental magic; however, spells that do not depend on the elemental planes generally rely on the energy planes. Thus the impact these two planes have on the cosmology makes the issue of their presence important. In most cosmos', the malign entities and creatures draw their energy force from the Negative Energy Plane.

Imagine a campaign where the effects of positive energies are diminished. Regardless of the influence of the Negative Energy Plane, magical healing powers are hampered. If the Positive Energy Plane is sealed off from the Prime Material Plane, the ability to heal may be impossible. Sealing off the Negative Energy Plane from the Prime Material Plane does not prevent death, however. Natural causes would still cause the normal amount of damage as they are not magical. Instead, you would have a setting where undead could not exist.

As you can see from this brief introduction to the mundane energy planes, they may have an immense impact on your campaign. What has not been mentioned yet is how far-reaching some of these effects are to non-spellcasters. Your setting could be one where the world is very young and the balance between Vitality and Entropy have not been fully established, leaving the plane awash in positive energies; or it could be a setting where entropy has won out and is slowly sucking out the vital energies that sustain life. The slightest imbalance in the amount of energy from one source or the other will alter the cosmology enough that one side will have an advantage over the other.

Finally, where are the mundane energy planes located? Like the elemental planes, these planes are located in the same metaphysical area as the Prime Material Plane, and are a part of its makeup, although the Positive extends to the Celestial and the Negative to the Nether. The mundane energy planes also overlap the elemental planes and the Prime Material Plane. The seven planes are linked to one another by metaphysical location and interdependence.

The Plane of Shadow is far different than the elemental and mundane energy planes. Whereas the planes so far described are based on constituent material elements, the Plane of Shadow resembles the Prime Material Plane forever shrouded in darkness. There are no natural sources of light to be found anywhere on this plane. It is a place of eternal twilight where neither light nor dark prevails, and the sky is ruled by flitting luminosities in a charcoal-hued dome. But this is only what the eyes see.

The Plane of Shadow is much more than just a dark reflection of the Prime Material Plane. In fact, it is the only physical plane to be subdivided into regions. The three regions are known as Shade (or the Transcendent Shadow), Penumbra (or the Spectral Shadow) and Umbra (or Ineffable Shadow). Despite the names, the three regions look the same and can only be distinguished from one another by the inhabitants common to each and the depth of their twilight, perhaps by the faint shades of color that might be discerned in Shade and Penumbra. Do not mistake the names of the regions for their actual locations. It is possible to physically cross from Shade into Penumbra and travel through Umbra only to emerge in Penumbra without changing directions. If one continued in this manner, a character would once again emerge in Shade. Whether Shade and Penumbra ring Umbra, or if it is a trick of the plane's physics, the result is the same: the regions are somehow nested.

If there is a true purpose of the Plane of Shadow, no one knows what it is, save perhaps to facilitate the near-maligned and maligned entities and creatures and house some of the spirits of dead creatures, including humans. The most notable features of the Plane of Shadow, which may lend a clue to the plane's purpose, are the rivers that run through all regions.

One river, the Dark Nile, is part of the realm of the Khemitic deities with still hearts. The plane is associated with the dead and the journey taken through the underworld to reach one's final destination. The river is just one such location and symbol. Other pantheons also use the Plane of Shadow in this way. Keep in mind, however, that acting as a road to the afterlife is not the plane's only function.

As with all other physical planes discussed so far, the Plane of Shadow overlaps the Prime Material Plane, and forms a part of it. Unlike the other physical planes, however, it does not overlap and is not touched by any other plane save the Celestial and the Nether. While all points are linked between the Plane of Shadow and the Prime Material Plane, portals to and from the Plane of Shadow are usually found in dark areas (such as deeply recessed shadows). The plane can be used to travel undetected while bypassing obstacles on the Prime Material Plane. The benefit of this is stealth, but the plane has its own hazards. Travelers who use the plane in this manner mainly do so only if it is less dangerous than the route on the Prime Material Plane. Since emergence requires a dark area, portals located in the middle of a field would only be accessible at night. Travelers have to plan their trips accordingly or camp on the Plane of Shadow until their exit point is available.

How the Plane of Shadow manages to resemble a dark version of the Prime Material Plane and function as a plane exclusive to it is a mystery. Where all the other physical planes are opposed by one other plane, the Plane of Shadow and the Prime Material Plane can be viewed as two sides of the same coin. In this view, the Plane of Shadow appears as the dark reflection of its parent plane.

Magic that powers spells of darkness or makes use of shadows is tied to the Plane of Shadow. While the plane is used to power these spells, it does not just work for the benefit of such magic. The Plane of Shadow is a place of stealth and requires reliance on senses other than normal sight.

The plane's primary importance rests in its role as a road to the afterlife for many pantheons. This does not mean you should only use it for such a limited view. The Plane of Shadow allows travelers to cover great distances without the worry that they will

be detected. In a tactical sense, the Plane of Shadow is better than mundane travel or crossing an area through the Ethereal. It works well as a mask.

The Plane of Shadow has an impact on your game, even if you do not recognize it. When access to the Plane of Shadow is blocked, the setting affected not only has little access to magic that allows travel through shadows, but the paths to the afterlife of many faiths become nonexistent. You would have to reroute the travels of the Khemitic deities through the underworld as Osiris battles his foes so the sun may rise again. The Olympian pantheon would be without its famous rivers, such as Acheron and Styx.

Imagine trying to move whole armies stealthily through the Ethereal Plane or through a portal. Not only would the magical abilities of spellcasters be taxed to the limit, but there is a good chance that the armies would be detected before enough troops could emerge to keep the way open for the rest. Those devoted to forces of darkness would also be hampered by lack of access. How do you use the powers of shadows or jump from one to another without the use of the Plane of Shadow? These questions will need to be answered if you are planning on altering the characteristics of the Plane of Shadow.

Metaphysically speaking, the Plane of Shadow is underneath the Prime Material Plane (Umbra) but also within (Penumbra) and extending above it (Shade). Given that the metaphysical axes of a standard campaign create a four-dimensional construct, trying to find the underside of a plane is nearly impossible. When you look at how the plane exclusively interacts with the Prime Material Plane, it means that Plane of Shadow is the only plane in a cosmology that has no contact with the Ethereal or Aethereal. This is the main reason why the plane has such a special connection with the Prime Material Plane and why changes to the plane will have an impact on the campaign.

## CLASSIFYING ELEMENTAL TYPES

The purpose of the elemental class of planes is to allow realms that consist of a primary and primal force of energy or matter. The four "classic" elements (based on the ancient Greeks view of the world), are good because they represent the four types of scientific material states—solid, liquid, gas and plasma. We add positive and negative energy to this.

Depending on your game system, you may want to provide an alternate look into the classic elements. The Eastern realms of Earth are important. China used wood and metal in place of earth, while Japan used a substance called "void," and the Hindus referred to the fifth element as "space."

The other thing is to consider the use of spheres in the Elemental Planes. Perhaps there is only one elemental plane filled with spheres. More importantly, spheres can be used to represent a mixing or amalgam of whatever elements consider primal in your cosmos, or a subclass of a specific plane.

For instance, the plane of earth could contain a sphere or plane of substances such as stone, clay, sand and maybe minerals. Perhaps in this last you would have a sphere representing specific element—maybe the scientific solid elements—a sphere for gold and lead, and sphere of carbon that contains a sphere of diamonds. You could have places like a plane of radiance which contains spheres for each type of hue—the azure sphere of radiance, for instance. Perhaps there is a sphere of sound somewhere on the plane of air, or planes consisting of various gases.

Other possibilities include different types of energy. We have presented lightning in the main text, but perhaps sound, magnetism, gravity, force or radioactivity could be others. Perhaps you could have some esoteric types like thought and emotion. In a fantasy universe, you can create your own elements—such as phlogiston, dark force, tau (the reputed most basic element), or some other substance.

The thing to remember about creating elemental planes is the following:

- Elemental planes should be primal forces of matter and energy. The less complex the substance or energy, the more likely you can place it in an elemental plane. Think of it as the building blocks of the prime universe, not all the possible things that can exist in the prime universe.
- Elemental planes deal with what we would call "natural" substances that would exist in our world. Dealing with supernatural forces like celestial or nether beings should not be the province of an elemental plane—thus you could have a plane of fire but not hellfire. Concepts involving spiritual elements are better suited to other realms.

Finally, entities inhabiting such planes and spheres are "elementals," creatures made primarily of the element in which they dwell.

As an odd trick, the Plane of Shadow does have portals to the realms of various pantheons and deities on other planes, for as noted above, it does reach to the Celestial and Nether Planes. Other than at these specific points, the plane has no connection

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to the rest of the cosmos. The portals are located in the realms of those pantheons where a journey through darkness is necessary before the soul of a mortal being may reach the judging point for its final resting place.

The last plane to be discussed in this chapter is part of a much larger realm. The Ethereal Plane is part of the Aethereal Plane and is a non-spatial realm. As the glue of the cosmos, the Ethereal has no true space that it occupies. The grayish filmy substance of the plane serves to show how strange it is.

When a traveler enters the Ethereal Plane, he views the plane he just left through a gray diaphanous haze. Although the character is on another plane of existence, he is physically in the same space he just occupied. However, someone on the plane of origin can pass through that point without injuring him and the character may simply pass through solid objects on that plane without suffering damage. Such a person will not notice by normal sight or contact an ethereally displaced character, or any ethereal person, thing or place for that matter.

The Ethereal Plane has a dual purpose. Not only does it hold the cosmos together, but it also keeps the other planes from touching. It is extremely porous, which makes travel to the Ethereal possible. This porous quality also allows travel from one plane to another through the Ethereal Plane.

For a standard campaign, this makes the Ethereal Plane very important. Without the Ethereal, travel to planes other than the Plane of Shadow from the Prime Material Plane is impossible. Only the violent exchanges of material through dimensional tears would allow a traveler access to the elemental and energy planes. Magic still flows through the planes to the Prime Material Plane, but does not give spellcasters direct access to them.

The Ethereal Plane is a cosmological buffer and glue. The lack of such a place means that no material planes other than the Prime Material Plane and the Plane of Shadow can exist at the heart of the cosmology. Since this plane is actually a sphere within the Aethereal Plane, the Ethereal Plane only applies to the inner regions of a cosmology. Its nonexistence would not have disastrous consequences for the majority of the cosmology, but the Prime Material Plane would no longer be shielded from the psychic storms that plague the Aethereal Plane.

In addition to restricting travel from the Prime Material Plane to the elemental and mundane energy planes, the lack of an Ethereal Plane may make it more difficult to travel to the Aethereal and metaphysical planes. Spells that rely on ethereal travel would be useless. Since magical means of detection are necessary to find someone on the Ethereal Plane eavesdropping on a conversation, the impact of this plane may be greater than expected.

While the Plane of Shadow allows a character to sneak around undetected from one location on the Prime Material Plane to another, the Ethereal Plane allows him to see what awaits him when he returns. There is a price to pay for this. Travelers who have "gone Ethereal" can be detected by those with the magical means to detect ethereal beings. This makes sneaking up on an army a dangerous proposition, if not a lethal one. For gathering intelligence, however, the use of the Ethereal Plane may be justified.

Where does the Ethereal Plane exist in relation to the physical planes? From the point of view of these planes, it is everywhere since it encompasses them. When viewed from the cosmology at large, it is the center of the cosmology and lies at the heart of the Aethereal Plane. This makes it an interesting plane since it has its own unique characteristics, but is still a sphere.

How do these seven disparate planes have anything in common? As with the Prime Material Plane, they are grouped together as part of the physical planes. Each plane has a corresponding opposite, all of them are mundane rather than metaphysical, and (with the partial exception of the Plane of Shadow) overlap one another.

In fact, all but the Ethereal and mundane energy planes mimic the Prime Material Plane as closely as possible. The elemental planes may be composed primarily of one element, but this does not preclude them from having vast empty or sterile spaces that separate islands of life, just like the Prime Material Plane. The Plane of Shadow mimics the Prime Material Plane so much that as far as a traveler can tell, the terrain of the plane closely corresponds to the terrain of the world the location touches, save in the lowest reaches of the Umbra and the highest portions of the Shade portions of the plane. When a traveler on the Ethereal is closest to the Prime Material Plane, the Ethereal Plane most resembles it. However, as the traveler moves away from the Prime Material Plane, this is no longer the case. The gray mists of the Ethereal thin and no longer hold the shape of objects on the material planes.

The main difference between the function of the mundane energy planes and the rest of the physical planes is that these two planes serve to infuse the others with the energies necessary for them to interact with one another. They also help create the various materials that can be joined together to form the physical reality of the Prime Material Plane. The elemental and mundane energy planes provide the energy infusion and medium necessary to combine elemental materials without risking damage to the Prime Material Plane.

Finally, all of the planes with the exception of the Plane of Shadow and the Ethereal Plane are used to describe the physical traits of a metaphysical plane in addition to the plane's polarity. What this means for your campaign is that your planes' physics may operate similarly to the Prime Material Plane's. You may also find it necessary to affiliate metaphysical planes with each of the mundane elements. This can help establish the importance of the physical planes. When you are describing a plane that physically behaves like the Prime Material Plane, it is unnecessary to mention changes to the plane's physics beyond the changes mandated by its polarity. Unless you're establishing a dichotomy on that plane between one region and another, then you would use the Prime Material Plane to show that one region acts like the cosmological standard while the rest of the plane adheres to its metaphysical axes.

It is now time to look at how the physical planes are different from one another. The Prime Material Plane and the Plane of Shadow could not be more different from the rest of the physical planes in composition. They lack the dominance of any elemental or energy trait. The elemental planes similarly could not be more different from the mundane energy planes. The elemental planes do resemble the Prime Material Plane in some areas; for example, they both contain islands of life surrounded

by empty expanses. However, whereas the elemental planes are full of material voids, the Prime Material Plane is just empty in the main. The mundane energy planes are so empty that many people wonder if anything exists on them. This vast emptiness of the energy planes resembles the emptiness between worlds on the Prime Material Plane.

It is important to consider that the planes in this book lay the groundwork for additional elemental, or paraelemental or quasi-elemental, planes that you may wish to include in your cosmology. Realize that the differences are not only integral to defining the physical planes but also are essential for understanding how they interact with one another.

Basically, what it boils down to is this; you can easily have an inner cosmology that lacks either the elemental planes, both mundane energy planes, the Ethereal Plane, or the Plane of Shadow. What is more difficult to do and maintain balance is to remove only one of the elemental planes or only one energy plane. It is easier to have a diminished capacity in one or more elemental planes or an energy plane than it is to remove the entire plane from a cosmology. This does not mean it is impossible, rather that it is really tricky if you're trying to maintain a balance between the elements. In contrast, it is simple to live without a Plane of Shadow, other than the actual loss of shadow conditions, or an Ethereal Plane. While those two planes allow for travel without mundane methods of detection, eliminating one or both would not to upset the balance of the game, although it would diminish the fantasy aspects of such a milieu considerably.

It is far easier and more likely that you'll have asynchronous relationships between the planes. Such a relationship allows you to create a cosmology in which there is a self-contained imbalance; in other words, one that doesn't affect other planes. The plane that is asynchronous to the rest of the cosmology can be accessed but has less impact on the cosmology as a whole, and most importantly won't disrupt the Prime Material Plane. As described in Chapter 1, an asynchronous plane can be created by altering one or two basic planar characteristics. This relationship of asynchronicity will save you the headache of trying to create a cosmology in which one of your elemental or energy planes is missing but which is still balanced, despite the dominance of the missing plane's counterpart.

#### THE LAW OF ELEMENTAL DOMINANCE

The Law of Elemental Dominance states that elements have a circular hierarchy. What this means is that each elemental plane is dominated by one element and in turn dominates another. This translates into a set of game statistics that expresses how dominance works when elemental powers come into conflict. The Law has three parts and can be applied to any of the four standard elemental planes without adjustments. The parts presented below are given as Dominator, Dominated, and Opposed, requiring only the substitution of the planes that belong in each category. (For example, the Plane of Air dominates the Plane of Water, is dominated by the Plane of Earth, and opposes the Plane of Fire.)

**Dominator:** Elemental magic cast in the presence of its dominating element is minimized to the least effect a spell can have.

**Dominated:** Magic used in the presence of the dominated element is maximized to the spell's greatest effects.

**Opposed:** Spells cast in the presence of the opposition element are halved.

When elemental-powered spells clash, the Law of Elemental Dominance applies. As casting grades of spells vary, use the game's spell system to determine how many grades or levels of power are affected. Spellcasters can use a spell of lesser power to absorb some of the opposing spell's effects, but the unaffected portion remains in effect. Keep in mind that this is an optional rule.

#### “NONSTANDARD” ELEMENTAL PLANES

Four elemental planes aren't enough, you say? You envision the cosmology possessing a different elemental structure? How would you go about creating a cosmology that includes “nonstandard” elemental planes? To begin, use the four standard elemental planes as a guide to help you create your new cosmology. You'll find that with a little practice you can take existing elemental planes and blend them together to form new ones, paraelemental or quasi-elemental sorts. Also, the mundane energy planes can lend a hand in this process.

Here are two examples of nonstandard elemental planes. Both are hybrid planes. The first is a combination of two elemental planes while the second is based on an elemental plane and a mundane energy plane. The new names of these planes are the Plane of Mud and the Plane of Ash. As you'll see after reading through the descriptions of the standard elemental planes, the examples are rough outlines and will require a little work on your part in order to create the desired effect. The Plane of Mud is a combination of the planes of Water and Earth and represents all forms of sludge, ooze and mud. Our second example, the Plane of Ash, is based on the Plane of Fire and the Negative Energy Plane. While it is not an exact representation, when negative energy is combined with fire, you have the end product of fire: ash.

When you design nonstandard planes, you are often essentially changing the name of the element from one of the standard four (Metal instead of Earth, for example). The above examples, however, show you that this is not always the case. In fact, often you will need to take two of the standard mundane energy or elemental planes and combine some of the traits to create a desired effect. Blending together planar traits will give you a good starting point in creating the elemental planes that you wish to have in your campaign. Thus, it's sometimes necessary to create planes mixed from standard mundane energy and elemental planes that you have no other intention of using in order to help you create the planes that you're trying to define.

With only the basic traits defined, you may find your planes somewhat lacking. The only thing the traits do is give you the parameters that you must stay within when describing the plane. This book can't help you describe the planes in detail. While this may seem unfortunate, the tools within the book should give you a running start. Do not feel shy about stealing the descriptions of the standard elemental plane in this book and rewording them to fit your own cosmology. It may not be an exact match, but it is a quick method for developing your planes before you fine-tune them.

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### SUGGESTED PARAELEMENTAL AND QUASI-ELEMENTAL PLANE

#### PARAELEMENTAL PLANES

Ash (Fire-Earth)	Heat (Air-Fire)
Brimstone (Fire-Earth)	Magma (Fire-Earth)
Cold (Air-Earth)	Mud (Earth-Water) — more viscous than ooze
Dust (Air-Earth)	Ooze/Sludge/ Mire (Earth-Water)
Electricity (Air-Fire)	Sleet (Air-Water)
Fog/Mist (Air-Water)	Smoke/Fumes (Air-Fire)
Glacis/Ice (Air-Water)	Steam (Fire-Water)

#### Time Limit Modifier

01-05	10 minutes
06-16	1 hour
17-27	1 day
28-38	1 week
39-50	1 month
51-61	1 year
62-72	1 decade
73-83	1 century
84-94	1 millennium
95-00	No limit

#### QUASI-ELEMENTAL PLANES OR SPHERES

Acid	Light
Alkalai	Marsh/Swamp/Taiga
Bone	Metal
Clay	Prairie/Steppe/Tundra
Crystal	Sand
Dark	Snow
Ember	Stone
Lava	Wood

#### ELEMENTAL SPHERES

The elemental and mundane energy planes can and do mix material on occasion. This material consists of so-called "spheres" that are not true spheres in the sense of fantasy cosmologies. The name comes from the fact that when material is exchanged, it's usually in the shape of a sphere. The tables that follow allow you to create a random sphere of material from any plane. However, no random table is given for an elemental or energy plane.

On the table below, make two rolls. The first result is applied to the table for the size of the sphere. The second result is applied to the table for how long the sphere lasts.

#### Die Roll

01-05	1d2	51-61	1d10
06-16	1d3	62-72	1d12
17-27	1d4	73-83	1d20
28-38	1d6	84-94	1d100
39-50	1d8	95-00	1d1000

#### SPHERE SIZE MODIFIER

01-05	1 yard	51-61	10 miles
06-16	10 yards	62-72	25 miles
17-27	100 yards	73-83	50 miles
28-38	1,000 yards	84-94	100 miles
39-50	1 mile	95-00	1,000 miles

#### THE ELEMENTAL PLANE OF AIR

The Elemental Plane of Air is a vast azure expanse lit by an unseen sun. Regardless of which point at which a traveler enters the plane, it is a limitless expanse of sky. There are few places where one could rest on this plane; however, the plane is not completely devoid of objects. There are clouds, birds, and the occasional flying castle. However, a traveler can look for miles in any direction and not see any of these objects. On the upside for the traveler is the ability to breathe pure air. If the traveler is adapted to the plane, then clouds might be the same as semi-solid or solid objects. This is at the discretion of the game master.

#### SIZE AND LAYOUT

The Elemental Plane of Air is an infinite expanse of mostly empty space. As mentioned before, it can contain floating objects such as flying castles, birds, and clouds. There may also be floating cities ranging from the size of a small village to that of a metropolis. These communities are not easily found. In fact, a character is more likely to encounter clouds and storms than another living being on the Plane of Air, assuming the game system used does not contain a large roster of creatures dwelling in elemental air, of course.

The layout of this plane is complicated to describe. This is mainly due to the nature of air itself. Although it is lighter than water, air is a fluid. Nothing stays in the same place and can make travel a nightmare for the uninitiated.

Once a traveler becomes accustomed to the nature of the Elemental Plane of Air, he can easily get around. Teleportation spells still work, but they require a bit of tweaking by following the principles of the plane's physics. The Panprobability Ability for the LA game gives travelers the option to successfully use teleportation spells. However, the traveler still is restricted to the limits of the spell. A special version could be made for the nature of the Plane of Air, but would require a character to research it.

Teleportation from one location to another is the fastest way to get from Point A to Point B on the Plane of Air. (More information on portals is included in Appendix E.) Barring the use of teleportation spells, portals and gateways tying communities together are the best thing available and are more reliable. The reason why knowledge of these methods is integral is because teleporting to the last known location of a place may put a traveler in the middle of a violent maelstrom.

Magic that enables the character to move on wind, or as if he were a force of wind is especially effective on this plane, and the effects of any such magic should be at least the maximum normally gained, possibly twice that.

There are a few places on the Plane of Air that are anchored to a specific location. The fact that most locations drift, however makes it difficult to determine whether or not a traveler is actually where he thinks he is. Some objects drift in a pattern, and those objects that do drift in a pattern have an orbit.

The tables below are a sampling of random objects and creatures on the Plane of Air.

#### Die Roll

01-30	Objects
31-50	Creatures
51-00	Weather (See <b>Hazards</b> )

#### Objects

01-20	Elemental Sphere
21-80	Community
81-85	Castle
86-00	Ship

#### Community

01-35	Thorp
36-65	Village
66-87	Town
88-94	City
95-00	Metropolis

#### Castle

01-25	Keep
26-50	Tower
51-80	Fortress
81-95	Castle
96-00	Palace

#### Ships

01-20	Flying Carpet
21-55	Balloon
56-85	Floating Barge
86-00	Airship

#### Creatures

01-35	Elementals
36-70	Mundane
71-95	Djinni
96-00	Drake

#### COMMUNITY

Communities on the Plane of Air are rare. The inhabitants of these cities are normally denizens of the plane, although they might hail from the Prime Material Plane and have fashioned communities on chunks of rock that have been transported

deliberately or through elemental spheres from the Elemental Plane of Earth. The communities of natives of this plane will be constructed on clouds of solid and unchanging vapor, not earth. While the size of the community does limit what items may be found there, it does not dictate how large the rock is.

One feature unique to communities on the Plane of Air is the aerial slip. Where cities on the Prime Material Plane next to waterways have docks or harbors, all communities on this plane possess an aerial slip for vessels that ply the airways. Larger communities may possess up to a handful of harbors.

**Thorp:** With no more than 50 people, the typical thorp on the Plane of Air serves as an outpost and is usually subordinate to another community. Some are built for extracting minerals from the rocks they occupy. A thorp may alternatively occupy a very large elemental sphere that's farmed with a small garrison to protect or oversee the farmers. Whatever the purpose of the thorp, it will have little to offer the wary traveler.

**Village:** Communities with 51-150 inhabitants, villages normally boasts of an inn and a blacksmith. Some goods will be available to the traveler, but the quantities of these are generally more limited than those in a village on the Prime Material Plane. Like a thorp, the village is usually subordinate to a larger community. Unlike a thorp, a village is more likely to be visited by merchants and receive supplies from its patron community. If the inhabitants of the village are unfriendly towards travelers, chances are that reinforcements are on their way to greet those who don't get the message and leave.

**Town:** Communities with 151-1,500, the size of a town, inhabitants are uncommon. Unlike a thorp or village, a town can be independent. It is likely to have an assortment of goods for a traveler's needs, but this selection will be more limited than that of a town located on the Prime Material Plane. Towns on the Plane of Air usually have two inns, a general store, a blacksmith, and possibly an apothecary. This is a good assortment of basic needs for short-term stays. The town will have some sort of industry, such as farming or mining, to justify its existence. If the town swears allegiance to a larger community, it will possess a garrison capable of defending the town and the skies surrounding it. Most towns possess a small harbor.

**City:** Cities in the Plane of Air are a rare sight, but not so rare as to be impossible to find. Cities have a population of 1,501-15,000 inhabitants. If one was to stand in the middle of a city in the Plane of Air, it would be difficult to distinguish it from one on the Prime Material Plane. Unlike smaller communities on the Plane of Air, a city is not limited to the types of goods one can find. Given its size, it is almost certain that the city has connections with others on the Plane of Air as well as on the Prime Material Plane. Cities do not need an industry to justify their existence; they are also well defended. Most cities have a minimum of three garrisons capable of defending the city. Cities also possess at least one major harbor.

**Metropolis:** Exceedingly rare is the metropolis on the Plane of Air. Boasting of a population of 15,001-50,000 inhabitants, the metropolis that would serve as the heart of an empire or major kingdom on the Prime Material Plane wields greater power on the Plane of Air than any mundane city can claim to possess. A metropolis on this plane is not only heavily guarded, it also

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boasts of strong fortifications. The smallest metropolis will have no less than five garrisons for the express purpose of protecting the city. A constabulary will also be found for policing the community as well as a guard force that protects the residence of the city's ruler. A metropolis is usually an independent city that swears allegiance to a kingdom or empire from the Prime Material Plane. Regardless of its status as dependent or independent, it will contain have at least two cities, a handful of towns, villages, and numerous thorps subordinate to it.

By necessity, metropolises are hubs of trade. This makes them great places for travelers to rest and find supplies. Other than the fact that a city in the Plane of Air occupies an elemental sphere floating through the plane, there is no difference between a metropolis on this plane and one on the Prime Material Plane. Metropolises accommodate trade by featuring several major harbors.

### CASTLE

Although this category is named "castle," it actually encompasses an assortment of floating fortifications. Few of these structures are independent. Rather, most of them serve as some sort of parameter defense for a large territory. This does not rule out the possibility that keeps, towers and fortresses protect flying castles and palaces. As castles and palaces are built with defense in mind, it's a logical conclusion that where keeps, towers and fortresses are, a large settlement must be nearby.

**Keep:** The keep is the smallest fortification one would encounter by itself on the Plane of Air. Keeps are so small that they cannot be located too far away from a community because they must be dependent on the community for supplies. This assumes that a keep does not have a portal inside. While the function of the keep has not changed from its Prime Material Plane counterpart, it does not have to resemble one on that plane. A keep can have entrances on any face rather than on the traditional four walls of an earthbound structure. It is suggested that a garrison of 11-30 warriors is typical of this structure.



**Tower:** Floating towers can be found throughout the Plane of Air. While towers are normally associated with lookout positions on the Prime Material Plane, that function is not necessary here. Some extradimensional empires may use tower outposts despite the fact that there is no ground and enemies can come from any direction. Given these considerations, the most likely encountered towers will be of powerful spellcasters with an affinity for the element of air. It is suggested that a garrison of 11-30 warriors is typical of this structure.

**Fortress:** Flying fortresses on the Plane of Air serve as territorial control points and defense lines. As with keeps, these structures must have a portal within them or must be close to a community for supplies. Likewise, a fortress will have multiple entrances and is usually equipped with airships and aerial combat units. Fortresses are usually used by creatures from the Prime Material Plane rather than by natives of the Plane of Air. Regardless of use, fortresses possess a landing bay or slips for docking. It is suggested that a garrison of 51-150 warriors is typical of this structure.

**Castle:** The flying castles found on Prime Material Plane worlds can also be found on the Plane of Air. There is no difference between Prime Material Plane flying castles and those found on this plane. In both locations the flying castle will be well armed and often boast of strong defenses and thick walls. It is suggested that a garrison of 21-120 warriors is typical of this structure.

**Palace:** Due to its grand size, a floating palace is unique to the Plane of Air. Its size makes it costly and too tempting a target for practical use on the Prime Material Plane. Most floating palaces on Plane of Air will belong to natives. Floating palaces are no different than floating castles in most respects other than size. This structure is bound to have a private harbor and its own private armada. It is safe to assume that if a mortal being owns a palace, he must possess great power and the means to hold his own against magical creatures. It is suggested that a garrison of 101-200 warriors is typical of this structure.

### SHIPS

While tied to the methods of transportation available for travel across the Plane of Air, ships serve well as random objects since they, like the rest of the objects found on the plane, are in motion more often than in harbor. More important are the types of vessels one can encounter on the Plane of Air. Though a Prime Material Plane world may not possess flying sailing vessels, they are common to the Plane of Air. Mundane creatures who take up residence on the plane or trade with the natives use such a vessel in order to conduct business. Exploration of the plane requires a reliable and stable platform for those who have a spellcaster but no access to outside magic.

**Flying carpet:** Probably the cheapest method of travel, the flying carpet is used by few people. Since the carpet can only carry so many people, it is not a viable method of travel for large groups. You could, however, have an army traveling on a number of flying carpets. It would definitely be a site to behold! You can choose the number of flying carpets the adventurers encounter or choose to use the table under elemental spheres to

determine which die to roll. Each carpet will hold 1d6 medium-sized passengers or such number as the game system used for play.

**Balloon:** If your game system allows for lighter-than-air balloons, then the following applies to such craft. Unless bad weather is encountered, a balloon is more reliable than a flying carpet. Additionally, the basket for the balloon can be any size. There is almost no risk of crashing since there is almost no land. Balloons, however, are at the mercy of storms and other flying objects. Despite these risks, people use them more than flying carpets because their non-magical nature makes them more readily available. Balloons have a load capacity of about twice that of the largest flying carpet, typically around eight persons (weighing c. 1,000 pounds in total) with sundry equipment and supplies totaling c. 1,000 pounds weight.

**Floating barge:** Again, this is applicable if your game system allows for such craft, then the following applies to such craft. Similar to the flying carpet, a rectangular floating barge can be of any size and serves as both a form of transportation and the foundation for a community. Given its giant size and uses, it is only slightly less common than the balloon. A floating barge serves well as a weapons platform for Prime Material Plane empires that hold territory in the Plane of Air. As it has proven effective, the natives of the Plane of Air have adopted the concept of a floating barge as a weapons platform. There are no limits to the size of the barge or how many people may occupy it, save that common sense dictates that the largest must be smaller than the largest flying ship.

**Airship:** The last of the common transportation methods used in the Plane of Air, this category includes sailing ships that have been magically altered so they can sail the plane. Airships may take the form of any waterborne craft from to bizarre constructs that would not float on water. Of the four categories, this one best allows you to describe the truly fantastic. Use models of historical sailing vessels from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries as the bases for sailed airships.

#### CREATURES

This sample list is far from complete. Any number of aerial creatures call the Plane of Air home. Many from the Prime Material Plane came to this plane through vortices and portals suspended in air. There are also intelligent creatures that willingly came to the Plane of Air. The samples below are basic categories of creatures that may be found on this plane. The specific creatures are up to you, and you might well consider creating aerial creatures of fish-like sort, even “wind whales” for the plane.

**Elementals:** Air Elementals, such as djinn, are the true denizens of the plane. However, they come in several varieties and range widely in intelligence. Air Elementals not only are found in their own distinct forms, but they also may appear as elemental forms of mundane creatures. When encountered, the number of elementals will decrease as their power and/or intelligence goes up. Thus, non-intelligent elementals the size of small birds may gather in large flocks, while larger and more intelligent elementals will be found in fewer numbers.

**Mundane:** This category refers to flying Prime Material Plane creatures: most notably, birds and insects. Though they are not native to the plane, many have adapted to it and may appear slightly different. Those that have not changed are likely new

arrivals. But regardless of how they arrived or how long they've been on the plane, these mundane species call the Plane of Air home.

**Djinni** (Note that the plural of the term is **djinn**, the singular **djinni**): Manipulators of the wind, djinni also the masters of elemental air magic. Their empires cover as much territory, if not more, than the air elementals combined. Unlike their elemental counterparts, djinn have cities and work to gather allies and trade throughout the Plane of Air as well as the Prime Material Plane. The djinni's slow but steady consolidation of power is a mystery if they are not working to take over the Plane of Air. Djinn are more powerful than adventurers from the Prime Material Plane. The number encountered outside of their cities should be comparable to the strength of the adventuring party.

**Drake:** Depending on the game system you're using, these beasts may be referred to as drakes or dragons. They are rare on the Plane of Air. Drakes are always encountered alone and those likely to be encountered have an affinity to the element of air. If the adventuring party is not strong enough to survive a meeting with one of these creatures, do not hesitate to choose another type of encounter.

#### MAJOR PHYSICAL FEATURES

Not surprisingly, there are no physical features for the Plane of Air, other than clouds and possibly thermals and winds, these depending on your game system and the decision of your game master. The plane is a limitless sky. What little there is other than as mentioned comes from other planes. Also, most air elementals are insubstantial. This makes the plane feel barren to residents of the Prime Material Plane – until they come across elemental spheres floating through the plane, that is.

#### HAZARDS

For residents of the Prime Material Plane, the Plane of Air is the safest elemental plane to venture to. This does make the plane free of danger. Violent winds, massive storm systems and lightning strikes are the greatest natural hazards the plane has to offer. These may not seem like a threat to travelers, but this is a grave misconception on the part of many first-time travelers. With nothing to stop the storms from gathering or to keep the winds from blowing, large sections of the plane can turn into storms the size of planets.

Without limitations on the size of a sky and without large objects to cut wind into smaller streams or slow it down, the wind takes on a strength that can rip flesh from bone. What makes the winds so deadly isn't just their speed, but the fact that there's nothing to signal their arrival. A traveler can fly into a windstorm before it's too late to change course. The severity of the storm only then makes itself known to onlookers. Since the weather on the Plane of Air is far worse than a storm on the Prime Material Plane, use the tables below to create storms appropriate to the plane.

#### WEATHER

01-34	Clouds
35-64	Wind
65-00	Storm

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**Clouds:** The clouds described on this table range from thin wisps to large cumulous. The clouds may be of any size and number, but they are not dense enough to form storms. However, the potential of such clouds to become a storm should not be seen as nonexistent. Forces both magical and mundane can cause large clouds to collapse and turn into a storm. When transformed to be compatible with the plane, travelers might well find clouds have substance, some actually being as solid as land to their new forms.

**Wind:** Winds on the Plane of Air can become violent. That's because there's little to slow them down. Please note that the table below does not apply to conditions found near maelstroms. Maelstroms are more violent than the typical storm and have their own wind table. The speeds for each category of wind are listed in parentheses. Consult your game system's rules to determine the effects the wind category has.

### WINDS

01-07	Calm (0 mph)
08-12	Very Light Breeze (1-3 mph)
13-18	Light Breeze (4-7 mph)
19-23	Gentle Breeze (8-13 mph)
24-29	Moderate Breeze (14-19 mph)
28-34	Fresh Breeze (20-25 mph)
35-40	Strong Breeze (26-31 mph)
41-45	Near Gale (32-37 mph)
46-51	Gale (38-45 mph)
52-56	Strong Gale (46-55 mph)
57-62	Whole Gale (56-63 mph)
63-67	Storm Force (64-75 mph)
68-73	Weak Hurricane (76-100 mph)
74-78	Moderate Hurricane (101-125 mph)
79-84	Stiff Hurricane (126-150 mph)
85-89	Strong Hurricane (151-176 mph)
90-95	Whirlwind (177-238 mph)
96-00	Cyclonic (239-299 mph)

**Storm:** Storms on the Plane of Air are much larger than anything encountered on a Prime Material Plane world. In addition to being able to dwarf their Prime Material Plane counterparts, Plane of Air storms can grow to the size of a maelstrom. Maelstroms are storms of great power and devastating force. Winds associated with these storms can be so fierce that they can strip unprotected flesh from bone. Small objects that cause little damage under ordinary circumstances can kill. Something as weak as a blade of grass can become as sharp as an arrowhead with speeds associated with gunpowder weapons.

### WINDS

01-07	Gentle Breeze (8-13 mph)
08-12	Moderate Breeze (14-19 mph)
13-18	Fresh Breeze (20-25 mph)
19-23	Strong Breeze (26-31 mph)
24-29	Near Gale (32-37 mph)
28-34	Gale (38-45 mph)

35-40	Strong Gale (46-55 mph)
41-45	Whole Gale (56-63 mph)
46-51	Storm Force (64-75 mph)
52-56	Weak Hurricane (76-100 mph)
57-62	Moderate Hurricane (101-125 mph)
63-67	Stiff Hurricane (126-150 mph)
68-73	Strong Hurricane (151-176 mph)
74-78	Whirlwind (177-238 mph)
79-84	Cyclonic (239-299 mph)
85-89	Light Tornado (300-362 mph)
90-95	Moderate Tornado (363-427 mph)
96-00	Strong Tornado (428-520 mph)

In addition to involving wind, storms may also be accompanied by precipitation.

### PRECIPITATION

01-11	Rain
12-22	Thunderstorm
23-33	Hail
34-44	Sleet
45-55	Light Snow
56-66	Moderate Snow
67-77	Heavy Snow
78-88	Blizzard
89-00	Maelstrom (Roll twice, ignore results above 88)

The duration of the storm uses the table below with the die roll table under the section on elemental spheres.

### Storm Duration

01-09	Minutes
10-18	Hours
19-27	Days
28-36	Weeks
37-45	Fortnights
46-54	Months
55-63	Years
64-72	Decades
73-81	Scores
82-90	Centuries
91-00	Millennia

### Storm Diameter

01-15	1d10 x 100 yards
16-35	1d10 x 1,000 yards
36-60	1d10 x 1 mile
61-75	1d10 x 10 miles
76-95	1d10 x 100 miles
96-00	1d10 x 1,000 miles

**Maelstrom Winds**

01-07	Strong Gale (46-55 mph)
08-12	Whole Gale (56-63 mph)
13-18	Storm Force (64-75 mph)
19-23	Weak Hurricane (76-100 mph)
24-29	Moderate Hurricane (101-125 mph)
28-34	Stiff Hurricane (126-150 mph)
35-40	Strong Hurricane (151-176 mph)
41-45	Whirlwind (177-238 mph)
46-51	Cyclonic (239-299 mph)
52-56	Light Tornado (300-362 mph)
57-62	Moderate Tornado (363-427 mph)
63-67	Strong Tornado (428-520 mph)
68-73	Light Jovian (521-650 mph)
74-78	Moderate Jovian (651-800 mph)
79-84	Strong Jovian (801-950 mph)
85-89	Light Saturnian (951-1,100 mph)
90-95	Moderate Saturian (101-1,250 mph)
96-00	Strong Saturnian (1,251+ mph)

**Maelstrom Diameter**

01-14	1d10 x 1 mile
15-28	1d10 x 10 miles
29-42	1d10 x 100 miles
43-57	1d10 x 1,000 miles
58-72	1d10 x 10,000 miles
73-86	1d10 x 100,000 miles
87-00	1d10 x 1,000,000 miles

Beyond these aerial hazards and others that plague the sky of a Prime Material Plane world, the Plane of Air may contain giant birds of prey, sentient races who don't take kindly to outsiders, and pockets of poisonous air. Since the plane is mostly empty air, these hazards are spread out far enough to make them an inconvenience compared to the dangerous winds and storms that can appear anywhere. Few ailments exist in the plane of air to plague a traveler due to constant open circulation.

**PHYSICAL TRAITS**

The Plane of Air has few physical features that haven't been imported from somewhere else. The chief building block of solid objects is compressed and hardened air, which ranges from a milky blue-white to clear. As such, it makes very poor material for constructing anything other than invisible walls. Few people use solidified air for construction, preferring materials they can see. Unless they're building a trap, that is.

Gravity is virtually nonexistent on this plane; it only exists on elemental spheres from the Plane of Earth and the decks of flying vessels. While on board a ship, gravity always pulls down towards the keel but the keel pushes objects down, so standing on the outside of a ship's hull is not possible. Characters can stand on the bottom side of a barge, however, because it's flat.

The direction of down on the Plane of Air is whichever direction a traveler thinks it is. This allows him to fall towards or away from objects if magical or mechanical flight is unavailable to

the character. However, this is not the case when a character is located on a gravity plane or within the field of an elemental sphere. The character can't simply imagine down is in another direction when he can feel gravity under his feet. In these instances, he needs to walk off the edge of a structure or use some means to fly as if he were on a Prime Material Plane world in order to escape the gravity.

Gravity can still be an important factor. Other than certain clouds, Elemental spheres from the Plane of Earth are one of the few structures where walking is possible. Lacking a method of flight doesn't prevent travel, although it does hinder a character. Characters without any means to fly may choose to "fall" towards any direction. Panprobability is one of the Legendary Adventure game Abilities that will give the character the use of flight while on the Plane of Air. This method of travel is limited as the character can not fly off a rock with gravity. Therefore, travelers bound to a surface by gravity need to fall off before Panprobability will work.

Not possessing a skill or spell to fly forces a character to use an attribute, such as Precision in the LA game, but he can only move at one-quarter the normal speed he would otherwise possess. Flight is still based on "falling" towards a direction, but without ground there's an illusion of controlled flight. The character needs to rethink "down" in order to change directions, making maneuverability clumsy, and necessitating another ability check to succeed in changing directions. *[D20 characters would use their Intelligence scores to determine their chances of success, but they possess a very poor maneuverability.]* How long it takes a character to become accustomed to moving between gravity wells is up to you as the game master. On average, it takes a few days to a few weeks before a character no longer needs to make any checks to fly.

Time appears to be at a standstill on the Plane of Air simply because it's always day. This is misleading as the plane has no visible sun and prevents an accurate method of keeping track of time without a mechanical clock. Time passes at the same rate as on the Prime Material Plane and the Plane of Air has no affect on the flow of time. The dimensional matrix of the plane must be altered in order to change the flow of time in relation to the cosmos to affect the entire plane.

**The Plane of Air** It overlaps the Prime Material Plane and all other physical planes. Thematically speaking, the plane can be viewed as being aligned to Order. Gravity is wherever a character thinks it is, winds may blow at almost any time, and precipitation from sudden storms radiates out in all directions, but these follow a pattern that could ultimately be predicted. Unless your cosmology differs from the standard model, the alignment will be the same as the Prime Material Plane.

Magic on the Plane of Air behaves differently than magic on the Prime Material Plane by following the Law of Elemental Dominance. All augmentations apply to magic that is elemental based. Other forms of magic, such as necromancy, remain unaffected. Air-based spells have their effects doubled along with their durations and have their casting grade reduced by one in cost, increased by one in effect. You may assume electrical spells are based on Air. The Law of Elemental Dominance for the Plane of Air is below:

**Dominator:** Elemental Earth dominates Air. Unlike the other elements, Earth can trap Air or choke it off. Thus, spells

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that are Earth-based can be cast normally on this plane. The duration of Earth-based magic is doubled, but effects are not.

**Dominated:** Elemental Water has no power over Elemental Air. Air always escapes the bonds of Water, making such spells weak on this plane. As a result, all Water-based spells cast on this plane are reduced to their minimums and are cast at one grade less than their true power.

**Opposed:** Elemental Fire opposes Elemental Air. Neither can gain the upper hand. Fire needs Air in order to burn; Fire, in turn, helps Air to defeat Earth. It is a relationship built on an uneasy truce. Fire-based spells have their effects halved.

### INHABITANTS

Numerous sentient species live on the Plane of Air, but it is likely that few can be said to be native. Many come from the Prime Material Plane and create planar outposts for trade with the plane's native inhabitants. There are two or possibly three well known sentient inhabitants of the Plane of Air: djinn, air elementals, and sylphs. The djinn are sometimes referred to as the "wind lords" due to their mastery of Air-based magic. While not the warmest of species towards outsiders, they are one of the few who openly trade with outsiders.

Air elementals are much harder to deal with. They are amorphous and fast and they do not like the mortal races due to their slower pace. An air elemental is always quick to judge and may also be experienced enough to correctly make snap decisions. However, not all air elementals possess such faculties. It is the greater air elementals, the nobility of the race, that possess the intelligence necessary to deal with other species. The rank and file of the race is reflexively just as quick, but lacks the same intellect. They respond mainly to stimuli and react on instinct. Unfortunately for travelers, these are the commonly encountered elementals, since nobility is scarce.

Sylphs are human-like creatures of the Plane of Air that most resemble fairies or perhaps sprite-like elves. They are good looking but capricious folk, so dealing with them is often somewhat uncertain in outcome. There are all manner of different sized communities of sylphs found on the plane, these places being rather similar to their human counterparts on the Prime Material Plane, but more fanciful in architecture and whimsical in operation.

It is suggested that there are two other intelligent races reside on the Plane of Air. While it is true that they are not native to the plane, they are found in greater numbers here than on the Prime Material Plane. The beings in question are intelligent birds and drakes (specifically air and wind drakes). These races are not so well known as the djinn and air elementals due to their smaller numbers and reclusive nature.

As stated earlier, all manner of unintelligent beings from Prime Material Plane worlds call this plane home. There are equally as many species that are native to the Plane of Air, however. Most of the native animals are elemental variants of their Prime Material counterparts. Insects and other flying creatures dominate the unintelligent life that inhabits the plane.

The inhabitants described above are the main dwellers of the Plane of Air. Dust devils and wind sprites are examples of other species that may also be found on the plane. Consult your game system for additional creatures inhabiting this place.

### INCORPORATING INTO AN EXISTING CAMPAIGN

In a normal cosmology, it's assumed that the Plane of Air is part of your campaign. This is especially true when Air-based spells are used. Replacing a cosmos with the Plane of Air creates a vast and mostly empty place. As such, it is more likely that you may wish to give traits of the Plane of Air to your cosmos without leaving the cosmology empty. It would be an interesting campaign where all of existence is a breathable, but mostly empty eternal day.

It is easier to replace a plane with another Plane of Air, but be warned that this has a huge impact on the cosmology. Being that the plane overlaps the Prime Material Plane, having two Planes of Air, even if the second is not connected to the Prime Material Plane, will shift the balance of the cosmos to a dominance of Air. Most likely, the cosmos will have elemental planes with weak connections to it or which are cut off entirely from it. Reestablishing access to the other elemental planes would restore the balance and return the cosmos to its "default" state. However, if the plane your second Plane of Air replaces is not in the inner region of your cosmos, the shift will not only be towards an Air-dominant state, but encounters with natives of both Planes of Air will possess the polarities of the Plane of Air located in your outer cosmos. For example, a second Plane of Air located along the Celestial metaphysical axis of a cosmos will give you an overwhelming number of benevolent creatures likely to deal with travelers in a fair and honest manner.

The easiest use of the Plane of Air is the application of its traits. Augmentation by the Plane of Air does not necessarily impose all of its traits, but the most common is the Law of Elemental Dominance. A cosmos so affected will possess the chosen traits on all planes, perhaps causing voids to be filled with a breathable atmosphere. It should also be noted that the rules for storms and maelstroms can also be applied to a plane. In fact when you add degrees to a plane, the effects are multiplied by the chosen degree. If you apply these qualities to a cosmos, the other elemental planes are affected as if they are one degree less (minimum of 1). This means that maelstroms can be six times their size on a standard Plane of Air. The following are examples of traits from the Plane of Air. Not all aspects of the plane must be applied. For example, if you do not want maelstroms, but want a plane to have constant winds, it would still have the same degree of affiliation for the Plane of Air, even though there's no chance of maelstroms.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Degree

Voids are breathable atmospheres.

Storms can be found in the empty regions of the plane.

Winds are predominant in the empty regions.

The majority of the plane is air; there are no worlds or large bodies of land, but clouds may be semi-solid or solid to creatures or transformed to the nature of the plane.

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree

Voids are pure air.

Storms are common in the empty regions.

Maelstroms are twice the size of those on the Plane of Air.

Winds are everywhere, but are not strong (gentle breezes).

There are fewer solid surfaces than in the Plane of Air.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree

Only breathable atmospheres exist.

Storms travel through the plane's sky.

Maelstroms are monstrous (3x) in comparison to those in the Plane of Air.

Winds are constant breezes, at minimum.

There are only  $\frac{1}{3}$  one-third as many solid surfaces as in the Plane of Air.

### 4<sup>th</sup> Degree

All atmospheres are pure air.

Storms can form anywhere.

Maelstroms are extensive (4x) compared to those in the Plane of Air.

Winds blow at no slower than a strong breeze.

There are no more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  one-quarter as many solid surfaces on the plane as the Plane of Air.

### 5<sup>th</sup> Degree

Pockets of rarified air drift through the plane.

Storms are a daily occurrence.

Maelstroms are so large (5x) that they dwarf most major features on a plane.

Winds blow at gale forces or greater constantly.

The plane contains no more than one-fifth of the solid surfaces found on the standard Plane of Air.

### 6<sup>th</sup> Degree

Rarified pockets of air envelop whole regions of the plane.

Storms are constant.

Maelstroms are extremely massive (6x).

Winds constantly blow at hurricane speeds or higher.

The plane contains few, if any solid surfaces compared to the Plane of Air.

## THE ELEMENTAL PLANE OF EARTH

Imagine a subterranean world where no matter how far you travel or how deep you dig, you reach a surface you can't dig through or run to a pocket of magma and are forced to stop. Strata after strata define this plane. Unlike a Prime Material Plane world, the layers do not indicate how deep within the earth a character is. Digging through a layer of hard rock may find the character staring at a layer of sand. One would never know until that layer is broken through, which surprises many first-time travelers. This plane is not for the inexperienced. Air is a rare commodity, making this a dangerous plane for travelers not magically adapted to it.

### SIZE AND LAYOUT

The Elemental Plane of Earth is an infinite expanse of soil and rock. Few would ever call this plane home as it generally lacks light and other important nutrients for survival. For burrowers,

however, this plane is a veritable paradise. The only respite for surface dwellers are hollowed out tunnels, caves and caverns, found sporadically throughout the plane. Being a plane of subterranean realms, few light sources exist and most are magical, to conserve air for breathing. This results in communities being limited to mining camps at best.

Given the size of the Plane of Earth, it is difficult for a person to navigate through it and make sense of the layout. The stratification of soils, rock, and mineral deposits follow no pattern and are not consistent in thickness or size. Subterranean races may find this to their liking, but surface dwellers will not enjoy being forced to sleep in the mine they work. Fissures, caves, caverns, and tunnels provide the only room for mortals to move on the plane, but they usually aren't large and don't alleviate claustrophobia.

To an uninitiated traveler, the Plane of Earth looks no different than a cavern system on a Prime Material Plane world. But spending a short amount of time exploring the confines shows the Plane of Earth is far different. Earthquakes, cave-ins, and a thick dust plaguing the air are three indications that the traveler is not on the Prime Material Plane. The dust is so thick in some places that it's a foamy goo suspended in the air. It not only clogs the lungs, but sticks to everything.

Travel wouldn't be so grueling if it wasn't for the dust-choked air. There's not enough for torches or oil lanterns in most places; while in the places where they will burn, they suck out the air and leave travelers asphyxiated. The threats to a traveler's lungs are numerous and not limited to dust and fouled air. The eyes are also endangered. Many of the plane's inhabitants are blind or have their eyes shielded. Touch and sound are the only reliable senses that one can use on the Plane of Earth. A character isn't likely to enjoy being surrounded by tons of rock and beings that eat anything they come in contact with.

Add to the misery the feeling of weight. Not just the weight one expects, but an oppressive weight that makes everything feel heavier. Some may believe that it's a pressure exerted by the plane while others think that the cause is the massive amount of earth. Either way, it's debatable whether the weight of the plane or its gravity is worse. If nothing else you can claim that the Plane of Earth exerts a strong sense of "down." The standard Plane of Earth is meant to impart a feeling of heaviness and unending burden.

Traveling through the Plane of Earth is an arduous task for those not magically adapted to it. If there's not a tunnel available, one has to be made. This means characters have to dig their way through the plane until they reach a hollowed-out spot. Short of teleportation or magic, there's no other way to move through the plane. Thus, the typical method of travel is by pickaxes and shovels to break through solid materials and clear packed soils out of one's path when spells aren't enough to reach the next settlement or cavern.

So, what's a traveler likely to encounter on his journey through the Plane of Earth? When digging, he probably won't run into another living being, but that doesn't mean he won't come across fissures, abandoned tunnels, mine shafts, or the ruins of a settlement. Surprise encounters with living beings are not so common in the Plane of Earth. Digging makes a lot of noise and by the time a space is cleared out to wiggle through, whoever's on the other side will have had time to prepare for the

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traveler. The sample tables below reflect encounters where the adventurers are making the noise. You can easily use portions of these tables to construct encounters where native burrowers happen upon the characters

### Die Roll

01-33	Objects
34-66	Creatures
67-00	Hazards

### Objects

01-15	Elemental Sphere
16-40	Cave
41-80	Cavern
81-85	Community
86-00	Tunnel

### Cavern

01-35	Chamber
36-65	Gallery/Shift
66-87	Maze Cavern
88-94	Rift
95-00	Vault

### Community

01-25	Abandoned Mine
26-50	Encampment
51-80	Mining Camp
81-95	Abandoned Town
96-00	Mining Town

### Tunnel

01-20	Dug
21-55	Collapsed
56-85	Burrowed
86-00	Dressed

### Creatures

01-35	Elementals (including djann)
36-70	Giant Worm
71-95	Giant Insects
96-00	Mechanical/Magical Burrower

### CAVE

Caves are one of the only places on the Plane of Earth where objects can be found. They are of a size ranging from a small room (10' x 20' x 10' high) to large areas of 100' x 50' by 30' high. Spaces larger than that are considered as caverns. Caves are irregular in shape, likely unevenly floored, and possibly part

of a complex. Note that caves in the Plane of Earth do not have stalactites or stalagmites because of scarcity of water to form such features. To discover if there are adjuncts to the space use the following table:

01-30	No adjoining areas
31-40	Chimney leading upwards to another cave, and roll again ignoring this result.
41-50	Shaft leading downward to another cave, and roll again ignoring this result
51-60	Natural passage (10'-100' long) leading to another cave, and roll again
61-70	One to three adjoining caves, roll again in each ignoring this result
71-80	One to three adjoining caves, roll again in each
81-90	One to three tunnels 20'-200' long, roll again at the end of each
91-00	Adjoining cavern (see below)

### CAVERN

Caverns are the only other points on the Plane of Earth where objects can be found. This also means that they are the main adventuring sites for the plane. When encounters take place, they're in openings between the layers of the plane. The table below does not take into account natural or artificial spaces; rather it is a sample list of major features common to cavern-cave systems.

01-25	Chamber
26-40	Cavern with 1-3 galleries
41-65	Maze cavern
66-90	Rift
91-00	Vault

**Chamber:** A chamber is an empty pocket, other than a tunnel, that serves as a room. Chambers may be as small as a closet to as vast as several square miles. The distinguishing feature of the chamber is its relatively low ceiling (no more than several stories in height). Natural caverns do not usually possess features such as stalactites, stalagmites, columns, and curtains (a wavy rock formation). Artificial spaces may be round or angled, but cut marks in the walls give away the nature of the chamber.

**Gallery/Shift:** Sometimes referred to as a chimney, the gallery is a vertical tunnel that occurs naturally. The length of the gallery may be as long as a mile or more to a few feet beyond a cave's ceiling or floor. Since these features are rarely encountered away from a chamber, an experienced spelunker who tunnels into a gallery will examine it to find the chamber it's connected to. Whether the chamber is intact or collapsed will not generally affect the gallery. If a gallery is in the floor of a collapsed chamber, it may be partially obstructed. As a random encounter, the portion the characters come across will extend at least 10 feet above and perhaps 5 feet below the character's tunnel. Galleries are narrow; when designing a gallery, think of it as a vertical tunnel for determining width and length.

**Maze Cavern:** A maze cavern is a random or semi-random series of interconnected tunnels. The formation of the maze cavern can range from being the result of a partial cave-in, columns and stalagmites, lava flows, or construction. The

jumble of tunnels makes passage through a maze cavern difficult or impossible. It can be an exercise in frustration as destroying a column or wall-like structure can collapse the maze cavern. Maze caverns are similar in size to chambers.

**Rift:** Rifts are chasms caused by earthquakes and shearing due fissures. The result splits a cavern fissure further apart, creating a lengthy gap but one that is not necessarily deep or wide. Rifts are violent aftermaths of the Plane of Earth's slow movement as cavern systems collapse and cause fissures. Fault lines move, rearranging sections of the plane's strata. Rifts can be dangerous to traverse or scale as another shift can cause the rift to squeeze together. The easiest way to conceive the maximum size of a rift in all dimensions is: river wide, ocean deep. As a river, rifts can be extremely long but they aren't very wide. Even if they extend miles deep, they normally will not widen.

**Vault:** The vault is the largest cavern structure one can imagine. Whereas a chamber can be miles in size but only a few stories in height, vault ceilings can be miles above their floors. These features are rare on the Plane of Earth because their size makes them likely to be crushed or experience partial collapses. Intact vaults are likely to house a community. Vaults may also be highly contested over as they're prime real estate on a plane whose riches outweigh its risks.

#### COMMUNITY

Communities of substantial size are exceedingly rare on the Plane of Earth. The plane isn't hospitable. Additionally, the plane's inhabitants make the problem worse. Communities of nonnative miners make hunting for food easier for natives since native species do not congregate in large numbers. Whole communities of foreigners are also less threatening to the plane's inhabitants than one native inhabitant would be. Both This level of danger makes existing communities wary of strangers.

**Abandoned mine:** One of the most common community sites on the Plane of Earth, the abandoned mine shows how much mortals are willing to risk to extract the plane's riches. Abandoned mines offer travelers shelter, albeit a poor one as the mine was most likely abandoned due to an attack or cave-in. Abandoned mines may have some useful items such as digging equipment and food, but otherwise do not contain anything of value to travelers.

**Encampment:** Depending on how views these communities, encampments are either unfortunate or inspiring. Unfortunate, because few will last. Inspiring, as they show the tenacity of people who risk everything for fortune. Encampments aren't necessarily start-up mining operations. Some were shelters that grew from stranded travelers who barely survived the plane. In this case, the inhabitants likely have lost hope of returning to their native worlds. The start-up mines are willing to trade with travelers since they haven't yet suffered from the dangers of the plane.

**Mining camp:** The mining camp is the most commonly encountered community. These are relatively small and are no larger than villages. For travelers, there are few amenities in a mining camp that would be of any use. The mine is the primary feature of the camp and may be as rich in minerals as a planet. The sample tables below can be used to randomly select the material mined. There's a 1 in 3 chance for either table if you use the random method.

#### Metal

01-10	Gold
11-25	Silver
26-30	Platinum
31-45	Copper
46-65	Iron
66-80	Tin
81-95	Lead
96-00	Mithril (or equivalent mythical metal of game master's choice)

#### Gemstone

01-05	Alexandrite
06-10	Aquamarine
11-15	Beryl (emerald, golden beryl, etc.)
16-20	Chrysoberyl
21-25	Corundum (emerald, ruby, sapphire, other colored, clear)
26-30	Diamond
31-35	Garnet (various colors)
36-40	Jade (jadeite, nephrite)
41-45	Jasper
46-50	Lapis lazuli
51-55	Malachite
56-60	Opal
61-65	Peridot
66-70	Quartz gems (amethyst, citrine, carnelian, sard, other valuable)
71-75	Serpentine
76-80	Topaz
81-85	Tourmaline
86-90	Turquois
91-95	Zircon
96-00	Other (game master's choice of mineral crystal being mined)

#### Rock

01-10	Alabaster
11-20	Brownstone (hard sandstone)
21-30	Coal (anthracite, bituminous)
31-40	Granite (or gneiss)
41-50	Jet
51-60	Limestone
61-70	Marble
71-80	Onyx
81-90	Salt
91-00	Slate

**Abandoned Town:** The remnant of a successful settlement, an abandoned town used to be a thriving mining operation. As with the abandoned mine, the town was deserted due to the mine running dry, a partial cave-in, or native creatures eating the town's inhabitants. The remains of the town may offer travelers adequate shelter except from earthquakes, and would serve as a defensible position against attacks by the plane's native creatures. As far as supplies go, few useful items should remain. The least likely items to be found are fresh water and food.

**Mining Town:** A mining town, whether on its path to ascendancy or on the decline, speaks of the stability of its mine and how prosperous it has been. Mining towns are rare because they must have an ample amount of food, water, and security for a prolonged period of time. While things are slow and plodding for the Plane of Earth's movements, earthquakes and cave-ins are more common than what one may expect until you consider the amount of weight pressing down on a cavern from above.

### TUNNEL

Tunnels refer to any structure that connects one cavern feature to another. Tunnels may be horizontal, vertical, or sloped. For the Plane of Earth, the tunnels are artificial. Natural passages are not covered here as they should be part of a cavern complex. The table for tunnels concerns itself with the constructs created to connect isolated caverns to allow physical travel through the plane, such as a tunnel left by a burrowing animal. Tunnels may be of any size, but are always built for the comfort of the creature that uses it.

**Dug:** Tunnels of this type are hewn out of the plane with tools. From hastily dug tunnels to mine shafts, dug tunnels are mechanically manufactured. Some dug tunnels will be shored up with bracings of wood, worked stone or masonry. However you wish to use these tunnels, the rule of thumb is that they are (or were) used by a civilization. For travelers, this could lead them to shelter, imprisonment, or worse.

**Collapsed:** Whatever a collapsed tunnel was used for, at least a section of it is in ruins. Collapsed tunnels may be partially obstructed, allowing the curious to see what's on the other side; filled in; purposefully caved-in; or partially crushed in. However a collapsed tunnel appears, using it should be difficult or impossible. You can choose or randomly determine which type of tunnel (dug, burrowed, or dressed) the characters come across. Unless you are planning on using it as a clue for an adventure or a side track, the type of tunnel is irrelevant.

**Burrowed:** Burrowed tunnels are created by subterranean creatures who claw or eat their way though the layers of the plane. Created by creatures as diverse as ants, worms, and moles all the way up to monstrous-sized tunnelers, burrowed tunnels are surprisingly uniform in their size. Even in the case of an ant lair, tunnels that turn perpendicular do so with some sense of uniformity. Burrowed tunnels make crossing the Plane of Earth easier, but characters using them run the risk of being attacked.

**Dressed:** Tunnels of this sort are rare. A dressed tunnel is one that has been worked with craftsmanship. The significance of a tunnel that's been dressed extends beyond this, however. It represents a community that has been around for an extended period of time. If the tunnel is intact, it signifies that that area is stable and has been so for years. This is not a guarantee that the area won't collapse, but should make the players feel more secure. Services likely to be available near such a tunnel may include a warm meal, an equally warm bed, and a market where characters can stock up on supplies.

### CREATURES

There are more subterranean creatures than can be listed on a sample random encounter list. To help determine

creatures that would be appropriate for an encounter within the Plane of Earth, consider that the plane emphasizes strength over intelligence. Thus, many creatures that populate the plane are generally strong, slow, and dimwitted. This is an oversimplification, but the stereotype serves its purpose and can be used to catch the players unawares when they encounter an intelligent and speedy opponent.

**Elementals:** Earth Elementals are composed of the same material as the plane. They are slow, plodding, and exceedingly strong. Most are unintelligent and act by instinct. Even the most intelligent Earth Elementals are hard-pressed to understand a mundane scholar or comprehend the thoughts of the Air Elementals. There are also elemental versions of mundane creatures that reside on the plane. Such creatures possess special forms that allow them to survive, but otherwise remain unchanged. In all probability your game system will elaborate on such creatures.

**Giant Worm:** Next to the elementals, one of the commonly encountered beings is the giant worm. The giant worm is a massive creature ranging in size from three feet in diameter and ten feet long to over twenty feet in diameter and more than sixty feet long. Giant worms are dangerous opponents because they can easily tunnel through the layers of the plane, allowing them to attack a target from any angle. Unless characters can travel through solid materials, they're susceptible to being swallowed.

**Giant Insects:** On the Plane of Earth, insects come in many sizes. It isn't the mundane variety that characters encounter that cause problems, but those large enough to take a finger or toe. When insects of this size or larger are encountered, they will attack as they see travelers as threats or intruders. Worse yet, insects are rarely encountered individually. Adventurers who disturb these creatures are likely to be overwhelmed by large numbers.

**Mechanical/Magical Burrower:** Devices powered by magic or mechanical power are rare on the Plane of Earth as the inhabitants of the plane attack them on sight. The most reasonable explanation for this is that these terrors kill anything in their paths. The occupants inside the machines may not be aware of the dangers they pose. For travelers, the only options are to flee at all possible speed or to create a barrier that can hold the burrower at bay until they can reach safety.

**Fungi:** You might have a variety of fungi found on the Elemental Plane of Earth. Such vegetable forms may range in size from very small to giant, be both edible and poisonous, and have fantastic properties such as intelligence, locomotion, phosphorescence, and sound emission. If your game system does not include such life forms, you can create them or consult the Lejendary Adventure game Beasts of Lejend for a roster of such things.

### MAJOR PHYSICAL FEATURES

The most notable physical aspect of the Plane of Earth isn't its physical features, but the absence thereof. Cavern complexes, pockets, and other hollowed out areas are the only places mortals can travel without magic. The plane itself is the only major physical feature. Life on the plane is harsh for mundane beings, but some do try to eke out an existence there. Plants, fungi, molds, slimes, and bacteria can be found on the plane, and they fare better than other surface creatures.



## HAZARDS

Everything about the Plane of Earth is hazardous. Collapses, earthquakes, fissures, and sudden shifts of the ground or the walls around a character are just as dangerous to the elementals as they are to the unsuspecting traveler. Life here is hard; surviving is harder.

Where the Plane of Fire impinges on it, there are magma streams that threaten to incinerate the incautious traveler.

Fresh air is a rare commodity and water is even scarcer. The few sources of water that can be found must be kept isolated from the plane. If water is not stored in this manner, it quickly combines with the fouled air and loose soils to form sludge.

Fires are another problem. While elemental fire can be used to melt rock, it also consumes what little air the plane has. Added to all of this, the natural out-gassing of rocks can fill a cavern with a poisonous atmosphere.

EVENT
01-33
34-66
67-00

Out-gassing  
Earthquake  
Cave-in

**Out-gassing:** The atmosphere is poisonous. How toxic you wish the environment to be should be limited to what the characters can handle. For unprepared characters, the effects of poisoned air can have deleterious effects. They can be fatal and bring the party to an untimely demise. As such, the effects of the gas, should be tailored to your needs.

**Earthquake:** Earthquakes are one of the most common threats on the Plane of Earth. While the plane may seem to be shifting ever so slowly, the tunneling through the layers of rock places stress on the material above the tunnel. Eventually, all passages and cavern complexes succumb to the weight of the plane. When a collapse happens, it sends shockwaves through the plane, affecting  $1d4 \times 100$  miles or more around the area (using the table for elemental spheres). Some of these tremors can trigger collapses in other tunnels and cause fissures and fault lines to move, triggering a larger quake that radiates further out, and possibly affecting the region that started the quake. While larger quakes are rare, they can strike at any time.

Earthquakes can last for two minutes. If one quake wasn't bad enough, there is a chance that a quake will be followed up by another, usually of lesser strength within a few minutes to a few days. Unlike other tables, the one below includes several lines of information covering the chance of tunnel collapses and aftershocks after d4 minutes/d4 hours/and d4 days (in percentages). Quakes strong enough to trigger a cave-in are marked with an asterisk while a double asterisk represents a quake that causes a full cave-in or crushes tunnels and caverns (see **Cave-ins** below). If there is another quake, roll on the table again to determine how severe it is. Subtract 5% from the die roll for every minute after the first, 10% for every hour beyond the first hour after the quake struck, and 20% for every day after the first (minimum of 1%). As time passes, the severity of the possible aftershocks is reduced. Thus, an aftershock of a massive quake that happens four days after the initial quake

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will have a -60%, causing the aftershock to be a slight or minor tremor at best. However, these aftershocks can trigger another quake.

### EARTHQUAKE

01-30	Slight	20/15/02
31-55	Minor	25/20/10
56-80	Moderate*	35/25/15
81-95	Major*	55/40/25
96-00	Massive**	75/50/30

**Cave-ins:** Just as earthquakes are part and parcel with the Plane of Earth, so are cave-ins. As stated above, the massive weight of the plane over time crushes empty spaces. Earthquakes are likely to cause the collapse of a tunnel or cave. Rock weakens over time, allowing for its natural collapse if an earthquake doesn't speed up the process. The table below can be applied to caverns and tunnels. Cave-ins marked with an asterisk can trigger an earthquake. If the event is in a cavern, there's a 10% chance per category (up to 50%) below **crushed** that an earthquake occurs. For caverns that suffer a complete collapse, you should arbitrate the chance of an earthquake.

### CAVE-IN

01-20	1/4 collapsed
21-45	1/2 collapsed
46-63	3/4 collapsed
64-88	Full*
89-98	Full – impassable*
99-00	Crushed*

Results that indicate a partial cave-in spread out five to ten feet from the affected region for every ten feet of debris that fills the tunnel. A 1/4 collapse represents a partially obstructed tunnel/cavern that can be passed with relative ease. A collapse that fills half of a tunnel/cavern can make passage through the region difficult. A 3/4 collapse will most likely make the tunnel impassable without clearing away enough debris for the characters to wiggle through. The difference between a full cave-in and one that's impassable is that the impassable collapse cannot be cleared away as more debris fill in any space that characters attempt to clear.

### PHYSICAL TRAITS

Once a character gets past the massive amounts of earthen materials that are the most prominent feature of the Plane of Earth, he will quickly note the differences between the strata. There's no uniformity to the layers. They can be anything from really soft rocks, like chalk and shale, to hard stones, such as marble and granite, with layers of dirt, sand, gravel, and clay mixed in. For many, trying to estimate how long it would take to build a tunnel, let alone a stable one, is a frustration due to the variety of the layers and the hardness of the materials. However, if one finds a pipe of softer material in stone, then tunneling becomes much simpler.

Gravity makes its presence well known on the Plane of Earth. There's nowhere a character can go on this plane to escape the insistent pull. The exertion of force is so powerful that many

forego trying to haul around equipment to alleviate the feel of the plane's weight. The issue of weight is important to mention here because despite how its pull is felt, the softer layers of the plane are unaffected. This is a mystery that confounds travelers.

The weight and mass of a plane have no effect on how time flows. Unless a sphere or a singular dimensional matrix has twisted threads, time passes on the Plane of Earth at the same rate as the Prime Material Plane. Since there's no natural light source, the plane feels as if it's been plunged into a perpetual night. Thus, it is difficult to tell time without a magical or mechanical timepiece.

Although the plane is considered to have one degree of separation from the Prime Material Plane, the Plane of Earth is still located at the origin point. As a physical plane, it overlaps other physical planes and, unless you're creating a nonstandard cosmology, has the same polarity as the Prime Material Plane. *[For the d20 system, the plane has the same alignment as the Prime Material Plane.]*

Magic on the Plane of Earth operates under different laws than on the Prime Material Plane. Elemental-based magic is the only form of magic that this plane augments. Earth-based spells have their effects reduced by one in cost, increased by one in effect. The Law of Elemental Dominance for the Plane of Earth is below:

**Dominator:** Fire dominates Earth. Unlike the other elements, only Fire can reduce Earth to ash or some other form. Thus, spells that are Fire-based can be cast normally on this plane. The duration of Fire-based magic is doubled, but the effects are not.

**Dominated:** Elemental Air has no power over Elemental Earth. Earth crushes Air, squeezing it until it is foul, making Air-based spells weak. As a result, all Air-based spells cast on the plane are reduced to their minimums and are cast as one grade less in power.

**Opposed:** Elemental Earth opposes Elemental Water. Neither can gain the upper hand. Water erodes Earth over time, but Air keeps Water at bay while Fire melts Earth so it may flow over itself and regain the territory it lost. Earth needs Water because it defeats Fire while Water needs Earth to dominate Air. Water-based spells have their effects halved.

### INHABITANTS

It is hard to think of the Plane of Earth's sentient races as being intelligent, other than perhaps the djinn, earth elementals related to the djinn of Air, efreet of fire, and marids of water. The most predominant race is that of earth elementals. They are slow, plodding, and physically fixated. The smartest of them are less intelligent than the average mortal. While they are not inherently selfish, they are unfriendly and violent. Perhaps it is a reflection of their physical bodies: hard and unwilling to yield. The main reason that the earth elementals are seen as unintelligent is because they often give in to instinctual impulses.

There are many unintelligent creatures throughout the plane. Some were transported from the Prime Material Plane and have adapted to the plane. Most notably are subterranean creatures

that don't rely on sight. Additionally, any Prime Material Plane creature can be found in an elemental form, which may make the creature appear different.

While elementals and mundane subterranean creatures are the well known life on the plane, you shouldn't feel limited to these choices. Other examples include oozes and slimes that feed off of the sludge created by mixing the plane's material with liquids. See also your game system.

#### INCORPORATING INTO AN EXISTING CAMPAIGN

This book assumes that the Plane of Earth is part of a campaign. This is a necessity in a game where the use of Earth-based magic is allowed. If you replace a cosmology's normal physical traits for this plane's, you create a cosmos where planes are composed of endless layers of rock and soil. Additionally, what would be considered a breathable atmosphere in this cosmos would be poisonous for travelers from a standard one.

If you are considering replacing a plane with a second Plane of Earth, realize that you are changing the elemental balance of the cosmos. An extra Elemental Plane of Earth in relation to the other elemental planes shifts magic towards an Earth-dominant cosmos. The easiest scenario to enact is one in which either only the Plane of Earth exists, or the other elemental planes have limited access. Reestablishing access to the other elemental planes would restore balance and return the cosmos to its "default" state. Please note that this option is far easier to use than a wholesale use of elemental earth traits on your entire but it does present the problems addressed above.

What if your additional Plane of Earth isn't part of the physical planes? The shift will not only be towards an Earth-dominant state, but it will also make the encounters with natives of both Planes of Earth possess the polarities of the plane located in your outer cosmos. Imagine a cosmos where elemental Earth is corrupted, a race of beings already physically minded possessing traits of moral corruption. You could possibly mark the use of earthen goods or mineral wealth as a sign of corruption.

The easiest use of the Plane of Earth is the application of its traits. Augmentation by the Plane of Earth does not necessarily impose all of its traits, but the most common is the Law of Elemental Dominance. A cosmology so affected will possess the chosen traits on all planes, perhaps causing voids between worlds and planes to be filled with dust, or where a world would be in a standard cosmology is a pocket in a void of layers of earth. While these are the two main features of the plane that spring to mind when applying traits to another plane, it should also be noted that the rules for out gassing and earthquakes can also be applied to a plane. When you add degrees to a plane, the effects of the plane are multiplied by that degree. If you apply the qualities to a cosmos, the other elemental planes are treated as if they have one degree less (minimum of 1). This means that earthquakes can be six times their size on a standard Plane of Earth. The following are examples of traits from the Plane of Earth. Keep in mind that not all aspects of the plane's traits must be applied. For example, if you do not wish for earthquakes to exist on the plane, but wish it to have out gassing, it would still have the same degree.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Degree

Voids are filled with dust.

Out-gassing can be found in the empty regions of the plane.

Particulate matter is predominant in the empty regions.

The majority of the plane is layers of earth (sand, gravel, clay, stone); there are no worlds or large bodies of land only pockets in the layers.

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree

Voids are caverns in the rock.

Out-gassing is common in the voids of the plane.

Earthquakes are twice their size compared to those on the Plane of Earth.

There are fewer caverns than the Plane of Earth.

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree

Only dust-chocked atmospheres exist.

Out-gassing travel through the plane's caverns.

Earthquakes are monstrous (3x) in comparison to those on the Plane of Earth.

Cave-ins are common.

There are only one-third as many empty spaces as the Plane of Earth.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Degree

All atmospheres are filled with dense particulate matter.

Out gassing can occur anywhere.

Earthquakes are extensive (4x) compared to those on the Plane of Earth.

The plane trembles often; cave-ins are daily occurrences.

There are no more than one-quarter as many empty spaces on the plane as on the Plane of Earth.

#### 5<sup>th</sup> Degree

Pockets of foamy earth drift through the plane.

Out-gassing is a daily occurrence.

Earthquakes are so large (5x) that they affect most major features on a plane.

Cave-ins and tremors occur constantly.

The plane contains no more than one-fifth of the empty spaces found on the standard Plane of Earth.

#### 6<sup>th</sup> Degree

The atmosphere is a viscous mud-like foam.

Out-gassing is constant.

Earthquakes are extremely massive (6x).

Cave-ins are extremely frequent, along with minor earthquakes.

The plane contains few if any empty spaces compared to the Plane of Earth.

## THE ELEMENTAL PLANE OF FIRE

Eternal flames dance and undulate across the limitless realm of the Elemental Plane of Fire. Passions and emotions soar and wither with the temperaments of the flames. The plane, a realm where the emotions are personified in fire, shifts with the flames. But not all flames are searing. It is true that a traveler who comes to this plane unprotected magically is risking too much, as the flames will likely roast him in seconds. It's a mixed blessing whether the illumination the flames provide help to show a mortal his demise or what awaits him if his magical protections fail. The horrors of immolation are but a small price some are willing to pay to see the beauty hidden in the flames.

### SIZE AND LAYOUT

Like all of the physical planes, the Plane of Fire is infinite in size. Its layout is simple, resembling the surface of a Prime Material Plane world (albeit one made of fire) that stretches infinitely towards the horizon. Unlike a solid world, however, the Plane of Fire consists of innumerable layers of semi-solid surfaces that serve as "ground" its inhabitants can walk across. These so-called layers are easy enough to pass through that a traveler is not left feeling limited to a particular region, as they consist of the cooler fires of the plane.

Traveling can seem a bit peculiar to neophytes to the plane, but it requires only a small stretch of the imagination to realize the flames can serve as a way to move from one layer to the next. Geographically speaking, the plane can be mapped with features ranging from waterways to buildings or mountains. However, most cartographers find the task daunting because they're not used to viewing a reality where multiple maps detail the geography above and below an area.

Why is this important to understand? When you are designing adventure locations on the Plane of Fire, the lay of the land is a factor you should consider. If you're planning an adventure for low-powered characters, you'll want the encounter to take place within a limited area on the same layer of flames as they have fewer resources at their disposal. The Plane of Fire is also a three-dimensional plane with no region that is inaccessible to a character possessing the right tools. This is radically different from a Prime Material Plane world where the vacuum of space is the final arbitrator of where characters can go. Thus, the plane forces you to think of adventures on a "surface world" in the way you would design an underground dungeon complex.

None of the above description makes travel across the plane any easier. Crossing a writhing mass of flames that hold to a general shape, but may suddenly change, is daunting. Then there's the fact that the plane has no breathable atmosphere; it's filled with noxious fumes and roiling flames. Even with magical aid, flammable materials such as paper, wood, and cloth risk immolation without considerable protection. In areas where the flames are hot enough to burn the native inhabitants, metals with magical protections also become prone to melting. Imagine the discomfort and fear a mortal traveling across the plane experiences at the thought of the failure of his protections!

The one thing that can not be completely alleviated is the discomfort from the intense heat. Any traveler who hails from a plane that does not possess an affinity for the Plane of Fire cannot escape this feeling. No matter how many spells are cast to help cool the traveler, there is always warmth akin to a blistering summer day: uncomfortable in metal armors, but not enough to kill a well-prepared traveler. The plane should threaten characters with the potential of being roasted alive.

As the plane is confusing with its multiple layers, you should devise a system that makes sense to you but not necessarily to your players when their characters first arrive on the Plane of Fire. The paths between the layers are a great way to prevent your players from immediately understanding how the plane works. The descriptive information below should provide you with examples of ways to change the look of an area from what was expected.

### DIE ROLL

01-30	Objects
31-50	Creatures
51-00	Weather (See <b>Hazards</b> )

### OBJECTS

01-20	Elemental Sphere
21-80	Community
81-85	Fortress
86-00	Land Shift

### COMMUNITY

01-30	Thorp
31-60	Village
61-82	Town
83-89	City
90-00	Metropolis

### FORTRESS

01-25	Keep
26-50	Grand Keep
51-80	Citadel
81-95	Castle
96-00	Palace

### LAND SHIFT

01-20	Flame Loop
21-55	Geyser
56-85	Rift
86-00	Uplift

### CREATURES

01-35	Elementals
36-70	Mundane
71-95	Efreeti
96-00	Drake

The Plane of Fire is a realm of smoldering embers, flames, and raging infernos. Lakes and rivers of fire are the most commonly described feature of the plane. What little atmosphere exists between the flames is full of noxious fumes and sulfurous compounds. Encounters on the plane dazzle the eyes of travelers as flames of all hues and viscosities can change the way objects and creatures appear. The way flames shift confuses the minds of mortals trying to pass through objects made of solid flames. The roar of the flames makes digging and the tearing down of walls difficult to hear. This noise also makes it difficult for travelers to hear anyone approaching. Thus, the chance of being caught unawares is high, at least double the normal probability. Since any adventurer with sense would not go about his business with weapons drawn on a plane where the intelligent inhabitants are mercurial, the surprise of an encounter places travelers in a bind. Some sample encounter tables for the Plane of Fire are detailed below. Using the surprise factor, even a city emerging out of the flames can be momentarily disconcerting.

#### COMMUNITY

You might think communities on the Plane of Fire are quite rare, but on the contrary, the natives of this plane are more likely to live together than the inhabitants of other elemental planes. From the legendary City of Brass to isolated communities, the Plane of Fire has an extensive system of cities. Part of the number of communities is due to the passionate nature of the native inhabitants and the layered structure of the plane. This Plane has more "surface" area than the other elemental planes, making it that much more likely for a traveler to find a town.

**Thorp:** With no more than 50 people, the typical thorp on the Plane of Fire is likely a new community. Many are established by natives who have been exiled from their former cities due to shifting allegiances. Then again, a thorp may occupy a very large, mined elemental sphere with a garrison to oversee and defend the resources. Regardless of its purpose, a thorp will have little to offer the wary traveler.

**Village:** Communities with 51-250 inhabitants, villages normally boast of a proper inn and a blacksmith. Some goods will be available to the traveler, but quantities are limited compared to a village on the Prime Material Plane. Unlike a thorp, the village is usually subordinate to those in a community of a larger size and is much more likely to be visited by merchants and receive supplies from its patron community. The inhabitants of villages are often unfriendly towards travelers, increasing the chances that reinforcements from the larger community will greet those who don't get the message.

**Town:** Communities with 251-2,500 inhabitants, otherwise known as towns, are less common than villages. Unlike a village a town can be independent. A town is likely to have an assortment of goods for a traveler's needs, but this selection will be more limited than that for a town located on the Prime Material Plane. Towns on the Plane of Fire usually have two inns, a general store, and a blacksmith. This assortment of basic needs is sufficient for short-term stays. If the town swears allegiance to a larger community, it will possess a fortress capable of defending the town from threats on the ground or from the air.

**City:** Cities on the Plane of Fire are considered rare only because of their massive size. Cities have a population of 2,501-20,000 inhabitants. If one were to view a city on this plane

from above and remove the fiery air, it would be difficult to distinguish it from a city on the Prime Material Plane were it not for the brass that encases many of the structures. A character can buy more and better goods in a city on the Plane of Fire. Given its size, it is almost certain that such a city has connections with other cities on the plane and the Prime Material Plane. Cities do not need some sort of industry to justify their existence and they are well defended. In fact, most cities have a minimum of four fortresses capable of defending the city.

**Metropolis:** Exceedingly rare is the metropolis. Boasting of a population of 21,001-100,000 inhabitants, a metropolis that would serve as the heart of an empire or the capital of a major kingdom on the Prime Material Plane wields less power on the Plane of Fire because of shifting alliances. A metropolis on this plane is not only heavily guarded, it also has strong fortifications. The smallest metropolis will have at least six garrisons to protect the inhabitants from invasions. An additional fortress serves as a constabulary for policing the community and a guard force protects the assets of the metropolis' ruler. A metropolis on the Plane of Fire is an independent city-state that rarely swears allegiance to a kingdom or empire. At least two cities, a handful of towns, and numerous villages will also swear allegiance to it.

#### FORTRESSES

A realm where emotions are the rule of the land, the Plane of Fire sees its fair share of skirmishes and wars. Fortresses are always in an aggressive posture. Another feature that distinguishes the Plane of Fire's fortifications from those on a Prime Material Plane world is that they're made from metals rather than stone. Travelers who know enough about the plane know that fortresses should be avoided at all costs. Even if a traveler must visit one, it's best to leave as soon as possible.

**Keep:** The keep is the smallest fortification one would encounter on the Plane of Fire. Keeps must be located close to an adjoining community so that they may be resupplied. Of course, this assumes a keep does not have a portal inside it. While the function of the keep has not changed from its Prime Material Plane counterpart, it doesn't have to resemble one. It is suggested that a garrison of 11-30 warriors is typical of this structure.

**Grand Keep:** Grand keeps are larger versions of the standard keep. While they are not true citadels, they are built like them. Thus, a grand keep is a cross between a keep and a citadel. It is suggested that a garrison be of 31-50 warriors is typical of this structure.

**Citadel:** Citadels on the Plane of Fire are heavily fortified for territorial control and defense. Citadels are designed to withstand the onslaught of frequent warfare. All citadels have a portal within them for supplies and reinforcements. Citadels are almost universally held and built by the efreeti, unlike other planar fortresses that are usually used and built by creatures from the Prime Material Plane. It is suggested that a garrison be of 51-150 warriors is typical of this structure.

**Castle:** The castles on Prime Material Plane worlds are similar to those found on the Plane of Fire. There is no difference between the Prime Material Plane version and those that are found on this plane other than the material they're constructed from and the fact that castles on the Plane of Fire must be built to withstand frequent sieges. It is suggested that a garrison of 21-120 warriors is typical of this structure.

**Palace:** Palaces on the Plane of Fire are vast military complexes with near-impregnable walls hardened to withstand the toughest sieges. This is not to say that palaces designed in this manner cannot exist on the Prime Material Plane, but rather that the large size and military might make them too costly and tempting of a target there. Palaces found on the Plane of Fire are usually controlled by native residents. It is safe to assume that if a mortal being owns a palace, he must possess great power. It is suggested that a garrison of 101-200 warriors is typical of this structure

### LAND SHIFT

The surfaces of the Plane of Fire are anything but stable. While this can be perceived as a hazard, these occasional changes in the landscape are temporary, and serve as a means to move from one layer to another. Land shifts may cause damage from falling or a traveler being tossed about, but the flames themselves are no more deadly than they would be otherwise. If you don't want to decide on how long the land shift will last, you can use the time limit modifier table for elemental spheres.

**Flame Loop:** A flame loop is an arc of fire that curves through the air like a bridge. It can link one layer to another, bridge a gap across a rift, or span two points on a layer.

**Geyser:** At times the land can erupt, spouting flames that are brighter than the surrounding area. Flame geysers only flow in one direction, up. They therefore serve as a fast way to reach the layer above. A traveler then must find another way to return to the layer below.

**Rift:** One of the most dangerous land shifts is a rift. When a rift occurs, it literally tears a hole through the layer. The danger lies possibly falling through to the layer below. While a rift may not directly cause damage, a character will suffer impact damage from the fall. Rifts can span any distance across a flame layer and may be as wide as a canyon.

**Uplift:** An uplift is essentially the opposite of a rift. Instead of a hole that allows a traveler to fall to the flame layer below, the uplift thrusts a section of a layer towards the one above. Uplifts that do not reach the layer above can form temporary mesas instead. Unlike a rift, however, an uplift does not create a hazard unless a character walks off its edge.

### CREATURES

The sample list is far from complete. Consult your game system for additions, and create your own as desired. Unfortunately, given the nature of the Plane of Fire, there are few creatures that one encounters who are not native to the plane or who could not thrive in the flames. Creatures from the Prime Material Plane usually come to this plane through vortices and portals found in raging infernos and volcanoes. Some intelligent creatures willingly come to the Plane of Fire and make it their home. The four categories of creatures are not necessarily specific types of creatures.

**Elementals:** The Fire Elementals are the true natives of the plane. They come in several varieties and range widely in intelligence. Fire Elementals not only have their own distinct forms, but also can be elemental forms of mundane creatures. When encountered, the number of elementals decreases with the increased power and/or intelligence of the elementals. Thus, non-intelligent elementals the size of small birds may

gather in large groups, while larger and more intelligent elementals gather in fewer numbers. Fire Elementals are not known for their patience. Being highly emotional creatures, the elementals are quick to anger and slow to calm. Encounters with Fire Elemental are often sordid affairs. You may want to include salamanders as a special species of fire elemental.

**Mundane:** This category refers to creatures native to the Prime Material Plane that are able to thrive in fiery conditions. Many of the species have adapted to the Plane of Fire and may appear slightly different. Mundane creatures that haven't been altered are most likely new arrivals.

**Efreet:** The lords of flame, the efreet are undisputed masters of fire magic. They are mercurial beings ruled by their passions. Their patchwork alliances cover at least as much territory as all of the elementals combined, but there is no unity amongst the race. Unlike their elemental counterparts, the efreet live in cities and build alliances for trade and power throughout the plane as well as with traders from the Prime Material Plane. Members of this race are very physically powerful and virtually in a constant state of war, making them very formidable opponents in battle but keeping them from taking advantage of their own strengths.

**Drake:** Depending on the game system you're using, these beasts may be referred to as drakes or dragons (some have both). They are a rare sight on the Plane of Fire. Drakes are always encountered alone and the types most likely encountered here have an affinity to fire. If the adventuring party is not strong enough to survive a meeting with one of these creatures, do not hesitate to choose another encounter.

### MAJOR PHYSICAL FEATURES

The Plane of Fire's most prominent physical features are its flames. The Plane of Fire resembles the inside of a massive furnace. Second to this would be the layered nature of the plane, followed closely by the pillars of flame that support the layers. In fact, the pillars are a most peculiar feature because unlike the surrounding terrain, they are immutable. This isn't to say that the pillars of fire can't fail, but that they do not change if a land shift occurs in the area. The beds of hot embers are what forms the "land" of the plane, and such beds tend to form, then disappear as heat increases.

### HAZARDS

The searing heat and flames of the Plane of Fire are the primary hazards that threaten a traveler. These aren't the only hazards, however, as toxic gasses and superheated plasmas fill the spaces between the flames. Of all the material planes, this is the hardest for a character to survive. Imagine the power of someone capable of living here! Add to all of this the mercurial disposition of the natives and you can see just how hazardous the Plane of Fire is for travelers.

Fresh air and water are nearly impossible to find. Air is immediately consumed by the plane while water douses flames continuously until it is evaporated. Earth, in contrast, will liquefy and remain in a molten state or until it becomes a powdery ash.

Certain fires and temperatures can harm the native inhabitants of the Plane of Fire. For travelers with protection from the

plane's normal dangers, these flames still damage them as if they were burned by a normal fire on the Prime Material Plane.

#### WEATHER

01-34	Vapor Cloud
35-64	Wind Flame Draft
65-00	Inferno

**Vapor Clouds:** The types of clouds described in this table range from thin wisps to large nebulous gaps between the flames, filled with noxious and highly toxic fumes. They are referred to as vapor clouds because many of these contain cooled gases that condense before being reignited when the vapor contacts flames again. These vapors are hot enough to burn efreet and fire elementals. Vapor clouds may be any size and number, but they are normally not dense enough to form infernos. The potential for vapor clouds to become an inferno should not be seen as nonexistent, however. Forces both magical and mundane can cause large clouds to collapse and turn into an inferno.

**Wind Flame Draft:** The “winds” on the Plane of Fire can become violent. Although there is enough terrain to slow the flame draft down, the fires that make up the landscape agitate the atmosphere and whip it into a frenzy. Note that the table below does not apply to conditions found in proximity to plasma infernos. Plasma infernos are more violent than the typical inferno and have their own table for flame drafts. The speeds for each type of wind flame draft are listed in parentheses. Consult your game system’s rules to determine the effects the flame draft category has under those conditions.

#### Winds

01-07	Calm (0 mph)
08-12	Very Light Breeze (1-3 mph)
13-18	Light Breeze (4-7 mph)
19-23	Gentle Breeze (8-13 mph)
24-29	Moderate Breeze (14-19 mph)
28-34	Fresh Breeze (20-25 mph)
35-40	Strong Breeze (26-31 mph)
41-45	Near Gale (32-37 mph)
46-51	Gale (38-45 mph)
52-56	Strong Gale (46-55 mph)
57-62	Whole Gale (56-63 mph)
63-67	Storm Force (64-75 mph)
68-73	Weak Hurricane (76-100 mph)
74-78	Moderate Hurricane (101-125 mph)
79-84	Stiff Hurricane (126-150 mph)
85-89	Strong Hurricane (151-176 mph)
90-95	Whirlwind (177-238 mph)
96-00	Cyclonic (239-299 mph)

**Inferno:** Infernos on the Plane of Fire are the equivalent of storms but are much larger than anything encountered on a Prime Material Plane world. In addition to being able to dwarf their Prime Material Plane counterparts, an inferno can grow to a size that classifies it as a plasma inferno. Plasma infernos are storms of great power and devastating force. Winds associated with these infernos can be so fierce that they can strip

unprotected flesh from bone if it doesn’t turn it to ash. Small objects that cause little damage under ordinary circumstances can kill. Vapor clouds combined with particulate matter (usually ash) can erupt in a plasma inferno to create a pyroclastic flow. While infernos may be caused by condensation from vapor clouds, all plasma infernos are caused by an elemental sphere from the Plane of Air, which lies at the heart of the inferno.

Infernos are powerful enough to damage natives of the Plane of Fire. Thus, even with magical protection adventurers suffer damage as if attacked by non-magical fire. Plasma infernos are twice as damaging as regular infernos to natives of the plane.

#### WINDS

01-07	Gentle Breeze (8-13 mph)
08-12	Moderate Breeze (14-19 mph)
13-18	Fresh Breeze (20-25 mph)
19-23	Strong Breeze (26-31 mph)
24-29	Near Gale (32-37 mph)
28-34	Gale (38-45 mph)
35-40	Strong Gale (46-55 mph)
41-45	Whole Gale (56-63 mph)
46-51	Storm Force (64-75 mph)
52-56	Weak Hurricane (76-100 mph)
57-62	Moderate Hurricane (101-125 mph)
63-67	Stiff Hurricane (126-150 mph)
68-73	Strong Hurricane (151-176 mph)
74-78	Whirlwind (177-238 mph)
79-84	Cyclonic (239-299 mph)
85-89	Light Tornado (300-362 mph)
90-95	Moderate Tornado (363-427 mph)
96-00	Strong Tornado (428-520 mph)

In addition to wind flame draft, infernos are also accompanied by precipitation.

#### PRECIPITATION

01-11	Flaming Vapor
12-22	Steam Storm
23-33	Liquid Fire
34-44	Magma
45-55	Light Ash Rain
56-66	Moderate Ash Rain
67-77	Heavy Ash Rain
78-88	Ash Blizzard
89-00	Plasma Inferno (Roll twice, ignore results above 88)

The duration of the inferno uses the table below with the die roll table under the elemental spheres section.

#### INFERNO DURATION

01-09	Minutes
10-18	Hours
19-27	Days
28-36	Weeks
37-45	Fortnights

46-54	Months
55-63	Years
64-72	Decades
73-81	Scores
82-90	Centuries
91-00	Millennia

**INFERNO DIAMETER**

01-15	1d10 x 10 yards
16-30	1d10 x 100 yards
31-45	1d10 x 1,000 yards
46-60	1d10 x 1 mile
65-80	1d10 x 10 miles
81-95	1d10 x 100 miles
96-00	1d10 x 1,000 miles

**PLASMA INFERNO WINDS**

01-07	Strong Gale (46-55 mph)
08-12	Whole Gale (56-63 mph)
13-18	Storm Force (64-75 mph)
19-23	Weak Hurricane (76-100 mph)
24-29	Moderate Hurricane (101-125 mph)
28-34	Stiff Hurricane (126-150 mph)
35-40	Strong Hurricane (151-176 mph)
41-45	Whirlwind (177-238 mph)
46-51	Cyclonic (239-299 mph)
52-56	Light Tornado (300-362 mph)
57-62	Moderate Tornado (363-427 mph)
63-67	Strong Tornado (428-520 mph)
68-73	Light Jovian (521-650 mph)
74-78	Moderate Jovian (651-800 mph)
79-84	Strong Jovian (801-950 mph)
85-89	Light Saturnian (951-1,100 mph)
90-95	Moderate Saturian (101-1,250 mph)
96-00	Strong Saturian (1,251+ mph)

**PLASMA INFERNO DIAMETER**

01-15	1d10 x 1 mile
16-30	1d10 x 10 miles
31-45	1d10 x 100 miles
46-60	1d10 x 1,000 miles
65-80	1d10 x 10,000 miles
81-95	1d10 x 100,000 miles
96-00	1d10 x 1,000,000 miles

**PHYSICAL TRAITS**

The majority of the flames on the Plane of Fire have no weight. Those that are solid, such as the flames that make up the geography of a layer or buildings constructed out of fire, do. The flames feel lighter than they really are as a consequence of their temperature. Gravity is normal on the Plane of Fire, but the effect of the temperature gives viscous and solid flames

a buoyancy that adventurers feel as sponginess. This in turn increases travel across the plane by  $\frac{1}{4}$  the party's normal rate of speed. This is true of the glowing embers that are the typical "land" found here.

Travel across the Plane of Fire is brutal, although the heat can be minimized. Unprotected characters will be killed immediately by the plane's fires. The flames may support one's weight, but they do not help protect outsiders from being burned. Darkness and shadows don't exist on the plane. Although it is always light, the flames limit vision to short distances. The upside to travel on the plane is that the flames, unless they are viscous or solid, will not hinder travel. When all is considered, the relative ease of travel across the plane may aid the adventurers to accomplish their goals and leave as quickly as possible.

Time flows normally through the Plane of Fire, allowing it to maintain the same pace with the Prime Material Plane. The energetic forces of the plane, however, cause time to be elastic locally. These regions seem to be equally distributed across the plane and are generally short-lived. The overall balance bolsters the idea that time flows normally.

Another aspect of the Plane of Fire that may confound first-time visitors is that there is no difference, locationally speaking, between the Plane of Fire and the Prime Material Plane. Both lie at the cosmology's point of origin in spite of the one degree of separation between them. The Plane of Fire overlaps other physical planes. It also has the same polarity as the Prime Material Plane in a standard cosmology. [Unless your cosmos differs from the standard model, the alignment will be the same as that of the Prime Material Plane.]

Magic on the Plane of Fire behaves differently than magic on the Prime Material Plane because it follows the Law of Elemental Dominance. All augmentations to magic are applied to elemental-based spells. Other forms of magic, such as necromancy, remain unaffected. Fire-based spells have their effects doubled along with their durations and casting grades are reduced in cost by one grade increased in effect by one grade. The Law of Elemental Dominance for the Plane of Fire is as follows:

**Dominator:** Water dominates Fire. Unlike the other elements, Water can weaken Fire or extinguish it. Thus, spells that are Water-based can be cast normally on this plane. The duration of Water-based magic is doubled, but its effects are not.

**Dominated:** Elemental Earth has no power over Elemental Fire. Fire scorches, liquefies and eventually turns Earth to ash or lava, making such spells severely weak on this plane. As a result, Earth-based spells cast on this plane are reduced to their minimums and are cast at one grade less in effectiveness.

**Opposed:** Air opposes Fire. Neither can gain an upper hand over the other. Air needs Fire in order to defeat Earth; Air in turn helps Fire to defeat Water, although Fire consumes Air. It is a relationship built upon an uneasy truce. Air-based spells have their effects halved.

**INHABITANTS**

Although many of the sentient races of the Plane of Fire are intelligent, their intellect is diminished by an appeal to baser natures. Beware the cunning and malicious efreet! Fire elementals are the most populous of the native inhabitants, but the efreet are more powerful. The hot-tempered and oft-

changing natures are not only shared traits between these two races, but are common to all native inhabitants. The lesser fire elementals are closer to unintelligent animals than not and are prone to violent rages.

Due to the extreme nature of the Plane of Fire, it's believed that little unintelligent life exists here. There are many elemental and magical versions of mundane creatures, but they are so far removed from their mundane counterparts that they do not seem related. A few creatures that thrive in or around fire on a Prime Material Plane world can be found on this plane. Some example creatures would be flame salamanders and flame trees (trees made of elemental fire).

#### INCORPORATING INTO AN EXISTING CAMPAIGN

It is assumed that the Plane of Fire is part of a campaign. This is considered evident when Fire-based spells are used. If you replaced a standard cosmology's normal physical traits with the Plane of Fire's, you would create a reality where all planes are composed of flames. A Prime Material World would essentially be a vast ball of solid flames and the void between worlds could be filled with noxious gasses vapor clouds and more flames. Alternately, the tiered structure of the Plane of Fire may be prominent on every plane.

Should you replace an existing plane with a second Plane of Fire, be aware that you are changing the elemental balance of the cosmos. These changes could have a far greater impact than what you intended compared to the impact resulting from a cosmos that possesses some traits of the plane. An extra Elemental Plane of Fire in a cosmos will shift magic towards a Fire-dominant cosmos. A quick-fix solution for a similar effect without having to alter the standard cosmos is to limit or prohibit access to the other elemental planes. While multiple Planes of Fire will provide a unique characteristic to a cosmos, it may not offer a ready-made plot such as working to reestablish the links to the elemental planes.

Since the Plane of Fire overlaps other physical planes, the addition of a second one has other effects as well. Imagine a second Plane of Fire located on the Order metaphysical axis. How can fire be made orderly and structured? Such a shift will have an influence on the Plane of Fire residing at the cosmos' origin. Would this result in the inhabitants of both planes having some control over their passionate natures? This image begs for an answer to how fires would burn on the Prime Material Plane.

The easiest use of the Plane of Fire is the application of its traits. Augmentation by the Plane of Fire does not necessarily impose all of its traits, but the most common is the Law of Elemental Dominance. A cosmos can be the recipient of a trait, which is applied to all of its planes. An example of this is a cosmos where everything is filled with flames, sulphuric fumes, or both. You can apply the traits based on the degree of affiliation you wish the plane (or cosmos) to have towards elemental fire. When you add such degrees to a plane, the effects of the plane are multiplied by the degree. If the application is to the qualities of a cosmos, the other elemental planes are treated as if they are one degree less (minimum of 1). Plasma infernos can be six times their size than on a standard Plane of Fire. The following are example traits from the Plane of Fire. Keep in mind that not all aspects of the plane's traits must be applied.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Degree

Voids are filled with fumes or vapor clouds.

Infernos can be found in the empty regions of the plane.

High temperatures are predominant in the empty regions.

The majority of the plane is fire; there are a few worlds with tiers serving as the plane's geography.

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree

Voids are filled with flames.

Infernos are common in the empty regions.

Plasma infernos are twice their size compared to the standard Plane of Fire.

Temperatures are warm everywhere, but are not strong enough to cause damage to protected travelers.

More flame tiers exist here than any other structure.

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree

Only fiery atmospheres exist.

Infernos travel through the plane's sky.

Plasma infernos are monstrous (3x) in comparison to the standard Plane of Fire.

Temperatures in the coolest locations are twice as hot as the standard Plane of Fire.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Degree

All atmospheres are superheated fumes.

Infernos can form anywhere.

Plasma Infernos are extensive (4x) compared to the standard Plane of Fire.

Temperatures in the coolest locations are three times as hot as the standard Plane of Fire.

#### 5<sup>th</sup> Degree

Pockets of plasma drift through the plane.

Infernos are a daily occurrence.

Plasma infernos are so large (5x) that they dwarf most major features on a plane.

Temperatures in the coolest locations are four times as hot as those on the standard Plane of Fire.

#### 6<sup>th</sup> Degree

Plasma envelops whole regions of the plane.

Infernos are constant.

Plasma infernos are extremely massive (6x).

Temperatures in the coolest locations are five times as hot as those on the standard Plane of Fire.

### THE ELEMENTAL PLANE OF WATER

The deep blue stretches in all directions. Suspended in liquid, one can drift through the limitless expanse of the Plane of Water. Everything is in motion, moving towards its destiny; it is inevitable that what is to come will come. That all things must flow is the attitude embodied by the Plane of Water. This plane is the domain of marine life. Some areas of the plane, however, are heavy with pollution while some are briny and others are pure. All forms of water can be found here. Although the Plane of Water is of an infinite depth, it is eternally lit by an unseen sun as if the entire plane were a lagoon. Light conditions vary randomly from that of shallow water to the blue-predominant coloration of depths. Akin to over 100 feet. Note that human

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vision ranges from that equal to dim sunlight down to late twilight.

### SIZE AND LAYOUT

The Plane of Water is infinite in size. The layout of the plane resembles the Plane of Air inasmuch as the majority of the plane is fluid with islands of material "hard water" floating about to provide "ground" for marine life. Much of the life on the Plane of Water is concentrated around isolated elemental spheres and coral growths springing from the "hard water". The purity of water usually can't be discerned by looks alone.

Getting around on the plane is easy, so long as a character doesn't need to worry about drowning. All one has to do is swim. Travelers do not sink or rise since the plane has an equal distribution of water everywhere creating a natural buoyancy that allows objects to remain in one spot. The only way an object would move would be due to a current. Similar to the Plane of Air, the Plane of Water has vast distances between islands of habitation with sparsely or unpopulated regions in between.

It is important to understand how objects remain balanced in water because many of the habitable islands that exist on the plane drift through it on various levels. While mainly a function of currents flowing throughout the plane, it does not mean that these objects are in any danger of colliding, or that they do not have a set path that they travel before returning to a specific point. Some objects and islands have their own method of propulsion to keep them from moving or to orbit around a neutral object or point. When designing adventures, this allows you to place an object anywhere you wish and be justified for doing so.

Teleporting from one watery island to another is the best option available to a traveler. Otherwise, a traveler has to swim towards the last known location of the object. Most are unwilling to take such a risk when it is unnecessary and can leave the traveler



stranded. Teleportation spells still work, but require some tweaking to follow the plane's physics. The Panprobability Ability in the **Lejendary Adventure** game allows the traveler the option to use teleportation spells according to the laws of the plane. However, the character is restricted to the limits of the spell. A special version could be made specifically for the nature of the Plane of Water, but requires research.

The tables below offer a sampling of random objects (and if they have orbits) and creatures on the Plane of Water.

### DIE ROLL

01-30	Objects
31-50	Creatures
51-00	Current (see <b>Hazards</b> )

### OBJECTS

01-20	Elemental Sphere
21-80	Community
81-85	Fortification
86-00	Ship

### COMMUNITY

01-35	Thorp
36-65	Village
66-87	Town
88-94	City
95-00	Metropolis

### CASTLE

01-25	Keep
26-50	Tower
51-80	Fortress
81-95	Castle
96-00	Palace

### SHIP

01-20	Sailing Vessel
21-55	Bubble
56-85	Submersible
86-00	Construct

### CREATURES

01-35	Elementals (including marid)
36-70	Mundane
71-95	Merfolk/Merrow/Nis
96-00	Leviathan

### COMMUNITY

Communities on the Plane of Water are dispersed and come in two general categories: cities built for inhabitants from other planes and the underwater kingdoms of the merfolk, merrow, and nis. What they have in common is that they are built on chunks of rock that have been transported from the Elemental

Plane of Earth as elemental spheres, areas of "hard water" or a body of coral growing upon such an area. While the size of the community limits what items may be available for purchase, it does not dictate how large the watery island is.

Communities on the Plane of Water feature an underwater slip. The number of submersible vessels that haul materials from one community to another can be equated to the airships used on the Plane of Air. The difference between their functions includes the practice of drift net fishing, something rarely seen on the Plane of Air. While the underwater slip resembles a harbor, those used by domed cities have floodgates that serve as an airlock. Larger communities possess anywhere from one to a handful of harbors.

**Thorp:** With no more than 50 inhabitants, the typical thorp on the Plane of Water serves as an outpost and is usually subordinate to another community. Thorps are often built to extract minerals from elemental spheres or to expand the boundaries of an empire. The size of the island that the thorp occupies may indicate the thorp's purpose along with what types of services are available.

**Village:** Communities with 51-150 inhabitants, villages normally have an inn and a weapons smith (or a blacksmith, if the village is domed). Some goods will be available to the traveler, but quantities are generally limited. As with a thorp, the village is usually subordinate to a larger community. Unlike the thorp, a village is likely to be visited by merchants and receive supplies from its patron community. If the inhabitants of the village are unfriendly towards travelers, chances are reinforcements from the larger community will greet those who don't and leave. This is much more likely to happen in a domed city.

**Town:** Communities with 151-1,500 inhabitants are common. Unlike the thorp and village, a town can be independent. A town is much more likely to have an assortment of goods for a traveler's needs, but again this selection will be more limited than a town located on the Prime Material Plane (unless it is domed). Towns on the Plane of Water usually have two inns, a general store, a weapons smith, and possibly an apothecary. This is a good assortment of basic needs for short-term stays for merchants and other passersby. The island that a town inhabits will contain some sort of industry, such as farming or mining. Most towns possess a small underwater harbor.

**City:** Cities in the Plane of Water are an uncommon sight, but easily found if a traveler takes time to look. Cities have a population between 1,501-15,000 inhabitants. Other than the occasional marine life passing outside the domed city, if a character was to stand in the middle of one, it would be difficult to distinguish it from a city on the Prime Material Plane. Unlike some smaller communities on the plane, the city is not limited to the types of goods one could find. Given this, it is almost certain that the city has connections with other cities on the plane and possibly with those on the Prime Material Plane. Cities do not need an industry to justify their existence and are well defended. Most have a minimum of three garrisons capable of defending the city. Cities possess at least one major harbor.

**Metropolis:** The metropolis is uncommon on the Plane of Water. Boasting of a population of 15,001-50,000 inhabitants, the metropolis that serves as the heart of an empire or the

capital of a major kingdom on the Prime Material Plane wields greater power and controls more territory than any mundane city. A metropolis on this plane also boasts of strong fortifications. The smallest metropolis will have no less than five garrisons for protecting the city from invasions. There will also be a constabulary to police the community and a guard to protect the city's ruler. The domed metropolis is usually a city that swears allegiance to a kingdom or empire from the Prime Material Plane. Regardless of its status, it will have at least two cities, a handful of towns, villages, and numerous thorps that swear allegiance to the metropolis.

By necessity, metropolises are hubs of trade. This makes it a great place for travelers to rest and find the supplies they need. Other than the fact that this city occupies an island drifting through the Plane of Water, there is no difference between it and the metropolis on the Prime Material Plane. Metropolises accommodate trade through several major harbors.

#### FORTIFICATION

This category encompasses floating and anchored fortifications. Few of these structures are considered independent. Rather, most of them serve as a parameter defense. This does not rule out that keeps, towers and fortresses can protect floating castles and palaces. As castles and palaces are built with defense in mind, it's more of a logical conclusion that where keeps, towers and fortresses are found, a large settlement must be nearby.

**Keep:** The keep is the smallest of the fortifications one encounters on the Plane of Water. Keeps are so small that they cannot be located too far away from a community so that it may be resupplied, unless the keep has a portal inside to link it with a community. While the function of the keep has not changed from its Prime Material Plane counterpart, it doesn't have to resemble one. This means a keep not anchored to an island can have entrances on any face. It is suggested that a garrison of 11-30 warriors is typical of this structure.

**Tower:** Drifting towers can be found anywhere throughout the Plane of Water. While towers are used as lookout positions on the Prime Material Plane, that function is not necessary here. Some extra dimensional empires may use traditional tower outposts despite the fact that there is little ground and enemies can come from any direction. Given these considerations, the most likely encountered towers will belong to powerful spellcasters with an affinity for water. It is suggested that a garrison of 11-30 warriors is typical of this structure.

**Fortress:** Floating fortresses on the Plane of Water serve as territorial control points and defense lines. As with keeps, they must have a portal within or be close enough to a community for supplies. Likewise, the fortress will have multiple entrance points and is usually equipped with submersibles. Fortresses are usually used by creatures from the Prime Material Plane rather than native inhabitants. Regardless of use, fortresses usually possess an underwater dock. It is suggested that a garrison of 51-150 warriors is typical of this structure.

**Castle:** An underwater version of the flying castles can also be found on the Plane of Water. There is no difference between the Prime Material Plane version and those that are found on this plane save that some are domed (indicating the occupants are from another plane) and may be floating or anchored to an island. Regardless, the flying castle will be well armed and

## GARY GYGAX'S — COSMOS BUILDER

possess strong defenses and thick walls if encountered outside of a community. It is suggested that a garrison of 21-120 warriors is typical of this structure.

**Palace:** Due to size, floating palaces are rarely found floating unanchored in the Plane of Water. Most unanchored palaces will belong to native residents. Palaces – anchored or otherwise – are no different than castles in most respects. This structure is bound to have a private harbor for submersibles and may have an armada. It is safe to assume that if a mortal being owns such a palace, it will be domed; he must possess great power and the means to hold his own against magical creatures. It is suggested that a garrison of 101-200 warriors is typical of this structure.

### SHIPS

While it is tied to the methods of travel across the Plane of Water, ships work well as random objects since they, like everything else on the plane, are in motion more often than in the harbor. More importantly is the variety of ships one can encounter on the Plane of Water. Whereas a Prime Material Plane world may not possess underwater sailing vessels, it is not an uncommon sight on this plane; but mundane creatures who with the natives require a vessel in order to conduct their business and transport goods. Exploration of the plane likewise requires a reliable and stable platform for those who do not have access to magic but have a spellcaster on the journey.

**Sailing Vessel:** Despite the image of a sinking ship, a sailing vessel traveling through the Plane of Water is adept at using the currents of the plane to travel along routes than other non-magical vessels. This category is used to designate sailing ships that have been magically augmented so they can sail through the plane. They may take the form of any waterborne craft from ships with sails, rowboats, and submersibles to bizarre constructs that would not float on water.

**Bubble:** The bubble, often of teardrop shape, is perhaps the most widely used “ship” for travelers from other planes. The bubble is practically useless outside of the currents that course throughout the plane. Fortunately, there are enough currents that use of the bubble is practical. On the other hand, without a way to steer, travelers find that they are at the mercy of the currents. The bubble can be any size, doubling its usefulness for transporting goods. As currents generally flow around islands, rather than crashing into them, there is little risk of crashing into rock formations. Despite these risks, people still use bubbles because the load capacity they can hold and unlimited size.

**Submersible:** While any vessel that plies the waters of the plane is technically a submersible, this category denotes vessels that are designed to travel under the waters of a Prime Material Plane world. Submersibles have enclosed compartments and have a propulsion system that is physically or magically driven. Being self-contained, the submersible provides occupants protection from patches of foul water and dangerous aquatic life. A submersible may be of any size and even look like an aquatic creature, so long as it has a streamlined appearance.

**Construct:** Constructs are a special form of submersibles that have multiple joints and often look nothing like a submersible (e.g. not streamlined). In fact, a construct may not possess a cockpit or passenger compartments! A golem is an example of

a construct that can be encountered in the Plane of Water. Very large mechanical creatures are a common form of construct as they often look like they belong in the watery realm of the plane, but their massive size deters the curious from coming closer than necessary. The construct’s motions give it a lifelike appearance.

### CREATURES

The sample list is far from complete. Any number of aquatic creatures call the Plane of Water home. Consult the bestiary of your game system for additions. Those from the Prime Material Plane come to this plane through vortices and portals submerged in streams, lakes and oceans. Some intelligent creatures willingly come to the plane and make it their home. The four categories of creatures represent a fraction of the life that can be encountered on the plane.

**Elementals:** Water Elementals are the true natives of the plane. They come in several varieties and range widely in intelligence. The marid are likely to be the most powerful in intellect and magical abilities. Water Elementals not only have their own distinct forms, but they also can be elemental forms of mundane creatures. When encountered, the number of elementals decreases with the increased power and/or intelligence of the elementals. Thus, non-intelligent elementals the size of small fish may gather in large schools, while larger and more intelligent elementals, other than the marid, gather in fewer numbers.

**Mundane:** This category refers to Prime Material Plane aquatic creatures. Though they are not native to the plane, many of the species have adapted to it and may appear slightly different than their Prime Material Plane counterparts to deal with the intermittent changes in salinity and pockets of fouled waters. These changes are generally indistinguishable from the form encountered on the Prime Material Plane. Regardless of how they arrived or how long they’ve been on the plane, mundane species consider it home and do not notice the difference between their previous home and the plane.

**Merfolk/Merrow/Nis:** This category is a double entry as location makes a large difference in which a traveler encounters. Within the proximity of an island a character is most likely to encounter the merfolk or merrow. In the empty expanses of the plane, the nis (male nix, female nixie) is the most likely encountered sentient. Water nymphs typically possess a hidden island, but the location is difficult to find and can be far distant from where the nixie is encountered.

**Leviathan:** The least encountered beast on the Plane of Water is also the most terrifying. “Leviathan” does not necessarily indicate a creature type, but rather a class of aquatic creatures that are supermassive. This includes water dragons, sea serpents, and kraken. Many are at least twice as large as those of the Prime Material Plane and usually larger than that as some can swallow ships. Imagine the goldfish blown up to the proportions of an aircraft carrier, and you can see how terrifying a leviathan can be.

### MAJOR PHYSICAL FEATURES

Beyond the water that comprises the majority of the plane, the Plane of Water possesses islands of ~~materials~~ “hard water” and coral. The most common are elemental spheres of earth and

coral: Unlike other planes where there's a single material for construction, the inhabitants of the Plane of Water have coral, bones of marine animals, kelp & seaweed, scales, shells, and ice. The materials that are uncommon and in short supply are metals. This is a result of the corrosive nature of salt water.

## HAZARDS

Prime Material Plane residents venturing to this plane find that it resembles any underwater realm on their home world, except few abyssal regions exist. If characters can overcome the lack of oxygen and constantly being wet, they can live comfortably on the plane. While this is the biggest hazard the plane presents, the second is the lack of uniformity in the water. Yes, it's all water, and it's just as wet in one locale as another, but temperature, salinity, and toxicity vary. This presents a series of challenges and natural hazards that even aquatic life finds hard to overcome.

The best indication of differing temperature/salinity/toxicity zones is dead fish and other unintelligent creatures. While knowing if the dead creatures are fresh or salt water inhabitants can help a character determine what the dead animals are floating in, it doesn't indicate temperature or levels of poison. Temperature can be guessed at through the presence or lack of ice in the area, but poisons require forms of magical detection, unless the problem is the result of bacteria such as a red tide.

### CURRENTS

01-33	Red Tide (Fungal Algae Bloom)
34-66	Tidal Effect
67-00	Current Stream

**RED TIDE (Algae Bloom):** Red tide is an algae bloom that is hazardous to all life. Red tide not only kills other aquatic plant life, but has a tendency to destroy living organisms on contact. Red tides are not conscious of their actions (some an algae blooms are) and drift through the plane until dissipated or a lack of food causes the bloom to die. To survive an encounter with an algae bloom a series of checks (made once a minute while in the affected region) must be successful against the game system's appropriate health-related statistic.

**TIDAL EFFECT:** Although tied to currents, tidal effects are important as they can affect the path of a algae bloom. A tidal effect can also change the course of a current. The tidal effect changes the state of the water (usually reversing a current's flow) by making it move. Tidal effect can be compared to an earthquake on the Plane of Earth. The shockwave of a tidal shift reverberates through the plane and can alter a current, or change its course. You can use the table for the duration of an elemental sphere to determine how long the effect lasts. Tidal shifts can create a current in still water, change the course of a current (usually no more than 90 degrees in any one direction), or reverse the direction of a current. These changes should be arbitrated rather than left to chance.

**CURRENTS:** Effectively underwater rivers, currents circulate the water of the plane. They serve as stable and reliable ways to swiftly move from one region to another. Many communities navigate the currents for commerce and to patrol a region. Some currents

are unidirectional while others are bidirectional (they reverse their flow predictably). Currents are akin to winds as they can be deadly and turn into whirlpools. The current speeds below are intended as a guide to use with the rules of the game system you're using. Although half the speed of winds, water exerts at least three times as much force.

### CURRENTS

01-07	Still (0 mph)
08-12	Very Light Drift (1-2 mph)
13-18	Light Drift (3-4 mph)
19-23	Gentle Drift (5-7 mph)
24-29	Moderate Drift (8-10 mph)
30-34	Steady Drift (11-13 mph)
35-40	Sluggish Current (14-16 mph)
41-45	Steady Current (17-19 mph)
46-51	Strong Current (20-23 mph)
52-56	Swift Current (24-26 mph)
57-62	Class I Cataract (27-32 mph)
63-67	Class II Cataract (33-38 mph)
68-73	Class III Cataract (39-50 mph)
74-78	Class IV Cataract (51-63 mph)
79-84	Class V Cataract (64-75 mph)
85-89	Class VI Cataract (76-88 mph)
90-95	Weak Torrent (89-119 mph)
96-00	Moderate Torrent (120-150 mph)

**Whirlpool:** Whirlpools can form at the confluence of two or more currents with speeds of at least 24 mph. These are areas of instability where the directional flows fight for control. What isn't understood is how the whirlpools reach speeds in excess of the currents that feed them. Given the danger that whirlpools pose, confluences are areas that many avoid. Thankfully, they are rare. Whirlpools are difficult to escape once entered. In addition to their fast speeds, the whirlpools draw objects to their center, exerting a force that is equal to twice normal gravity. To randomly determine the size of a whirlpool, use the table for the size of elemental spheres.

Additionally, the whirlpool has a complex structure that makes it difficult to navigate. The churning waters switch directions violently, an action intended to help get a character out of the whirlpool could push him in deeper. Abilities such as Panprobability or navigational skills are useful in getting the character out, but multiple successes may be involved before the character is free.

### WHIRLPOOL SPEEDS

01-07	Swift Current (24-26 mph)
08-12	Class I Cataract (27-32 mph)
13-18	Class II Cataract (33-38 mph)
19-23	Class III Cataract (39-50 mph)
24-29	Class IV Cataract (51-63 mph)

28-34	Class V Cataract (64-75 mph)
35-40	Class VI Cataract (76-88 mph)
41-45	Weak Torrent (89-119 mph)
46-51	Light Torrent (120-150 mph)
52-56	Moderate Torrent (151-181 mph)
57-62	Strong Torrent (182-214 mph)
63-67	Swift Torrent (215-260 mph)
68-73	Raging Torrent (261-325 mph)
74-78	Moderate Surge (326-400 mph)
79-84	Strong Surge (401-475 mph)
85-89	Swift Surge (476-550 mph)
90-95	Raging Surge (551-625 mph)
96-00	Unnatural Surge (626+ mph)

Other hazards include salinity, acidity and sulfurous plumes around volcanic hot spots. Salinity is most destructive towards metals. Salinity will slowly corrode them over time. However, the Plane of Water has pockets of concentrated salinity where the water becomes more caustic and acts like an acid that corrodes metal at a faster rate. Additionally, such briny waters can cause damage to flesh by leeching out water. Acidic regions of the plane are devastating to flesh. A mildly acidic region will damage the body before it affects metals. Essentially, acidity and salinity have the same function, but respectively one affects flesh first while the other attacks metals first.

#### PHYSICAL TRAITS

This plane plays host to more variety in materials than the other elemental planes in terms of what's available. Getting past the lack of air provides little restriction for air breathers. While metals, other than non-corroding ones such as gold, are less common, the bounty from marine life and coral offer themselves in exchange. Bone, coral, and shells (some of extraordinary size) are also available for creating buildings; and dead plants and coral serve as the material necessary to start an underwater garden in an area of "hard water".

Cooking is also a problem. Short of magical fires that can burn while submerged, there are few options for a visitor to cook anything he hunts. The best known sources of heat on the plane are volcanic vents that can be found on some of the larger earth elemental spheres. Eating things raw most likely won't appeal to visitors, but it's often the only option available.

When it comes to gravity, the Plane of Water seems to be of two minds. While there is a definite sense of down, the water prevents a conscious being from sinking and allows islands of coral and elemental spheres to remain buoyant while small objects, such as tools, will sink if left unattended. Living beings can allow themselves to sink by concentrating (by using a skill such as **Lejendary Adventure** game's Panprobability Ability), but it is often faster to swim than to allow the gravity of the plane to pull a character down. The other mind of the plane is that large elemental spheres of earth exert gravity and act as worlds since a character can walk around the surface without falling off. The traveler can swim away from elemental spheres, but will feel the pull towards the sphere until the one-mile boundary is reached.

At that point, the character will feel a momentary disorientation as the plane's sense of down replaces the sphere's pull.

The lack of gravity's effect on living creatures is a mixed blessing. The ability to sink at will can help to pull a traveler out of a current or a whirlpool, provided the current is perpendicular to the plane's sense of down and the whirlpool's center is far enough away so its pull is. Getting out is relatively easy, even if sinking isn't an option, a character merely needs to travel at an angle different from the current and he should make his way out. Of course, how long that takes, is at the game master's discretion.

It is possible to sink faster than normal. While it takes little thought to start sinking, the use of an ability ~~like~~ such as Panprobability can help the character sink faster. The sinking is as fast as if the character were flying. If a character does not possess the ability to fly, substitute Precision (or Intelligence) in its place but reduce rates to one-quarter of what they would be. Sinking at will allows a traveler to sink at one mile an hour.

Time flows normally through the plane, maintaining the same pace as the Prime Material Plane. There may be isolated pockets where time is more elastic (moving faster or slower), but the plane is generally stable. Such regions are often short-lived and sporadic. There is no relationship between the region's temperature, salinity, and so forth and the flow of time in these regions. A current might pass through an area where time flows differently and not be affected.

Cosmologically speaking, there is no difference between the Plane of Water and the Prime Material Plane. They both reside at the cosmology's point of origin in spite of the one degree of separation between them. For many uninitiated first-time travelers to the plane, this tends to confound. The Plane of Water is a physical plane that overlaps other physical planes. The plane has the same polarity as the Prime Material Plane in a standard cosmology. [Unless your cosmology is different from the standard model, the alignment will be the same as the Prime Material Plane.]

Magic on the Plane of Water behaves differently than on the Prime Material Plane by following the Law of Elemental Dominance. All augmentations to magic are only applied to elemental-based spells. Other forms of magic remain unaffected. Water-based spells have their effects doubled along with their durations and have their casting grade reduced by one and its effectiveness increased by one. The Law of Elemental Dominance for the Plane of Water is below:

**Dominator:** Air dominates Water. Unlike the other elements, Air can weaken Water by intermingling with it, preventing it from bearing any object, pushing Water aside when it is through and bursting the grasp Water may hold on Earth and Fire. Thus, spells that are Air-based can be cast normally on this plane. The duration of Air-based magic is doubled, but the effects are not.

**Dominated:** Elemental Fire has no power over Elemental Water. Water tempers, quenches and extinguishes Fire, making such spells severely weak on this plane. All Fire-based spells cast on this plane are reduced to their minimums and are cast at one grade less than their true power.

**Opposed:** Earth opposes Water. Neither can gain the upper hand. Earth needs Water in order to defeat Fire; Earth in turn helps Water defeat Air by smothering it. It is a relationship built

upon an uneasy truce. Earth-based spells have their effects halved.

#### INHABITANTS

The Plane of Water teems with life. This plane boasts of more sentient races than any of the other elemental planes. The merfolk, merrow and nis are the three most well known sentient races followed by the Water Elementals. Many inhabitants and travelers have a tendency to overlook the water elementals, although they are the dominant race. They are seen as weak-willed because they go along with changes. The races are by and large eternally patient as they know that water will pass through and reclaim its place when objects have moved on. The lesser water elementals, while still possessing some intelligence, are closer to unintelligent animals than not and try to push the water back into spaces occupied by other objects. The marid are certainly exceptional.

Unlike other elemental planes, unintelligent life is abundant on the Plane of Water. Any variety of marine life that can be imagined to exist can be found on the plane. Every niche exists, including regions of pitch blackness where an elemental sphere blocks the light shining on the plane in a protected hollow. Elemental and magical versions of mundane creatures can also be found on the plane.

#### INCORPORATING INTO AN EXISTING CAMPAIGN

It is assumed that the Plane of Water is inherent in a campaign. This is true in a game where Water-based spells are used. If you replaced a standard cosmology's normal physical traits with the Plane of Water's, you create a reality where planes are composed of islands suspended in water or infinite sea floors. A Prime Material World would essentially be a large elemental sphere of earth.

If you replace an existing plane with a second Plane of Water, be aware that you change the elemental balance of the cosmos towards a Water-dominant one. In many ways, these changes could have a greater impact than what you intend to have. An extra Elemental Plane of Water in a cosmos will shift magic towards a Water-dominant cosmos. A solution to achieving this effect without altering the fundamental aspects of the standard cosmos is to limit or prohibit access to the other elemental planes. While multiple Planes of Water will provide a unique characteristic to a cosmos, it may not offer a ready-made plot.

The Plane of Water overlaps other physical planes. Thus, the addition of a second one has other effects. Imagine placing a Plane of Water along the Stasis metaphysical axis. Does this mean water has been frozen into ice, or are there orderly currents that flow through the plane, forcing water to follow and belong to a structured whole? Since such a metaphysical shift will influence on the Plane of Water at the cosmos' origin, would this result in the inhabitants of both planes taking a less of a view of water washing away debris to reclaim its place? This image then begs to have an answer to how water would behave on the Prime Material Plane.

The easiest use of the Plane of Water to augment a plane is to apply its traits to another. This does not necessarily impose all traits, but the most common is the Law of Elemental Dominance. A cosmos can also be the recipient of a trait, which is applied to all the planes. An example of this is a cosmology where the

voids are filled with water (briny or otherwise). You can apply the traits based on the degree of affiliation you wish the plane to have towards elemental water. When you add degrees, the effects are multiplied by the chosen degree. If the application is to the cosmology, the other elemental planes are treated as one degree less (minimum of 1). This means whirlpools can be six times their size on a standard Plane of Water. The following are examples of traits from the Plane of Water. Not all aspects of the plane's traits must be applied to a plane.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Degree

Voids are filled with oceans.

Whirlpools can be found in the empty regions of the plane.

Brackish waters are predominant in the empty regions.

The majority of the plane is water; there are few islands of elemental spheres floating in the depthless ocean.

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree

Voids are pure water.

Saline waters are commonly found in the empty regions.

Whirlpools are twice their size compared to the Plane of Air.

Currents are everywhere, but most are gentle.

Only half as many islands of elemental spheres as the Plane of Water.

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree

Only liquid atmospheres exist.

Fungal blooms travel through the plane's voids.

Whirlpools are monstrous (3x) in comparison to the Plane of Water.

Currents course through the plane three times more so than the Plane of Water.

There are only one-third as many islands of elemental spheres as the Plane of Air.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Degree

All atmospheres are pure water.

Fungal Algae blooms can be found anywhere.

Whirlpools are extensive (4x) compared to the Plane of Water.

Currents flow at no slower than a swift current.

There are no more than one-fourth as many islands of elemental spheres on the plane as the Plane of .

#### 5<sup>th</sup> Degree

Pockets of watery solutions (e.g. salts, acids, etc.) drift through the plane.

Fungal Algae blooms are a daily occurrence.

Whirlpools are so large (5x), they dwarf most major features on a plane.

Currents flow at Cataract I intensity or greater constantly.

The plane contains no more than  $\frac{1}{5}$  of the islands of elemental spheres found on the standard Plane of Water.

## 6<sup>th</sup> Degree

Pockets of watery solutions envelop whole regions of the plane.

Fungal Algae blooms are constant.

Whirlpools are extremely massive (6x).

Currents constantly flow at torrent speeds or higher.

The plane contains few, if any islands of elemental spheres compared to the Plane of Water.

## THE MUNDANE ENERGY PLANES

As a clear transition from the physical to incorporeal, the mundane energy planes represent the common forms of positive and negative energies found on the Prime Material Plane, only they make up the entirety of their own infinite space. Both planes work in the same manner. Where one functions favorably, the other is unfavorable to a normal traveler. For mundane beings, both energies are hazardous over time. The Positive Energy Plane constantly infuses visitors with energies, healing all wounds until they're ready to burst from so much power held in their bodies. The Negative Energy Plane, on the other hand, constantly draws energy out until there's nothing left, unless they are attuned to the negative, use its power. The mundane energy planes are also unique amongst the physical planes in that they are in actuality aligned to a metaphysical axis, namely Vitality/Entropy.

### SIZE AND LAYOUT

The mundane energy planes are both infinite expanses. Unless there's an elemental sphere floating through either plane (an unlikely occurrence), the elemental energy planes are uniform. This gives these planes their unique status in the physical planes because they are comprised of incorporeal energies. Thus, travelers to the plane pass through anything that may exist here. These planes may be unique in all of a cosmology to boast of such a physical state as the only spatial planes to be incorporeal.

Where the Positive Energy Plane is awash in energies that are blinding, the Negative Energy Plane is devoid of light. Positive Energy infuses while Negative Energy diffuses. Given these two conditions it is impossible for mundane beings to determine what, if anything exists on these planes. The energies are so overwhelming that they prevent magical detection. This also lends itself to the consequence that distances cannot be judged by any means.

Unfortunately, for sight-seeing travelers, there isn't much to see, except for explosions and disintegrations, respective to the Positive and Negative Energy Plane. There's a lot to hear, however. The crackling of energies is deafening. Then again, they would be when they're inside a traveler's ears as well as the tingling feeling caressing one's skin as the energies rush in (or draw out energies) from his body.

### MAJOR PHYSICAL FEATURES

Although this section follows the format for all planes presented in this book, it seems redundant and ironic since there aren't any physical features of note. The energies that comprise the mundane energy planes are the only physical feature for the planes. This makes the physical nature of energy maddening

to explain because a character can see it, watch it work, know that it has to travel through things, but no matter how hard one tries, he can't hold it in his hands. Even plasma, the highest state of matter, is intangible. That's what the mundane energy planes are.

### HAZARDS

Without magical protection, it is impossible to spend more than a few moments on either mundane energy plane. On the Positive Energy Plane, the energy infusion allows a character to be healed as if he had rested for a day for every minute spent on the plane. On the Negative Energy Plane, the normal character would lose that much health. Once the limit is reached, the character can have up to 50% of his health in addition to what is normally allowed while on the Positive Energy Plane. Any energy gained beyond that point will cause him to explode. When a character loses all of his health on the Negative Energy Plane, he dies, but his body is still intact so long as the total doesn't exceed -50% of health if he were alive. If this point is reached, the body disintegrates.

With protections from the energies of the planes, it is possible to survive a trip that lasts any length of time. It's easier to travel across the Positive Energy Plane because all non-entropic spells cast are always cast with maximum effect. On the Negative Energy Plane, protection spells are hampered because the energies used to empower most such spells are fed by positive energy. Thus, the spell has its effects diminished by the Negative Energy Plane leeching away power, leaving the spell less effective and shorter in duration.

For very short periods of time, visits to the Positive Energy Plane are beneficial to most living beings. Staying on the plane for longer periods without magical protection is fatal. It is possible that extended stays are life threatening regardless of the amount of protection the traveler has. The opposite is of course true of the Negative Energy Plane. If a trip to the Positive Energy Plane is beneficial on the short term, consider that trips of all durations are dangerous and potentially fatal. However, the undead and other entropic beings experience the opposite reaction in respect to both the Positive and Negative Energy Planes. Negative energy heals the entropic beings and the undead while positive energy deals them damage.

### PHYSICAL TRAITS

To reiterate, there is no physical matter native to the mundane energy planes. This doesn't prevent gravity from functioning, however. Neither plane gives a sense of directional gravity, but this does not preclude its existence. Down is any direction a traveler imagines it to be. The energies of the plane create directions as the traveler perceives them. Thus, travel requires magical means, thought, or abilities/skills such as Panprobability as a means to fly through the energy planes.

Time is greatly affected by the mundane energy planes when compared to other physical planes. The Positive Energy Plane has a propensity to cause time to flow at a faster rate than the Prime Material Plane. In fact, it is most likely that the plane will cause time to flow faster while on the plane as a normal function. The Negative Energy Plane has the opposite effect in that time flows slower through it than the Prime Material Plane.

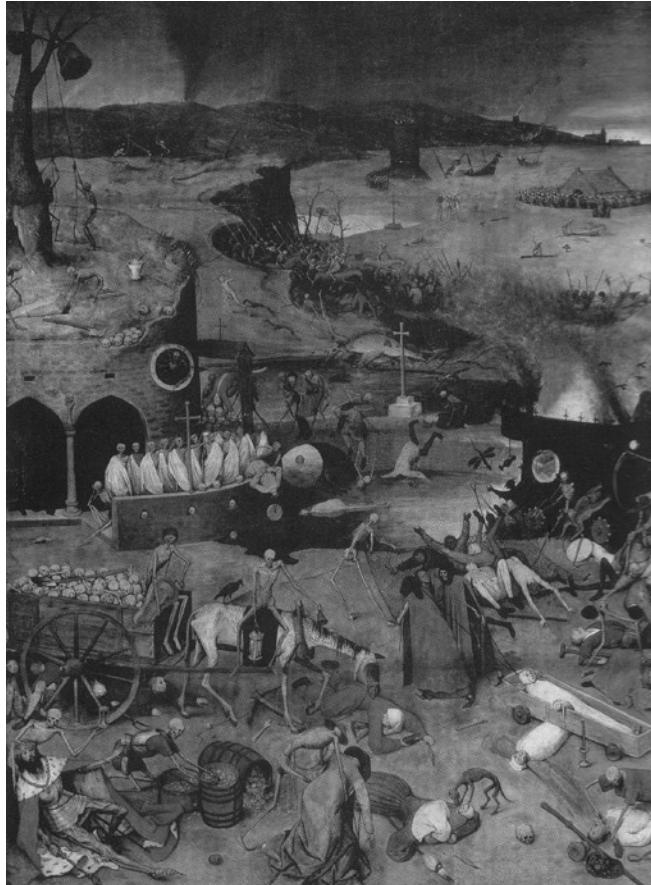
If the previous qualities didn't separate the mundane energy planes from the rest of the physical planes enough, they both possess an affiliation for the metaphysical poles of the Vitality/Entropy axis respective to their energy types. While this affinity towards the positive and negative forms of energy is inherent, it does not affect their polarity in terms of how they relate to the Prime Material Plane. They are neutral by the sole fact that they reside in the inner region of the cosmos and because they overlap other physical planes. *[The slight shift of polarity does not change alignment from the Prime Material Plane's for d20 campaigns. This shift only affects energy and entropic effects.]*

Magic that is not specifically tied to negative energy is always enhanced on the Positive Energy Plane while it's diminished on the Negative Energy Plane. Spells from either energy source are affected adversely. For example, positive energy spells on the Negative Energy Plane would be affected twice, once for the initial drain to spells with non-entropic sources and then again for being powered by positive energies. This also applies to entropy powered spells cast on the Positive Energy Plane. The energy planes follow the rules presented in Chapter 1 under dimensional matrices for magic cast on planes with metaphysical polarities.

#### INHABITANTS

One of the most confounding aspects of the mundane energy planes is their seeming lack of native life. It's not that creatures from the two planes have never been encountered, but that they've never been encountered on their home planes. Outside of the mundane energy planes, the beings composed of positive and negative energies are easily distinguishable. Since there seems to be a variety of levels of intelligence amongst the mundane energy beings, they are as varied as the elementals. The crucial difference between the mundane energy beings and their elemental counterparts is that when on their home planes a traveler passes through them. (Consult your game system's bestiary for possible inhabitants of these planes.)

This makes it difficult to determine if the creatures encountered outside of the energy planes are real or just composed of energy controlled by spellcasters. Perhaps the most important aspect of the energy beings is that while they are incorporeal, any damage that they cause to an individual who passes through one when encountered outside of their home plane also causes damage to the energy being. For the energy being, the encounter could be fatal as a solid object passing through the energy field that makes up its body causes a disruption. However, it is more common for a small energy being to be affected than larger creatures.



#### INCORPORATING INTO AN EXISTING CAMPAIGN

In a normal cosmos, it is assumed that the mundane energy planes are inherent. This is held to be true when you allow energy/entropy spells to be used, let alone most spells rely on energy. Replacing a cosmos with either energy plane creates a vast, empty place. As such, you may wish to give traits of the mundane energy planes to the whole cosmos without leaving the cosmos empty. However, it might not make for an interesting campaign where all of existence is an enormous, empty energy field.

It is not easy to replace a plane with another mundane energy plane; doing so has huge impact on the cosmos. Being that the mundane energy planes overlap the Prime Material Plane, having two of the same, even if the second is not connected to the Prime Material Plane, will shift the balance of the cosmos

to one that is infused with lots of energy. This creates a problem since an overabundance of energy that its polar opposite cannot neutralize the excess sends the cosmology into a death spiral until only the energy field is left. Most likely, the cosmos will have access to one of its energy planes blocked while allowing the energy to flow through the cosmos. Reestablishing access to the other energy plane would restore the balance and return the cosmology to a "default" state.

Infusing traits of the energy planes into another plane is normally limited to magical augmentations. A cosmos so affected will possess the chosen traits on all planes, again, this can be a tenuous balance and can cause a spiral towards annihilation of matter until only an energy field remains. When you add degrees to a plane, the effects of the plane are multiplied by the chosen degree. If you apply the qualities to a cosmos, the other energy plane is treated as one degree less (minimum of 1).

#### THE PLANE OF SHADOW

What makes the Plane of Shadow so different from other physical planes? To begin with, it is the only one that can only be accessed from the Prime Material Plane. The Plane of Shadow overlaps that plane only, but it extends to border on the Celestial and the Nether, so one can travel to either place via this plane. You can regard it as the opposite of the Prime Material Plane in some ways, but this would be a misrepresentation of the Plane of Shadow and its purpose. The Plane of Shadow is the only physical plane to be separated into three distinct regions: Shade, Penumbra, and Umbra. It is the realm spirits either travel through before reaching their ultimate resting place or remain in as their final destination.

## GARY GYGAX'S — COSMOS BUILDER

The Plane of Shadow is one of chiaroscuro, grays and shades of black, filled with dimmed lights that serve as the main respite from the ever present and oppressive eternal twilight. All of these sources of brighter light are artificial, constructed by travelers and residents to slowly grope with one's eyes rather than their hands across the infinite horizon. The plane mimics the Prime Material Plane by serving as a slightly distorted mirror of the landscape of the world the plane touches at that location.

### SIZE AND LAYOUT

The Plane of Shadow follows the pattern of all physical planes as it is an infinite expanse. The terrain resembles a world cloaked in a starless and moonless twilight with pale luminosities moving across the sky as if they were the ghosts of astral bodies. The landscape closely mimics the area where the Prime Material Plane and Plane of Shadow touch, but only enough to be disturbing to travelers familiar with the region. The plane's layout looks like an infinite expanse of earth underneath a leaden sky. The terrain varies as much as a Prime Material Plane world, but also includes panoramic views that would astound mortals, if only they could see the unbelievably tall mountains and chasms of indeterminate depths. All three regions of the plane share this sense of landscape on a grand scale while mixing in elements of the world that it touches.

While the terrain may run the gamut of alien landscapes, plane always has a breathable atmosphere. In fact, no matter how far up one flies, it is a breathable atmosphere. The layout doesn't hinder travel beyond the problems one would face covering a similar landscape. The darkness of the plane hinders vision in the region of Umbra, but does not otherwise provide any problems to a character's mobility. In the Penumbra sight is as if one were in late evening twilight, while in Shade it is more akin to early twilight where shadows are long and deep.

The main problems the plane presents are its ability to dampen light sources and to mask their existence through terrain features. Light sources are subdued on the Plane of Shadow by having their radius and brightness diminished. The region of the plane a traveler is in affects the light differently. For instance, the light in Shade has its radius and brightness dimmed by one-half. The umbrate region sees light dimmed and radii shortened to one-third of the range of a light on the Prime Material Plane and the deep umbral region has light dimmed and shortened to one-quarter.

The best method to make one's way through the Plane of Shadow is to use teleportation spells or navigate the rivers that snake their way through the plane. These are the safest ways to move about the plane. Teleportation spells allow you to bypass the majority of the problems the natives present as well as the spirits of the dead seeking their final resting places. The rivers are safer than overland travel, but it is best to have a ferryman helm the craft and get a character to his destination. Without the help of one of the Plane of Shadow's ferrymen, a character is likely to encounter dangerous creatures that inhabit the waterways.

So, how does the plane's layout affect encounters? Very rarely can travelers from another plane surprise the native inhabitants. In fact, it is usually the light used to travel that causes characters to give away their position. This is a problem for anyone looking to avoid an encounter. It is doubly troublesome when

you consider that lights can be seen at twice their normal distance, although they don't provide illumination. Lights attract attention, bringing the curious and the aggressive alike. Another point travelers must contend with is that distances are distorted; meaning that objects may be closer than they appear.

What follows are sample tables for objects and creatures commonly encountered on the Plane of Shadow.

### DIE ROLL

01-30	Objects
31-50	Creatures
51-00	Weather (See <b>Hazards</b> )

### OBJECTS

01-20	River
21-80	Community
81-85	Castle
86-00	Ship

### COMMUNITY

01-35	Thorp
36-65	Village
66-87	Town
88-94	City
95-00	Metropolis

### CASTLE

01-25	Keep
26-50	Tower
51-80	Fortress
81-95	Castle
96-00	Palace

### SHIPS

01-20	Raft
21-55	Boat
56-85	Barge
86-00	Sailing Ship

### CREATURES

01-35	Shades
36-70	Spirits
71-95	Mundane
96-00	Ferryman

**River:** Rivers course through the Plane of Shadow, crossing it with such frequency that portions of the plane can be thought of as islands. For many travelers, the rivers are dangerous. Some of the most powerful and malignant beings that call the plane home reside in rivers or near their banks. The wider the river is, the larger and more ferocious the creatures that can be found lurking there.

**COMMUNITY**

Communities are common on the Plane of Shadow in spite of the lack of light. Mortals who choose to dwell on the plane eventually take on a pallor that makes them suffer when exposed to sunlight. Even with artificial lighting, these effects still apply to mortals. Some believe it is due to the closeness that the plane shares with death. After all, there are communities on the plane that are inhabited purely by souls who cannot find the path or complete the test necessary to reach their eternal resting place. There are even rumors of cities where the living and the dead live together.

Communities are the safest and most dangerous places to be on the Plane of Shadow. This is a quandary until you consider that most communities are nestled along the edge of a river. While the community's residents are safe within the confines of the community's boundaries, they aren't so protected that a rampaging beast can't lay waste to a portion of the settlement. Monstrosities can come crashing through the streets of the town at any moment, making communities on the plane dangerous. The other reason communities cling to riverbanks is that rivers serve as expedient ways to transport goods. With the help of the ferrymen, this is a profitable business as there's no safer guarantee that goods will reach their destination. The ferrymen are expensive, but as the workhorses of the plane, they can demand their rates.

**Thorp:** With no more than 50 people, the typical thorp on the Plane of Shadow serves as an outpost and is subordinate to another community. Unlike thorps built on a Prime Material World, thorps built on the Plane of Shadow do not need a purpose for their construction. The thorp may be a way for a larger community to establish a beachhead in a sparsely populated area for anything from colonization to preparations for a war with another community. Whatever the purpose of the thorp, it will have little to offer the wary traveler and a wharf that's essentially beached rafts and rowboats.

**Village:** Communities with 51-150 inhabitants, villages normally boast of an inn and a blacksmith. Some goods will be available to the traveler, but quantities are generally limited. As with a thorp, the village is usually subordinate to another community. Unlike the thorp, a village is likely to be visited by merchants and receive supplies from its patron community as it is less likely that a creature will come rampaging through the village. The inhabitants of villages on the Plane of Shadow are often unfriendly because of the number of creatures that can wander into the community. Chances are that reinforcements are on their way to greet those who don't leave.

**Town:** Communities with 151-1,500 inhabitants are uncommon. Unlike the thorp and village, the town can be independent. A town is more likely to have an assortment of goods for a traveler's needs. Towns on the Plane of Shadow usually have an inn or two, a general store, a blacksmith, and possibly an apothecary. This is a good assortment of basic needs for short-term stays. Marauding monstrosities are just as common as for a village, but the creatures are usually loathe entering the town proper (the outskirts are another matter). Towns will possess a garrison capable of defending it from the creatures, minimize the damage. Most towns will also possess a small harbor.

**City:** Cities on the Plane of Shadow are a relieving sight for wary travelers. Cities aren't as rare as one would expect, but they require that a traveler searches for them. Cities have a population of 1,501-15,000 inhabitants. If one was to stand in the middle of such a city it would be indistinguishable from a city on the Prime Material Plane on an overcast, moonless night. The city is not limited to the types of goods one can find. Compared to the above settlements, cities do not need to be located next to a waterway. Most such cities were built by the spirits of the dead who cannot find the way to their afterlife. Given this large size, it is almost certain that the city has connections with other cities on the plane. Cities do not need to justify their existence and they are well defended. Most cities have at least three garrisons to defend the city. When you consider that cities attract the attention of the ferocious creatures of the plane, is it any wonder that only strong garrisons of troops can prevent them from overrunning the settlement? Cities along a river possess at least one major harbor.

**Metropolis:** The metropolis is rare on the Plane of Shadow. Boasting of a population of 15,001-50,000 inhabitants, the metropolis on the Prime Material Plane would wield greater power on the Plane of Shadow if territory could be held on to without a building occupying or surrounding that ground. Metropolises on the plane are mixed communities of the living and the dead. When the only way to survive is to huddle together, the metropolis becomes a home to anyone willing to accept such a disparate (and desperate) population. A metropolis on this plane is not only heavily guarded, it also boasts of strong fortifications. The smallest metropolis will have no less than five garrisons for the express purpose of protecting the city from the near constant attacks against its walls by the ferocious creatures attracted by the number of prey in one location. A constabulary will be found for policing the community and a guard force to protect the castle or palatial grounds of the city's ruler. The metropolis will have at least two cities, a handful of towns, villages, and numerous thorps subordinate to it.

By necessity, metropolises are hubs of trade. This makes them great places for travelers to rest and find supplies. There is no difference between the metropolis on the Prime Material Plane and one on this plane beyond the plane's peculiarities. Metropolises accommodate trade by having several major harbors for vessels (if located on a river) or equivalent for wagon trains to flow in and out of the city.

**CASTLE**

Although the category is named "castle" after the castles on the Prime Material Plane, it encompasses an assortment of fortifications. Few of these structures are independent. Rather, most of them serve as a parameter defense for a region. Given that castles and palaces are normally built with defense in mind, it's logical that where keeps, towers and fortresses are, a large settlement must be nearby. A common accoutrement for castles on the Plane of Shadow is a large beacon fire. Larger structures frequently have several beacon fires, increasing the number of beacons per structure by 1d4 for every category above the keep.

**Keep:** The keep is the smallest fortification one would encounter on the Plane of Shadow. Keeps are so small, in fact, that they cannot be too far from a community so that it can be resupplied. This assumes the keep does not have a portal

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inside. While the function of the keep has not changed from its Prime Material Plane counterpart, it doesn't have to resemble one. As the spirits of the dead may occupy keeps, there are many variations that can be used to satisfy their needs rather than mortals. It is suggested that a garrison of 11-30 warriors is typical of this structure.

**Tower:** Towers are scattered across the Plane of Shadow, commonly lining the path of a major thoroughfare that connects two settlements to one another. While towers are normally associated with look out positions on the Prime Material Plane, that function is impracticable here. Some extradimensional empires may use the traditional tower outposts despite the fact that light sources can't penetrate the darkness. Given these considerations, the towers most likely encountered will be those of powerful spellcasters. It is suggested that a garrison of 11-30 warriors is typical of this structure.

**Fortress:** Fortresses on the Plane of Shadow are territorial control points and defense lines. As with keeps, these structures must have a portal within or be close enough to a community for supplies. Likewise, the fortress will have multiple entrance points and is usually equipped with troops trained to combat whatever horrors prowl the area. Fortresses are usually used by mortals rather than the dead (who have fewer predators looking to devour their essence). It is suggested that a garrison of 51-150 warriors is typical of this structure.

**Castle:** Castles come in two varieties on the Plane of Shadow: flying and grounded. Flying castles on Plane of Shadow are near impossible to find and can only be accessed if one knows of their existence and can teleport to them. These are the private abodes of powerful beings referred to as the Lords of Shadow. To live in the skies of this plane requires great daring and magical might. Castles on the ground are mobile or surrounded by ruins. Mobile castles are the possessions of beings unafraid of the terrors that haunt the rivers. While all castles have strong walls, the castle encircled by ruins serves as a testament to its strength to withstand the destruction that laid waste to the community that once surrounded it. It is suggested that a garrison of 21-120 warriors is typical of this structure.

**Palace:** Travelers should be wary of encountering a palace standing by itself. If the palace appears to be without blemish, it is occupied by an extremely powerful being. Palaces that show signs of aging are likely inhabited by creatures best left undisturbed. Unlike the Lords of Shadow, the inhabitants of palaces have no need for titles or recognition. Some of these palaces may be capable of moving across the plane or by flight. In this case, a wise traveler would steer clear of such palaces. No one goes to a solitary palace unless they're looking for a swift death or they have business with the occupant. It is suggested that a garrison of 101-200 warriors is typical of this structure.

### SHIPS

Ships serve well as random objects since they are in motion more often than they are in harbor. More importantly are the types of vessels that one can encounter. Most business between settlements is conducted via the rivers, making the likelihood of encountering watercraft that much more possible. Rivers are the lifeblood and curse of the inhabitants of the plane. Exploration of the plane requires a reliable and stable platform for those who do not have access to a ferryman. This can be

common due to the steep prices they demand for transporting goods throughout the plane.

**Raft:** Despite the numerous hazards clustered around the Plane of Shadow's waterways, there are always those brave (or foolhardy) enough to ply the lake or river waters with a raft. If a raft is encountered, chances are it will be devoid of passengers. Many of the provisions found on an abandoned raft will probably be useless or damaged beyond repair. Encounters that include passengers on a raft should leave travelers a bit leery. This is especially true if the individuals are powerful, desperate, insane, or a combination of the three.

**Boat:** This category refers to any waterborne craft found in a lake or on river's bank, from a rowboat to a skiff. Boats are more defendable than a raft in proportion to the vessel's size. Small sailing vessels, such as a fisherman's sailboat, fall into this category. Thus, the range this category covers is intended to give you a greater degree of flexibility in designing an encounter. The waterborne craft favored by the ferrymen of the plane generally fall into this category. (A rare few ply the waterways of the plane using barges and large sailing ships.)

**Barge:** The barges of the Plane of Shadow are the workhorses of cargo transportation. While many barges can be found throughout the plane, the safest and most encountered are those operated by a ferryman or one who has been apprenticed to become one. In the case of the latter, the pilot of the barge will only travel specific routes that have been taught to him. Barges that don't have either a ferryman or an apprentice will have the appearance of a raft. However, barges seem to be less likely to be attacked. These vessels do not ply the seas and oceans, of course.

**Sailing Ship:** The last of the common vessels used to ply the large waterways of the plane, this category is used to designate sailing ships that can travel many of the rivers that cross the plane. Sailing Ships also include some of the most fantastic and bizarre ships forged out of materials resistant to the attacks of the monstrosities that haunt the rivers and are able to repel them. Due to their construction, sailing ships may be safely crewed by any sentient species without a ferryman. While sailing vessels come in several varieties, they almost universally carry beacon lamps at bow and stern.

### CREATURES

The sample list below covers four of the most commonly encountered types of creatures on the Plane of Shadow. These represent the main native life of the plane and the particular twist they place on it. Many of these beings exhibit traits that are not inherent in the plane. Although these differences will be explained, it is important to keep this in mind when reading the descriptions of the entries.

**Shades:** Shades are the only known mortal race that inhabits the Plane of Shadow. They appear as humanoids with ebony colored skin. On close inspection, shades appear to be translucent or incorporeal. Given the darkness of the plane, it is difficult to tell where a shade ends and his clothing begins. Shades prefer to remain in gloom and can see as far on the Plane of Shadow as a traveler can on the Prime Material Plane in full daylight. Shades have a slight infusion of negative energy and cast magic as if they were on the Negative Energy Plane. (Consult your game system's bestiary for possible variations of this sort of creature.)

**Spirits:** Spirits are as common as the shades. Unlike shades, spirits come in many forms and do not necessarily appear as they did in life. When encountered, a spirit will possibly be on the road to reach the path to its final resting place or it is lost and searching for the path or a way to overcome a challenge to reach its final resting place. Spirits may be hostile towards the living and insane. In the case of the latter, the spirit's demise or inability to reach its final resting place may be the cause for its lack of sanity. The two most common forms spirits come in if they do not have the form they had when living will be that of a light (similar to a will o' the wisp) or they bear the wounds (or decay if death was natural) when they died. There are spheres found on the Plane of Shadow that are the final dwelling places for many spirits.

**Mundane:** Any subterranean creature may be encountered on the surface of the Plane of Shadow. Additionally, many nocturnal creatures call the plane home. Many species found on the Prime Material Plane can also be encountered in rivers or along their banks. Such creatures include alligators, venomous water snakes, and carnivorous fish. There are non-predatory mundane species that live on this plane, but they are not very common due to the strange vegetation of the plane.

**Ferryman:** The strangest and most enigmatic figures of the Plane of Shadow are the ferrymen. No two look alike, yet they all wear the same style of black, deep-hooded, voluminous-sleeved robes. Some speak while others do not. The only other universal quality they share is their uncanny ability to navigate the plane's waterways to any destination without encountering any monstrous creatures. Ferrymen are respected and feared by the inhabitants of the plane and any attacks against them usually cause others to come to their defense.

#### MAJOR PHYSICAL FEATURES

If one could penetrate the murkiness that veils most of this realm, one would see is three realms in one that resemble Prime Material Plane landscapes on a grand scale. However, the distinction between the three realms isn't physical, but rather the level of dimness and the beings that inhabit the regions that make it a three-fold realm. Penumbra is the closest to the Prime Material Plane and is the safest for mortals to tread. Fortunately, in many places on the plane vast oceans generally separate the three regions from one another.

Additionally, Shade and Umbra are further from the Prime Material Plane with the latter being the darkest and nethermost of the three realms. This is an important distinction as travel to the Plane of Shadow always deposits the traveler in ~~Shade~~ Penumbra unless a dimensional doorway specifically anchors a location to a higher or deeper region. Another way to distinguish the three regions from one another is that many creatures that dwell in the waterways usually do not cross over to another region, despite that nothing physically prevents them. This distinction could be seen in the behavior of creatures in the oceans separating the realms if the darkness could be rolled back.

#### HAZARDS

The Plane of Shadow is not harmful to travelers. The dimness may be a hindrance, but it does not have any detrimental effects. The terrain is similar to the Prime Material Plane. There may be a few natural hazards, but they are no different than expected on a world that possessed the terrain. Climates on the Plane of

Shadow mimic those of the world closest to the region. Thus, there are swaths of arctic terrains and tropical bands that blanket huge areas of the plane. Climate becomes more mild and beneficial as one enters Shade, less so when one descends into Umbra.

While it is not much more dangerous to live on the Plane of Shadows than the Prime Material Plane, travelers aren't protected from the natives or natural hazards. Although many of the weather hazards are similar to what you would find on a Prime Material Plane world, there are a few special weather events that are unique to the Plane of Shadow. As the plane has a limitless atmosphere, there is a chance a storm similar to those on the Plane of Air will form and rage before descending to the terrain below. The table below is an example of the weather hazards that can affect the plane.

#### WEATHER

01-20	Prime Material Plane
21-40	Plane of Air
41-60	Dark Tide
61-80	Void Cloud
81-00	Tenebrosity

**Prime Material Plane:** The region is under the effect of a storm appropriate for its climate if it were on the Prime Material Plane.

**Plane of Air:** See the tables for weather on the Plane of Air for a storm that affects the region on the Plane of Shadow.

**Dark Tide:** The dark tide is a unique weather event on the Plane of Shadow. Instead of affecting a region with damaging weather, it is a wave of aphotic energy that affects light sources as if they were in Deep Umbra. A dark tide may last as long as a storm, and generally ebbs and flows, causing light sources to fluctuate between the effects of the three regions of the Plane of Shadow. Areas of Umbra are affected in the same manner, but it does not become apparent unless the ebbing and flowing acts as another region. Using a d6, the effect can simulate the region as follows: 1-2 Shade, 3-4 Penumbra, 5-6 Umbra.

**Void Cloud:** A void cloud resembles a fog bank. However, as it possesses no moisture, the region affected by a void cloud slowly comes under the effects of the cloud through a gradual darkening. Void clouds are unlike any other inclement weather on the Plane of Shadow in that they pass through all six degrees (described at the end of the section on this plane) before leaving those inside the cloud isolated from the rest of the cosmology until the cloud dissipates. The void cloud is so dense and dark that individuals standing inches from one another disappear from sight and the act of reaching out to touch them finds only air. The ground beneath one's feet also disappears, making travel impossible although there is no sensation of free fall. When the cloud lifts, it goes through the six degrees in reverse, slowly revealing the cosmology to those within the cloud. Time can also be distorted.

**Tenebrosity:** The Tenebrosity is similar to the maelstrom on the Plane of Air. Rather than being a storm driven by winds and precipitation, the Tenebrosity is driven by aphotic energies that have been pushed back and compressed by sources of light, condensing the darkness and imbuing it with a slight negative

energy field. The view is that the tenebrosity is driven by the use of light, but periodically tenebrosities spring up over the vast oceans like enormous hurricanes along the borders between realms. The cause isn't from light, but the different levels of aphotic energy between the regions clashing and compressing one another.

Tenebrosities are as turbulent as a maelstrom, but the winds are wraith-like and pose little threat. Use the wind speeds table for maelstroms, but divide the speeds by six to determine its physical force. The precipitation generated by a tenebrosity is illustrated by the table below.

### PRECIPITATION

01-11	Void Cloud Surge
12-22	Dark Tide Surge
23-33	Negative Energy Mist
34-44	Negative Energy Thunderstorm
45-55	Light Swirl
56-66	Moderate Swirl
67-77	Heavy Swirl
78-88	Negative Energy Surge
89-00	True tenebrosity (Roll twice, ignore results above 88)

**Void Cloud Surge:** As a sudden downdraft, a void cloud surge is a series of void clouds that radiates out in all directions from the storm's center. Unless they're particularly large, void clouds in a surge do not keep an individual suspended in isolation for long. Void cloud surges tend to be patchy, making travel through the affected area maddeningly slow.

**Dark Tide Surge:** Similar to a void cloud surge, a tenebrosity sends out massive dark tides that push out from the storm's center, but their effects are short lived.

**Negative Energy Mist:** A light precipitation of negative energy, the negative energy mist causes very little damage. For objects and travelers caught in a negative energy mist, they suffer the minimum amount of damage your game system allows per minute within the mist.

**Negative Energy Thunderstorm:** Negative energy thunderstorms are violent weather systems that act like regular thunderstorms. Instead of bright flashes of lightning, the bolts are comprised of negative energy and strike the ground unseen, save perhaos for a brief absolute blackness there. The rain poses no threat, but the lightning deals negative energy damage rather than the positive energy associated with thunderstorms.

**Swirl:** A swirl is a combination of void clouds, dark tides, and negative energy. A light swirl causes damage as a negative energy mist. A moderate swirl deals damage as if it was a negative energy surge, and a heavy swirl deals damage as a bolt from a negative energy thunderstorm. A swirl does not perform all three at once. Rather, it is a random assortment of the three elements contained in the swirl. As such, there is a one in three chance each minute that the swirl will produce any effect. Using a d6, this works out to have the following results per die roll: 1-2 void cloud surge, 3-4 dark tide surge, and a 5 or 6 results in a negative energy field in the swirl.

**Negative Energy Surge:** Negative energy surges fluctuate in their potency. They are more powerful than negative energy mists, but less so than negative energy lightning. This gives you leeway to adjust the damage dealt by an energy surge. Negative energy surges are blanket effects, just like the negative energy mist. A negative energy surge causes damage every minute spent within the field.

### PHYSICAL TRAITS

The Plane of Shadow is similar to Prime Material Plane worlds in nearly all respects. This is important to bear in mind since many of the plane's creatures are infused with negative energy. The plane is not that different than a Prime Material World with respect to the fact that the horizon stretches to infinity in all directions and there is no discernable curvature to the plane. Numerous rivers, lakes and some oceanic-sized bodies of water split the plane into roughly continent-sized masses of land that are further sectioned off into what amounts to large islands bounded by rivers.

Gravity on the Plane of Shadow is regionally based. It is the same as the Prime Material Plane world it touches. Unless the region's gravity and terrain prevent it, all forms of travel available on a Prime Material Plane world are available.

Time is likewise unaffected by the Plane of Shadow. While certain aspects of the plane, like its weather, can cause distortions in time, the plane as a whole does not affect the flow of time. Likewise, the plane does not have a different polarity from the Prime Material Plane it is attached to. This may seem contradictory as many creatures on the plane usually are infused with negative energy, but this is a consequence of the planes dark and secretive nature. The fact that the dark hides the actions of an individual has lent itself to the actions of creatures with ill intentions and those who use negative energy. *[For the d20 system, the Plane of Shadow possesses the same alignment as the Prime Material Plane it is attached to.]*

Magic on the Plane of Shadow functions as if the character were on the Prime Material Plane. Although the plane is enshrouded in dimness, it doesn't mean that magic is affected in any way. Magic is neither augmented favorably or unfavorably unless the spells are affected on the Prime Material Plane. There is one caveat to this rule, however; as a natural effect, spells that produce light are hampered based on the region's effect on light while spells dealing with darkness are enhanced. For example, a spell of darkness cast in Shade will have its effects doubled (distance and duration) and have those benefits strengthened to three times the spell's normal effects if they cross over into Penumbra, and in Umbra they are quadrupled.

### INHABITANTS

The Plane of Shadow has many sentient races. Many of them are shadowy versions of Prime Material Plane inhabitants. The shades are an example of a race of mortals native to the Plane of Shadow who are shadowy versions of humans. Other sentient creatures found on the plane are the spirits of the deceased. While they are not mortals, spirits can be destroyed. This makes them nearly as fragile as the other mortal inhabitants.

Shadowy versions of unintelligent creatures from the Prime Material Plane comprise a sizable portion of the plane's fauna. They're a sizable portion because their counterparts can also be found here. The majority of the species from the Prime Material Plane have a natural aversion to light, those who don't

use sight as a primary sense, or species that are naturally blind; and many aquatic creatures can be found in the waterways. Creatures transplanted here are not quite the same as those from the Prime Material Plane. In order to survive in the darkness, they have had to adapt to the ruthlessness of new predators. Travelers will never look at such creatures the same way after their first encounter.

#### INCORPORATING INTO AN EXISTING CAMPAIGN

Any campaign where spells of darkness or those that rely on shadows are allowed assumes the Plane of Shadow is in the campaign's cosmology. You could choose to have the traits of the plane affect the cosmos as a whole to achieve this effect. There's one problem with this. Generally speaking, a cosmology dominated by the traits of the Plane of Shadow would be a dark place. Additionally, the plane is meant to function as a dark reflection of the Prime Material Plane it is attached to, making the cosmos function as a Plane of Shadow difficult. This is not to say that it would be impossible, but rather the essence of the plane's concept is to be attached to another plane. In this way, you could have a shadow cosmology connected to another cosmos.

Another issue that is difficult to see how the plane could be used is replacing another plane with the Plane of Shadow. The fortunate aspect is that while having additional Planes of Shadow in your campaign won't have deleterious effects, extra Planes of Shadow are inherently neutral and are unable to skew the balance of the cosmos. You can use this to your advantage, however. The easiest way to have one element be dominant in a cosmology was illustrated by denying or severely limiting access to the remaining energy or elemental planes. However, the planes could be accessible indirectly by having Planes of Shadow that can be accessed (for spell purposes, if not physically). This puts a twist on the use of the Plane of Shadow by allowing planes to have dark reflections, but preserves the cosmological balance and gives characters access to shadow-based magic when on planes other than the Prime Material Plane. You do not have to use this method. Planes of Shadow without a parent plane are just as mysterious.

The most common feature the Plane of Shadow possesses and is easiest to impart on other planes is its effects on light. Even if the plane has full daylight, you can use the trait from the Plane of Shadow to have darkness (from sunset or otherwise) that diffuses light. This infusion does not employ all of the traits of the Plane of Shadow, but shows a limited application of its most notable feature. Likewise, a cosmos can be the recipient of the trait. Using the most common trait, the cosmology would have areas of extreme darkness, even if your cosmos possesses planes that have day/night cycles. For example, a Plane of Air that had the traits of the Plane of Shadow applied to shaded regions would result in a plane where shadows provide deep cover against being spotted.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Degree

Voids above the land are breathable atmospheres.

Tenebrosities can be found in the oceanic regions of the plane.

Dark tides are predominant in the oceanic regions.

Light sources are diminished to one-half (standard Shade)

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree

Voids above the land are pure air.

Void clouds are common in the empty regions.

Tenebrosities are twice their size compared to the Plane of Shadow.

Winds are everywhere in the extreme reaches of the atmosphere, but are not strong (gentle breezes).

Light sources are diminished to one-third (standard Penumbra)

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree

Void clouds are common across the plane

Dark tides travel through the plane's sky

Tenebrosities are monstrous (3x) in comparison to the Plane of Shadow.

Light sources are diminished to one-quarter (standard Umbra)

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Degree

Void clouds float through the atmosphere.

Dark tides can form anywhere.

Tenebrosities are extensive (4x) compared to the Plane of Shadow.

Light sources are diminished to one-fifth

#### 5<sup>th</sup> Degree

Void clouds drift through the plane.

Dark tides are a daily occurrence.

Tenebrosities are so large (5x), they can dwarf most major features on a plane.

Light sources are diminished by to one-sixth

#### 6<sup>th</sup> Degree

Void clouds envelop whole regions of the plane.

Dark tides are constant.

Tenebrosities are extremely massive (6x).

No light sources cast illumination.

#### POSSIBLE ASSOCIATED PLANES

If you have Egyptian myth in your campaign, the underworld of the **Duat**, or **Tuat**, is definitely a separate Plane of Shadow with 12 regions and many associated spheres.

You might wish to add and detail a Plane of Dreams that is parallel to the Plane of Shadows, like it in many respects. Shade is similar to daydreams, Penumbra to dreams, and Umbra to nightmares. The rest is left to your creative imagination.

#### THE ETHEREAL PLANE

The Ethereal Plane is a non-spatial plane. It is the glue that simultaneously binds the planes together while keeping them from touching. The plane is non-spatial because when on the plane, a character can see the plane he just departed as if it were being viewed through a diaphanous screen. The character may move about while on this plane, but objects such as walls not on the plane pose only a minor inconvenience. If the character travels away from the plane he entered from, it the view of that plane fades away and is replaced by a grayish haze.

**SIZE AND LAYOUT**

Size is an interesting question concerning the Ethereal Plane. As a non-spatial plane, it is difficult to quantify how the plane can be infinitely large when it has no actual space. The layout of the plane is easier to describe. The plane is composed of a substance called ectoplasm. The ectoplasm is thin in areas that do not contain physical objects. Where a physical object exists on a plane, the ectoplasm is thicker. For travelers on the plane, this represents an area that is harder to move through. Note that the traveler is himself now composed of such matter, and so very thick ectoplasm can form a barrier to his movement.

The fact that the plane is gray and featureless does not help in discerning the size and layout of the plane beyond what can be seen when a character is close to the boundary between the Ethereal and a plane it borders. This is why everything appears to the characters as if he's viewing it through a gauzy film. The character is at the edge of the plane but can't cross over without magical means. The character can pull away, but will have less connection with the plane he was viewing. This is a unique feature of the Ethereal Plane.

This is a drawback for eavesdroppers on the Ethereal Plane. While they can spy on their foes using this plane, spellcasters or beings with certain magical sensitivities may be able to detect them. There's also the potential that the intended target has placed magical wards around him to prevent the ethereal space at the location from being entered. Thus, just because a character can't be seen by those without magic doesn't mean he is able to move freely without fear of detection. Barring magical intervention, sounds would be muffled as if heard from behind a door despite the fact that the source may be next to the character.

**MAJOR PHYSICAL FEATURES**

The Ethereal Plane resembles the mundane energy planes when it comes to physical features. For the most part, the plane is devoid of any feature other than the gray ectoplasmic mists. Unlike the energy planes, there are physical features (despite the non-spatial dimensions). These features are encountered when in proximity to a physical plane. There are two physical features in this regard: the physical features of the plane bordering the Ethereal in that location and ectoplasmic thickening in the shape of a physical object. For the latter, the character is far enough from the border between the planes that he cannot see the neighboring plane, but is able to see its geography as an area thicker than the surrounding location.

An example of thickening in this region between the emptiness and the very edge of the plane is a semi-translucent gray mist with a deeper gray topography. Areas where the mists are thicker can

be passed through, but movement is reduced. The material that the condensed ectoplasm represents determines the reduction of movement. For example, to pass through wood, the rate is cut by  $\frac{1}{4}$  one-quarter, while stone cuts rates in half; regions that are comprised of metal are reduced by  $\frac{3}{4}$  three-quarters. Lead is the only exception to this. For some reason, this material prevents a character from traveling through the condensed area. It is likely that the great density of lead is the reason. If that is so, then gold would likewise prevent passage, and so too platinum.

**HAZARDS**

The Ethereal Plane presents no real hazards to the character. The plane is harmless, but there is one hazard that it poses: it is devoid of resources. If a character is stranded on the plane, he risks the chance of starvation or dehydration. Worse, if he wanders too far from the physical planes, it is possible to travel to the Aetherial Plane. Travel on the plane is generally limited to the plane the character left to take an ethereal jaunt to another location on the same plane before rematerializing.

As for hazards posed by living beings, there are creatures that can attack a character on the Ethereal Plane, but they don't necessarily call the plane home. Many of these creatures use the Ethereal Plane to hunt their prey. Most creatures that have the ability to shift at will from the Ethereal to another plane won't hesitate to attack what they perceive as an intruder. Alternatively, the being may appear on other planes in an ectoplasmic form (certain types of ghosts, incorporeal beings, etc.). If this is the case, the creature will have a natural camouflage. This disadvantage will hinder the character's ability to mount an effective defense. Consult the bestiary of your game system for creatures able to access this plane.

**PHYSICAL TRAITS**

The physical traits of the Ethereal Plane were given previously. Just because it's a grayish mist that can condense doesn't mean that it is without other traits. For example, gravity can be felt when in the border regions. The direction of gravity is imparted by the neighboring plane. However, when one is in the mists away from the border areas, there is only subjective gravity. Here, down is in any direction a character wants it to be. In this outer region, travel requires magical means, thought, or the use of abilities or skills such as Panprobability. Travel in the border regions can also be done using any method that is available on the plane bordering the Ethereal in addition to abilities/skills like Panprobability.

Interestingly enough, time remains unaffected in the border regions. No matter how twisted time may be by a neighboring plane, time on the Ethereal Plane always flows at the same rate as the Prime Material Plane. This is a break from the effects that

## PRECISION, SCALE AND DIMENSIONAL TRAVEL

If you decide to allow probability and time travel in your campaign, your players may ask why they cannot go to their own pasts, or why they cannot go to a world that is exactly the same, except one of their companions has not died. Theoretically, Space-Time and probability should allow for an infinite number of worlds and timelines. However, a simple explanation to limit this is the mathematical concept of precision and scale.

Take a ruler—English or Metric, does not matter. A foot or yard ruler is divided into feet, while a metric one is divided in decimeters. Then you get to measuring inches/centimeters, then finally fractions and millimeters. As you narrow your scale, you become more precise—however, soon the ruler becomes inaccurate when dealing with the smallest items. It becomes harder to gauge the distances accurately.

This can be used to explain that while there are an infinite amount of possibilities and fractions of seconds in a time-probability line, you are not able to measure them all. This can be used as a perfect explanation while probability travel cannot allow one to find a very similar timeline (such as a timeline that is exactly the same except for the fact you ate beef instead of chicken for dinner yesterday), or to go back to the recent past. Magic, psychic powers or science enabling time or probability travel may be limited in their measurements of the raw energies of these two forces.

other planes exert on the border regions of the plane. Not even the energies exerted by the mundane energy planes affect the border regions.

The Ethereal Plane always has the same polarity as the cosmos. Thus, no matter what polarity a Prime Material Plane possesses, the Ethereal will always possess the polarity of the cosmos. This is unlike the physical planes which generally have the same polarity as the Prime Material Plane. Then again, if the Prime Material Plane has a shifted polarity that is not shared with the cosmos, the physical planes may share the same polarity as the Ethereal Plane. *[In a d20 campaign, this is represented by a True Neutral alignment for the standard cosmos. However, for a campaign with a different alignment, the Ethereal Plane possesses that alignment instead.]*

Magic on the Ethereal Plane follows the same rules as the cosmos. Even when a character is in a border region for a plane that augments magic, the effects do not carry over to the Ethereal Plane. The plane is so inert that no augmentations spells apply to the border regions unless these changes are inherited by the cosmology.

#### INHABITANTS

The Ethereal Plane resembles the mundane energy planes when it comes to inhabitants. There seems to be a lack of them. Although there are creatures that can use the Ethereal Plane, there are no known sentient or unintelligent creatures native to it. This is not to say that no creature has been encountered, but that there are no inhabitants who spend their entire existence on the plane. This is a far cry from the problem with beings from the mundane energy planes that look like the plane's physical features. It's the lack of lairs of beings that make use of the Ethereal Plane. No one knows if any of the creatures who use the plane as camouflage also use it to hide their young. It is speculated that at least one species must, but without nests or

clutches of eggs, it is impossible to tell.

Ectoplasm can be shaped and controlled. Thus, it is possible that some of the beings encountered by travelers are simulacra. This helps to compound the issue by making it that much more difficult to determine what creatures are native and which are puppets of powerful spellcasters. Many creatures composed of ectoplasm are incorporeal and appear to be little more than a wispy haze when encountered outside of the Ethereal Plane. The ones that are more commonly considered to be constructs are made of a thicker ectoplasm that looks like gray jelly. These creatures have a tendency to leave a thin tale-tell trail of slime wherever they go.

#### INCORPORATING INTO AN EXISTING CAMPAIGN

The Ethereal Plane cannot be used to replace a cosmos in the way that other planes can. There are no traits that can be imparted by the Ethereal Plane either. This is due to the fact that the plane is non-spatial, meaning that it has no true dimensions. This effectively removes the plane from possible use as a variant for a cosmos unless you want the entire cosmos to be comprised of just the Ethereal Plane. Similarly, a plane with spatial aspects cannot be replaced by the Ethereal Plane. As a consolation, however, the Ethereal can be used to create new planes. While this seems illogical, the non-spatial aspect of the plane does not prevent it from housing extradimensional spaces. The plane is a barrier between spatial realms, after all. Thus, although you can't use the plane to impart any traits, you can use it as a way to create an unlimited number of extradimensional spaces that can be grown into pocket realms or planes without interfering with other planes. The non-spatial nature of the plane allows it to "stretch" to accommodate additional spatial regions that would otherwise conflict with preexisting locations.

## CHAPTER 4: THE AETHEREAL PLANE

**T**HE AETHEREAL PLANE is in actuality part of the greater Aethereal Plane. When a character is traveling through the Ethereal away from the physical planes, he will eventually come across a silvery-gray wall. This is the boundary that separates the Ethereal from the Aethereal Plane. This means that the Aethereal is a non-spatial realm. The boundary that separates the two planes acts as the line that divides the cosmos from a series of purely physical planes to those with metaphysical concepts.

The Aethereal Plane serves as a glue to hold the entire cosmos together and keeps the planes from touching one another or otherwise interacting in a way that is detrimental to the planes or the cosmos. The Aethereal is far from being a static realm, however. The quiet enjoyed by the Ethereal Plane does not extend to the Aethereal. The best way to describe this plane is in terms of a tortured landscape where warring ideas clash in psychic duels. Being non-spatial, it is hard to say how large these conflicts are, but for most observers, they appear titanic.

By holding the cosmos together, the Aethereal Plane performs its function without fail. But some speculate whether the purpose for the Aethereal Plane is to act solely as the glue that binds a cosmos together. They point out the psychic activity from the metaphysical concepts that clash throughout the plane as proof that it is not static. In fact, they claim the purpose is much more complex than just a cosmological solvent.

The Aethereal Plane is known to hold lost artifacts and other discarded trinkets. Is the plane then the cosmos' garbage dump or a universal lost-and-found? Some believe it is. By the very act of containing these disparate objects the Aethereal Plane seems to violate its own purpose of holding the cosmology together. The sheer number of items one can find, from the flotsam and jetsam remnants of a ship to the husks of dead creatures, lends some to wonder if the plane is not at war with itself.

Trying to define how the plane works is beyond the scope of this introduction. That does not mean a brief overview is not possible, however. Since the plane is a non-spatial realm, it has no true size (or lack of size) and easily accommodates any plane that may be inserted in a preexisting cosmos or one you are designing. This means that you can add and remove planes of existence from a cosmos at will without worrying about problems relating to whether the cosmos will collapse. How does the plane manage to have so much elasticity without breaking?

The question of how the plane can do this can be credited to its non-spatial state. Since the plane does not take up space, cosmologically speaking, it does not suffer any ill effects from an expansion or contraction. In fact, the plane's structure does not even notice the addition or removal of planes. The Aethereal Plane is unfazed by anything done to it. With the exception of portals that connect to planes that disappear, there are no changes of the Aethereal Plane. The plane does not suffer even if two or more planes merge, which is an event that releases psychic energies throughout the plane, but does not otherwise interfere with its function.

The importance of the plane cannot be stressed enough. Without the Aethereal Plane, there is not anything to hold a

cosmos together. Conversely, there would not be anything to keep planes from crashing into one another. The Aethereal Plane not only serves in this capacity, but it is the only plane that can do so. The psychic energies from metaphysical concepts that rip through the plane do so with little resistance. None of this is caused by the plane; rather it comes from nullification of psychic energies from polar opposites. Think of the Aethereal Plane like a copper wire with multiple electrical contacts.

The mental image of the plane as a copper wire is meant to illustrate the point of a neutral, unbiased conduit. The plane is not made of copper, nor is it part of the wiring of any circuit. However, the fact that electricity can flow from any point of the wire to another is an apt analogy. However, since the metaphysical poles in a cosmology are separated, they act like the electrical points from which energy can flow at any given point and time through the wire. The Aethereal Plane is unlike the copper wire when you allow multiple poles to let psychic energies flow through it. In this instance, the wire would probably melt or begin to glow from the overload of energy. Psychic energy flowing through the Aethereal Plane does not conform to this principle. If it did, the plane would not be stable and cause the entire cosmos to collapse or explode.

This is a dire image to have in mind when the question of how the Aethereal Plane affects your campaign has not been addressed. Remember, the plane is inert. The plane has no direct impact on your game until and unless you allow the players' characters to travel to planes beyond the Ethereal Boundary. Even with this, there is no impact on the campaign that would signify the Aethereal Plane is at the heart of a problem because it happens there. In other words, you can ignore the plane until the time arises when an adventure requires the characters to leave the Prime Material Plane.

So, unless you want to make the Aethereal Plane unstable, there is nothing about this plane that will affect your game. You have to construct the plane with an augmentation not inherent in the cosmos (something abnormal for the Aethereal to possess) in order for it to have a much larger impact on the game. Barring tweaking the fabric of the plane, another option that will allow the plane to affect your cosmology is to populate it with a race or military organization capable of menacing the Prime Material Plane.

The last question to answer in this brief introduction is the Aethereal Plane's whereabouts in the grand scale of the cosmology. It is literally everywhere in the cosmos. Then again, because it is non-spatial, it is nowhere. If you were to take the sheet of paper you are staring at and looked at it edgewise, you would see something thicker than the whole of the Aethereal Plane. Yet, in this non-spatial realm, there are an infinite number of possibilities in the form of portals to other planes, lost treasures, wreckage from unknown and potentially ancient battles, and the shifting folds of extra-dimensional spaces. The fact that the plane is so close at hand despite its infinite size from the inside, boggles the mind that something so thin envelops all of the infinite realms that constitute a cosmos. Thus, there is no incorrect answer to placing the location of the Aethereal Plane.

**SIZE AND LAYOUT**

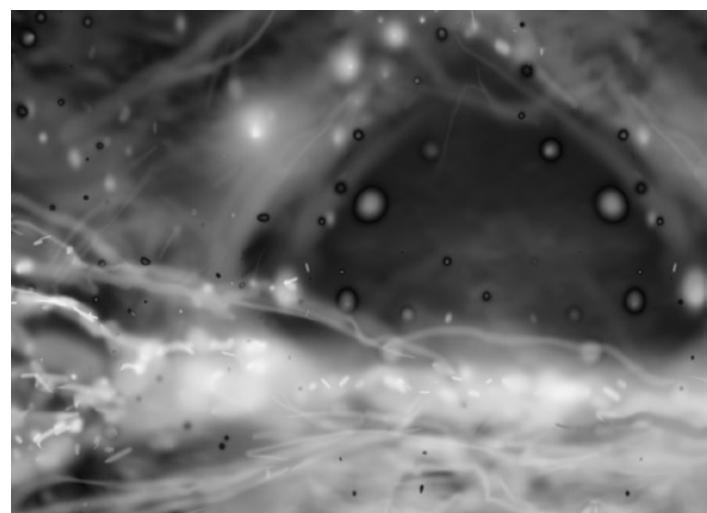
As stated above, the Aethereal Plane is non-spatial. Thus, it literally has no size. Yet, this is not quite the case. Travel on the Aethereal Plane reveals that from the perspective of the character, the plane is as large and vast as any other infinitely-sized plane. Then again, it is difficult to determine the truth of this when the plane looks the same as the Ethereal Plane. That is until a character comes across objects floating in the plane. Some of these objects are so massive or cover such a wide area that travelers question the claim that the plane has no spatial aspects.

As has been stated, the Aethereal Plane is the glue of the cosmos. This makes it the “largest” of all non-spatial planes. Also, the Aethereal Plane includes the Ethereal Plane, meaning they both share many of the same traits. Because of this, the Aethereal is sometimes referred to as the Deep Ethereal. This is a misnomer as the plane not only does not function like the Ethereal Plane, but it also has traits that vary widely from the Ethereal, which is essentially a sphere in the Aethereal even though it is a plane unto itself.

On the surface, there are no differences between the Ethereal and the Aethereal Planes. This is based on the view most travelers have as the gray mists look the same as the Ethereal Plane. Additionally, when one crosses the Ethereal Boundary and looks back, the barrier cannot be seen unless one travels back to the Ethereal. There are also times when the mists of the plane roll back and reveal a scintillating multicolored void or what looks like a night sky full of stars. But this is just an example of the strange anomalies that plague the Aethereal Plane.

The strange objects one encounters on the Aethereal Plane are numerous. In addition to the eccentric change of scenery that does not affect travel, wayfarers can inadvertently pass through a wrinkle in the plane and find themselves in an extra-dimensional space or a pocket realm. Other encounters are creatures or unnamed horrors that materialize before the characters, attack them and then vanish. The only reason they are known to have existed is because of the physical wounds with which the characters are left.

To help you develop a feel for the random encounters that can take place, the tables below contain a sampling of events and



items characters are likely to run into while traveling on the Aethereal Plane. Descriptions follow afterward.

**DIE ROLL**

01-30	Aethereal Appearance
31-50	Extra Dimensionalism
51-70	Wreckage
71-90	Abandoned Trinkets
91-00	Psychic Energy (see Hazards)

**AETHEREAL APPEARANCE**

01-31	Gray Mist
32-57	Space
58-78	Scintillating Rainbow
79-94	White Space
95-00	Dimensional Matrix

**EXTRA-DIMENSIONALISM**

01-30	Hostile Creature
31-55	Figment of Psychic Energy
56-75	Extra-dimensional Space
76-90	Aethereal Wrinkle
91-00	Pocket Realm

**WRECKAGE**

01-10	Ship Wreckage
11-35	Flotsam and Jetsam
36-50	Broken Stone
51-70	Broken Siege Equipment
71-00	Broken Weapons

**ABANDONED TRINKETS**

01-16	Baubles
17-33	Ornate Costume Jewels
34-50	Sextant
51-66	Aethereal Compass
67-83	Relic from the Past
84-00	Shattered Hand Mirror

**AETHEREAL APPEARANCE**

As stated earlier, the Aethereal Plane periodically changes its appearance around a traveler. These changes do not necessarily coincide with an event. It is a feature of the Aethereal Plane that is caused by the surges of psychic energies that reverberate throughout the plane due to the strains placed on it by the metaphysical axes. When a change takes place, it is possible that another event will occur simultaneously or immediately following the change. These changes are usually short lived with the gray mists rolling back over the area when they end.

How large of an area and how long is it affected for? The quickest way to randomize the size is to use the tables for elemental spheres in Chapter 3. However, the time lapsed for a change in the appearance of the plane should not necessarily

last as long as an elemental sphere. Then again, it would be interesting to have your characters burst through the gray mists and find that they are staring at a starry night on one side and a wall of gray mist at their backs. You should thus make a decision as to how long the appearance changes from the gray mists and back again for random effects and the length of time a change lasts randomly or arbitrarily. However you choose to deal with this, the mists should be allowed to roll back into place before some other appearance effect is applied.

**Gray Mist:** If the appearance of the Aethereal is different in your cosmos, or was altered by a previous random roll, this results in the gray mists rolling back, hiding anything that had been revealed. If this result comes up while the plane is enshrouded in the mists, you can ignore the result and re-roll or leave the plane as is.

**Space:** When this change in the appearance of the Aethereal plane occurs, the gray mists roll back and reveal a flat, two-dimensional starry night sky. If the characters continue to travel in this environment, it is possible to come across objects that are flat. The characters will appear to be two-dimensional as well. As the void fills with air, the distant specks of light twinkle. If the appearance changes while the characters are in this region, the mists will billow through the area, slowly obscuring the space-like canopy until it is gone.

**Scintillating Rainbow:** If the mists roll back to reveal this change to the plane, the players will see what looks like a pool of shifting, brightly lit colors. The mists do not roll away completely, however, allowing travelers the option to not travel through the changed region. If they do choose to enter it, however, they risk being blinded from having a bright light shone in their faces. The region constantly changes colors, lending "scintillating rainbow" as an apt name. When the mists roll back over the area, the characters are likely to have their vision impaired for a few minutes. What an opportunity to use exotic names for hues! Beige, carmine, citrine, cerise, fuchsia, lake, mauve, ochre, rose madder, russet, taupe, ultramarine...

**White Space:** Imagine a negative of a photograph taken of space. This is what white space is. The mists roll back to reveal a white field with distant dark spots. Everything still has a two-dimensional appearance, but the colors of the spatial region have been reversed. As it is similar to the appearance of space, when the mists roll back in, the appearance fades out in the same manner.

**Dimensional Matrix:** The strangest view the Aethereal Plane can take is when the mists roll away to reveal the dimensional matrix. At least, that is how the character should view the change. The character has not left the Aethereal Plane despite what he may think. This does not mean that what the player is actually viewing **is** the dimensional matrices of the Aethereal Plane and the planes in the cosmos. Then again, he could be viewing just that. The view can look like the dimensional matrices of planes in your cosmos or the details can be made up for each change.

### EXTRA-DIMENSIONALISM

The Aethereal Plane is full of extra-dimensional spaces. Everything from proper planes held together in the cosmos to pocket realms, planar seeds and the wrinkles in the fabric of the cosmos can be found in the Aethereal Plane. The effects

of the extra-dimensional and psychic nature inherent in the plane can cause creatures or what appear to be living beings to materialize before a traveler and attack him before immediately disappearing. These events and those that can cause a mortal to be driven to the edge of sanity are part and parcel of the extra-dimensional properties that the Aethereal Plane possesses as it twists and curves through the cosmology to bind it.

**Hostile Creature:** Without warning, a large and voracious creature begins to attack the characters. The beast knows no fear and is not confused as it assaults the closest target. Any creature can appear. When one of these encounters takes place, you should avoid allowing a character die from the attack. Rather, have the assailing creature shift to another member of the adventuring party or have the creature vanish right before the killing blow is struck.

**Figment of Psychic Energy:** This is one of the most harrowing experiences a character can experience because of the peculiarities of the Aethereal Plane. The figment is just that. It is not real, but it mimics the effects of psychic energies, the character is affected by as if they were. When such an encounter occurs, usually one member is affected. This character believes that the effects the energies should have done. Thus, if the character believes the attack should have killed him, he will close his eyes and stop moving (breathing is not affected). As another example, if the figment resembled the energies that would have set his skin aflame, he will believe his flesh has been burned and insist he needs healing. Some figments can affect a whole group. If the plight of one character is hard to deal with, imagine how harrowing it would be for the party trapped in a group hallucination caused by the ghost of a psychic energy wave.

**Extra-dimensional Space:** While many extra-dimensional spaces found in magical items on the Prime Material Plane use the Ethereal Plane as the source of the extra-dimensional space, the Aethereal Plane contains spaces that can be entered easily. Most such intrusions into an extra-dimensional space are accidental and may surprise the characters. Extra-dimensional spaces may yield up treasures, storage of cargo or voracious creatures unaware that they could leave the space they are confined to if they had known of the entrance the characters discovered. The details of the extra-dimensional space, such as whether or not the characters can leave the space the same way they entered it are left to you. Note that a pocket universe can be accessed thus, penetrated unknowingly, and getting back to the access point might be an adventure epic unto itself. See below.

**Aethereal Wrinkle:** The Aethereal Plane is not a smooth and homogenous whole. Rather, it writhes and twists with the expansions and contractions of the planes in the cosmos. The plane is therefore full of imperceptible wrinkles that cause the plane to curve in unexpected ways. Characters traveling on the plane cannot see these wrinkles regardless if they are looking straight at them or from an angle. Aethereal wrinkles are generally found near the edge of the plane. When characters enter a wrinkle, the Aethereal Plane seems to be warped in on itself, distorting or hiding the way back to the main region of the plane.

**Pocket Realm:** Pocket realms are hidden throughout the Aethereal Plane. It is possible for characters to accidentally

stumble across the entrance of one while traveling through the plane. What they find inside the realm is left to your imagination. The realm could be an earthly paradise, a private playground or even a massive library with a magical laboratory off to one side.

### WRECKAGE

Imagine coming across the floating debris of a massive battle that appears to have been fought somewhere else. This is essentially the type of wreckage that one can encounter while on the plane. What you decide to do with it and what the characters make of it is another story. Questions arise about how the debris came to be located on the plane, such as whether the plane has inhabitants of vast power, if there are forces vying for control of the Aethereal, and so on. Any explanations can be used as red herrings to distract the characters or may be integral to the themes in your campaign. All wreckage, despite the form it may come in, shares the universal quality of offering little of value to salvagers, and what might have some greater value is bulky.

**Ship Wreckage:** This wreckage is a field of debris from a ship that has been broken into numerous and indistinct pieces. The amount of the wreckage the characters can see depends on the appearance of the Aethereal Plane. In the gray mists, the debris will fade into view and will look like a series of random trails of splintered beams, frayed ropes, and tattered sails radiating in all directions. As this is the Aethereal Plane, the ships need not look like sailing vessels. You can substitute fantastic constructs, such as the burrowing constructs used on the Elemental Plane of Earth or even craft with self-contained environments, for sailing vessels. The number of wrecked ships the characters encounters is left to you. Again, such wrecks have little salvage value.

**Flotsam and Jetsam:** Flotsam and jetsam refer to transported goods. The broken barrels, chests and crates of cargo from a ship are also possible as a debris field on the Aethereal Plane. Whether or not they are in proximity to ship wreckage may be a cause to lead characters to investigate ship wreckage or to see if the flotsam and jetsam will lead them to the other. If the point of venturing into the Aethereal Plane is to search for salvage, this encounter may be used as a diversion to keep the characters from reaching the true debris field they are searching for (this can be used dramatically to allow rivals to reach the correct field first) or it may in fact be more important than the treasure prospecting the adventurers were originally seeking.

**Broken Stone:** Probably one of the more unusual items to encounter on the plane (although more common than ship wreckage), are remnants of destroyed structures, razed buildings or the shattered battlements of castle walls. These two examples may be what a character thinks of first, but the stone does not need to be from such a source. Imagine that some of these stones may be parts of massive dreadnaughts that ply the Aethereal Plane, patrolling the deep recesses of the plane for threats from otherworldly beings or as a means to prevent travelers from encroaching on an empire that spans the cosmology. Thus, the broken stones that characters come across may belong to structures they cannot begin to identify or imagine. Alternatively, the chunks of stone (which may range in size from pebbles typical of a river's edge to very large boulders) may have come from catapults and other siege engines.

**Broken Siege Equipment:** There is little to describe how strange this would appear to anyone who has traveled to the Aethereal Plane. How could ruined siege engines find their way onto the plane to form a debris field? The siege engines will be recognizable, but in a state of disrepair if not permanently inoperable. Broken siege equipment frequently is encountered near a region with broken stone. Of all the siege devices most appropriate to find are straight trajectory weapons, such as a jettison or ballista. This has more to do with the physical traits of the plane than it does with where the equipment originates.

**Broken Weapons:** Although this category is labeled as such, it is not limited to weaponry. Armor can also be present, and work tools might also be found. The equipment found in such a debris field will be useless. The metals may be retrieved for the purpose of smelting them down and forging new armor and weapons, but few items of value will be found. Some items, such as bows with broken strings and magical items can potentially be salvageable, but should be exceedingly rare. The amount of items found in this debris field can range from a single item to what resembles the remnants of a battlefield. In the case of the latter, the debris will be intermingled with or in close proximity of one of the categories above.

### ABANDONED TRINKETS

For some reason, there are multitudes of discarded items found on the Aethereal Plane. Why or how these items end up here is a mystery that could be used as a source of adventures. Then again, the reason for the discovery of abandoned items could have other implications, such as items that belonged to travelers who met their demise on the plane. Others may have been deposited onto the plane through a tear in an extra-dimensional space or as a result of a strange warpage of time that can occur on the Aethereal Plane. Many of these items are worthless, but their value should not necessarily be measured monetarily. Some of these items may be used as adventure hooks to solve some of the greatest mysteries of your campaign. After all, items are only as valuable as you believe them to be. Some few might have a value to antiquarians or museums.

**Baubles:** This category represents items of little to no value other than to the person who once owned them. Many of these objects may catch the eye and be pleasing to behold, but they are rather common. Adventuring gear with an occasional use also falls under this category. The purpose of these items is to show that travel in the Aethereal Plane can be hazardous if not to one's person than to their equipment.

**Ornate Costume Jewels:** Trinkets of this type are meant to be used as a way to keep players guessing at what sorts of tricks you have up your sleeve. Although the category is associated with stones found by themselves, this should not be taken as a way to prevent you from using whole pieces of jewelry instead of the stone. Perhaps one of the character's favorite pieces of gaudy jewelry he or a family member once owned appears before his eyes. If the item was lost long ago and is a family heirloom, what better way to confound the adventurers who believe they may have discovered the secrets of the Aethereal Plane, let alone the cosmos they inhabit.

**Sextant:** Used to sight the stars to get an accurate fix on one's location, the sextant is out of place on the Aethereal Plane. How did it end up here? Why would anyone try using a

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sextant anywhere but the seas and oceans of their home world where they would best know the stars in their night sky? The characters may find items floating through the Aethereal Plane such as this to be disturbing. It is obvious by looking at the device that it has no use to anyone trying to navigate their way through the plane.

**Aethereal Compass:** If the characters possess a device such as this, it would be disturbing to find one floating through the plane. Is the device a failure, or did the owner meet a gruesome fate? Is the aethereal compass an item that brings more trouble than it is worth? Anything that is touted as being a useful piece of equipment and found floating through the plane is bound to make any adventurer think twice about how much faith he places in it. He would probably also question the wisdom of people who swear by such items being the reason they were capable of navigating the Aethereal Plane without encountering any hazards, or were they lying about their exploits? Either way, anything of major use for anyone traveling on the plane falls under this category and such items are in working order with few or no adjustments necessary.

**Relic from the Past:** Items of this sort are antiques. This does not mean the objects are of incredible power. Some may well be endowed with great power, but it is unlikely that a random trinket will turn out to be an item of such immense potency. Objects from the past usually show their age either through the ravages of time or more subtle details (construction, artistic styles once popular, etc.). The object may serve as a clue for an adventure that spans the cosmology, but as a random item it should not have significant impact on the game. Such things as basketry, clothing, simple furniture, pottery and statuary fall into this category.

**Shattered Hand Mirror:** Objects belonging to this category are generally small and are used mainly for personal grooming or adornment. However, unlike ornate costume jewels, the object is in a state of disrepair and requires maintenance in order for it to be useful. These objects have value when in a pristine condition. Thus, fixing them is worth the time or effort necessary. Objects like this are ornate enough to merit consideration as to how they got to the Aethereal Plane because they are not the sort of equipment one would carry for adventuring. The objects normally look like they belong to someone from the aristocracy or nobility class. You can chalk this up as one of the mysteries of the cosmology or as a way to

hook the players onto a new adventure – just to name a couple of possibilities.

### MAJOR PHYSICAL FEATURES

As explained in the opening section of the chapter, the Aethereal Plane resembles the Ethereal Plane. The unremarkable gray mists that define that plane's major physical feature appear to be a façade when applied to the Aethereal Plane. How it is that the inner region of the plane is so different in behavior should baffle most characters. This should not be seen as a conundrum with inexplicable causes, however. There are many reasons why the Aethereal does not resemble the Ethereal to the point that neither can be thought of as related. The Ethereal Boundary acts as a shield, preventing the psychic energy coursing through the Aethereal Plane from crossing into the Ethereal Plane and spilling over to the physical planes.

Movement through the Aethereal Plane can be a bit tricky due to the forces that twist and distort the plane. Most of the changes to the physical boundaries of this plane are caused by the planes held together by the Aethereal Plane. The constant motion of the dimensional matrices as planar energies push and pull against them generates wrinkles in the fabric of the Aethereal Plane and causes the psychic storms that fan out through the plane. These effects will not prevent travel, but they will hinder navigational efforts. Thus, you should not feel required to create a map so the players can figure out how their characters can travel the plane. This is meant to be taken as a creative license to justify any changes and chance encounters you wish to include.

### HAZARDS

The Aethereal Plane itself is not hazardous to travelers. This does not mean that it is free from danger. The plane is probably one of the more hazardous planes for travelers to cross outside of the Nether realms. The hazards come from the psychic energies and the pressures the planes of the cosmos place on the Aethereal. You have already been introduced to some potential hazards in the form of extra-dimensional random encounters. While these encounters are not meant to be harmful to characters when encountered by chance, this does not mean that they cannot be planned in advance as a trap. The hazards presented in this section are not of a physical variety. This section deals with the psychic horrors that can leave an unprepared character emotionally shaken, hazards that may be more destructive than the physical harm a character can



experience from the same event. Collectively, these hazards (composed of psychic energy) are known as psychic weather due to the similarities between these events and what one experiences when caught in foul weather.

#### PSYCHIC WEATHER

01-50	Psychic Winds
51-89	Psychic Storm
90-00	Psychic Catastrophe

**Psychic Winds:** Psychic winds are equally as unlike windstorms found on the Plane of Air as they are alike. While that sounds redundant and contradictory, it is true. Psychic wind speeds are as swift as their non-psychic counterparts. At the same time, these winds have little to do with damage and more about how quickly they can overcome a character and unleash their psychic imprints on his mind. These effects are the most important aspect of the psychic winds. Unlike wind storms, psychic winds do not necessarily buffet a traveler about (although this can be the case if the psychic energy is telekinetic). Below is a sample list of effects that can accompany a psychic wind. The effects are generally short lived, but can be persistent.

#### PSYCHIC WIND EFFECTS

01-30	Telekinesis
31-55	Phobia
56-70	Paranoia
71-90	Delusion
91-00	Paralysis

**Telekinesis:** Psychic winds that carry this trait have the force to be felt. Winds of this nature are comparable to those found in a windstorm on the Plane of Air. Thus, it is possible for the character to be hurled quite a distance before the wind dies out or he escapes the wind stream. Objects nearby might also be picked up and propelled by the force, such things being dangerous, even deadly missiles.

**Phobia:** Psychic winds of this variety cause a traveler to be filled with an intense fear (such as spiders, magic, open spaces, etc.). When this type of psychic wind passes through a character, a check to prevent the phobia from taking hold using the appropriate attribute, skill or ability is allowed. For a group of adventurers who fail to avoid the effects of this psychic wind, you do not need to give them the same phobia or have it affect them for the same period of time. You should give each affected character a phobia that is in keeping with their background. This not only makes the Aethereal Plane stand out as a place of mystery, but one where the dangers are unpredictable in effect and duration. Imagine a warrior with a fear of sharp objects...

**Paranoia:** Paranoia effects carried by psychic winds are similar to phobias. However, paranoia sets the character on edge and makes him question the actions of everyone. For the duration of the effect, it is possible for a character to be paranoid that a magical item (or other item) is really out to get him. The character should gain a bonus to abilities, skills or attributes that deal with perceiving the actions of others. This bonus does not need to be a large modifier, but it should be coupled with a penalty that is roughly twice as much towards checks that would help prevent the character from abandoning his senses and acting out against the object of his paranoia. Such a penalty

would represent the character's misinterpretation of the act and only applies to the object or objects of the character's paranoia.

**Delusion:** Some psychic winds can make characters see things that are not there. Conversely, some of these psychic winds may make a traveler feel that he is invulnerable or possessed with feelings of grandeur. The specific type of delusion should follow along similar lines as the effects caused by a psychic wind bearing the phobia trait. That is, you should make the delusion specific to the character and the length of time one suffers from the delusion should vary from character to character.

**Paralysis:** Characters who fail to stave off the effects caused by a psychic wind possessing the paralysis trait act as if they have been paralyzed by the wind. While there is nothing physically wrong with the character, he will refuse to move with the erroneous – and insistent – belief that he is unable to make his body respond while under this effect. As physically moving one's limbs is not really necessary for movement through the Aethereal Plane, the character can avoid objects hurtling towards him. There is no reason for the character to be completely “paralyzed.” You can rule that only two limbs are unresponsive, the character is unable to speak or any other form of paralysis.

**Psychic Storms:** Psychic storms are violent affairs that resemble the great storms on the Plane of Air. The main difference between these two is that psychic storms offer no precipitation in the form of moisture. What psychic storms do offer are hazards in the form of ectoplasmic beasts, figments of psychic energy, extra-dimensional effects, such as monstrosities appearing briefly before the traveler, and one of the most horrific effects to take place outside of the Nether Realms: personal and group harrowings. Typical effects of a psychic storm include the constant changing of the Aethereal Plane's appearance in the affected region. When in the region affected by a storm, a traveler can actually see the plane in its multiple appearances so long as the gray mists have rolled away from him. This is a random and ever changing effect associated with psychic storms. Aethereal wrinkles are also possible, but not common in smaller storms, although it is speculated that these storms are driven by wrinkles that have curved in upon themselves too much. The table below represents the effects possible from a typical psychic storm.

#### PSYCHIC STORM EFFECTS

01-12	Telekinesis
13-24	Phobia
25-36	Paralysis
37-48	Stun
49-58	Ectoplasmic Beasts
59-67	Figments of Psychic Energy
68-77	Hostile Monstrosity
78-84	Harrowing, Personal
85-89	Harrowing, Group
90-95	Aethereal Wrinkle
96-00	Psychic Catastrophe (Roll twice more, ignore results above 99; see catastrophes below)

**Stun:** Winds in a psychic storm that possess this trait affect characters by reducing their mental and physical capacities. A check to avoid a mental attack can be made to avoid becoming stunned. If the roll is failed, the character is affected based on the game system's rules for being stunned.

**Ectoplasmic Beasts:** These are strange beings that are often horrific in appearance. Ectoplasmic beasts are constructs that have been built on the psychic impressions of some unknown being and perhaps humans' nightmares. Some resemble bizarre versions of mundane beasts. Others are grotesque horrors that take various aspects of other creatures, such as tentacles and antlers, and put them together as one being. These constructs are unlikely to survive in a real environment. Their presence is frightening and may require the characters to make a check to keep from panicking.

**Hostile Monstrosity:** This category is essentially the same as hostile creature. The main difference, however, is the size of the monstrosity and its ferocity is greater. These creatures are not constructs. Rather, they are massive creatures from one of the planes in your cosmos.

### Harrowing, Personal:

The psychic wind from a storm can carry with it a devastating attack on the mind of a traveler. The personal harrowing is such an attack. The character must make a check using the appropriate ability/skill/attribute to save him from the waking nightmare that will otherwise leave him mentally drained. What do harrowings actually do? Think of them as a person's worst fears combined with the moments of his past that haunt him to this day. You are free to create the details of the character's harrowing, but there are suggestions concerning how to conduct them.

A harrowing, no matter how long the character thinks it is, should not eat up game time. What is meant by this is that the character may think the harrowing took a great deal of time but was actually instantaneous as viewed by his fellow adventurers (assuming they were not affected by their own harrowing). Also, when you look at how much time you have for playing a game, harrowings should not be too drawn out if you want to keep all of your players interested. Either limit how long you want the harrowing to appear to last (e.g. cutting down on descriptions or events), or you could have the other players help by giving them roles to play in the character's nightmare. If you take this latter route, you should take the players involved in these role assumptions aside and explain what you want them to do. It is important that each harrowing is personal to the character. A harrowing ends either when you decide it is over or the players

make periodic rolls using the characters' appropriate skill/attribute/ability until he succeeds.

After a harrowing the character will be drained of energy, at 20% of all normal attributes and abilities, and need to rest. For each hour of sleep, or two hours of waking non-activity, 10% of lost energy will be restored.

**Harrowing, Group:** Group harrowings are similar to personal harrowings. However, the difference comes from the fact that the group experiences the same effect. Group harrowings require that all the players make successful (and possibly successive) checks before harrowings come to an end. The characters are essentially trapped in a harrowing until all succeed at once (if you want the harrowing to be unusually cruel) or you can have the harrowing last until all of the party members have made at least one successful check.

See Harrowing, Personal, for effects on the group and their loss of energy, its restoration.

**Psychic Catastrophe:** Psychic catastrophes are to the Aethereal Plane what maelstroms are to the Plane of Air: super massive, violent storms that rage uncontrollably. These phenomena are vast regions where an aethereal wrinkle has curved in on itself so tightly that it smoothes itself over and releases the wrinkled area as a psychic storm of immense power. The psychic winds in these storms carry two effects. This makes it dangerous for a traveler to come into contact with a psychic catastrophe as first two effects strike him



and possibly followed by sets of two different effects with each gust. The speeds of psychic winds in a catastrophe are as fast as a maelstrom. Psychic catastrophes, like psychic storms, are similar enough to the hazardous weather on the Plane of Air that you can use the tables listed under that plane to determine the size and duration of the event.

### PHYSICAL TRAITS

As mentioned previously, the Aethereal Plane looks exactly like the Ethereal Plane. They are one in the same with the Ethereal Boundary serving as a shield to keep out the psychic energies of the metaphysical polar concepts. There is no border Aethereal, thus gravity is nonexistent. Objects still have weight, but there is no definite direction for gravity. One cannot walk, but there are other ways to move. A traveler can either think about moving in a direction, but does so with much less precision as someone with a skill or ability such as Panprobability or magical means.

Although the psychic energies twist the Aethereal Plane, they do not affect the flow of time. Neither do the constant contractions and expansions of the embedded planes, for that matter. The Aethereal Plane also possesses the same polarity as the cosmology as a whole despite the psychic currents that rip through the plane. Thus, if the origin point of the cosmos is balanced between the metaphysical poles, the Aethereal Plane will be as neutral as that point; if the origin point is shifted towards a metaphysical pole, the Aethereal Plane will possess that polarity. *[In a d20 campaign, this is represented by a True Neutral alignment for the standard cosmology. However, for a campaign with a different alignment, the Aethereal Plane possesses that alignment instead.]*

Magic on the Aethereal Plane follows the same rules as the cosmos as a whole. Even when a character is near a portal for a plane that has augmentations to magic, the effects do not carry over to the Aethereal Plane. The plane is so inert that no augmentations enhance or diminish spells on any plane touching the Aethereal Plane.

#### INHABITANTS

There are strange and psychic things that haunt the Aethereal Plane, but none could truly be considered native or living beings in their own right. (Consult your game system for possible exceptions.) It is hard to classify them since the beings have never been encountered outside of the Aethereal. Crossing the Ethereal Boundary when being chased by these alien “things” has proven not only that they cannot follow, but that they are confined to the Aethereal Plane. Because of this, it is believed that no known sentient species inhabit the plane and no known living unintelligent beings that do so either.

The other reason why it is believed the Aethereal Plane is devoid of life is that, it too, can have its ectoplasmic mists shaped in the same manner as the Ethereal Plane. The grayish jelly-like creatures that can be created on the Ethereal Plane can also be created on the Aethereal Plane. The difference is that ethereal constructs can leave the plane.

#### INCORPORATING INTO AN EXISTING CAMPAIGN

The Aethereal Plane cannot be used to replace a cosmos in the way that other planes can. There are no traits that can be imparted by the Aethereal Plane. This is because the plane is non-spatial, meaning it has no true dimensions, and because it is the glue that holds the planes together and keeps them from touching one another, it also keeps the cosmology stable. This removes the plane from any possible use as a variant for a cosmos unless you want the entire cosmos to be comprised of just the Aethereal Plane. If this is the case, you have a proto-cosmology (an infant cosmos that is still forming). A plane with spatial aspects cannot be replaced by the Aethereal Plane. As a consolation, however, the Aethereal can be used to create and hold new planes or metaphysical axes. The non-spatial aspect of the plane allows it to house extra-dimensional spaces. The plane is a barrier between spatial realms, after all. Thus, although you cannot use the plane to impart any traits, you can use it as a way to create an unlimited number of extra-dimensional spaces. The non-spatial nature of the plane allows it to “stretch” to accommodate additional spatial regions that would otherwise conflict with preexisting locations.

## CHAPTER 5: THE CELESTIAL REALMS

**T**HE CELESTIAL REALMS, like all metaphysical planes, are not focused on physical traits. They possess physical traits, but they are secondary to the metaphysical aspects of the plane. As such, the physical appearance of the plane will be dictated by the concepts the plane embodies.

So, what exactly are the Celestial Realms? To some, they are the rewards for those who have lived a virtuous life; for others, they are a nightmare. In truth, they are the embodiment of the traits most associated with the forces of right and good, epitomize weal and the benign. While each cosmos determines what is right and good, it should come as no surprise that many of the same concepts can be found from one cosmology to the next. These planes represent the diverse tenets of morality that are central to the cosmos, or more practically – your campaign world.

The Celestial Realms are the planes where benevolence reigns supreme. Different faiths hold different views of what is benevolent and moral. Some may consider love the greatest quality where others hold honor supreme. Then again, others can argue favorably for diligence and care to craft the greatest work one's skill allows. Mercy would also be counted amongst the qualities of benevolence.

It may seem useless to have more than one plane to fulfill the needs of a cosmos' sense of benevolence and morality. This is not the case since each plane does not have to be related to the purpose of another. One point to consider is that the planes are the homes of the gods and their extraordinarily powerful (often magical) servants and sometimes also the final resting places of the dead. Thus, why would the gods of one pantheon live with the gods of another if the cultures that they venerate have different values?

While this book cannot fully answer that question for you, it can help you define why this is the case in cosmos' you design. Many benevolent earthbound political powers work together for the common good or common defense. Similarly, deities can live together (on the same plane, but not necessarily next door) for the same reason. While they may be cordial towards one another, deities are not likely to hold the exact same views just because they have similar concerns. This helps to explain the multitudes of planes with similar, but non-overlapping traits. Additionally, the purpose of each plane will have that much more of an impact on your campaign when your players see how the cosmos is laid out and what concepts a culture venerates. The values of the cultures and their gods make the planes in your cosmology exist.

How do these planes work if they are based entirely on metaphysical concepts? They are not. At least, that is the most direct answer. The metaphysical concepts are the **guiding force** behind the physical reality that makes up the planes. As an example, a plane where comfort is the highest tenet could have objects that are quite solid, but if a character accidentally falls (say, from a cliff), the ground gives way and wraps him up as if it were an enormous, fluffy blanket. There is a catch to such a plane. If his accidental fall is a result of a malevolent action gone awry, the plane is not going to be so forgiving.

The above description is an apt one that gives a good sense of how these planes work. They not only embody specific themes and traits, but the physics of the Celestial Realms are based around this concept. Each plane works in its own unique way, but they all stress benevolence and work to further their themes and concepts throughout the cosmos. The planes are not necessarily sentient. Rather, they foster the environment that allows the concepts to spread through the inhabitants of the plane and mortals who visit the plane. It is through this relationship that the inhabitants of the plane try to spread the values to others and thus increase the importance of the plane.

How important are the Celestial Realms to a cosmos? That depends on your campaign. If the concepts of good, moral values and benevolent acts are not a factor and that seems most improbable, then there is not much use for the Celestial Realms. Each culture makes that decision for itself, however. This gives rise to the pantheons of your game world that more than likely have a plane that either resides in the Celestial Realms, or has an element or two from these realms as a way of showing a tendency towards leniency or cordiality. This chapter is still useful in designing planes of existence even if your cosmos does not have planes devoted to the concepts that define the Celestial Realms.

Despite a lack of planes that would fit in this category, the concepts and themes normally associated with the Celestial Realms can be ported over to planes aligned with different contradictory metaphysical poles. This is due to the fact that there are few traits, themes or concepts that can be seen as being universally tied to a metaphysical pole. An example of this would be love. This amorphous thought usually brings to mind the emotional concept of love and spiritual bonding with another person, but that is the moral view of love. What about the love of flesh (often referred to as lust or carnality)? It too, is a form of love, albeit one we have assigned another word to distinguish between a pure, emotional/spiritual love and one that is viewed as a lesser, carnal form. Righteous anger could be thought of as a trait of the Celestial Realms in as much as unadulterated wrath is associated with the Infernal Realms.

Probably the most important question you need to ask yourself is when these planes affect your campaign. In a standard game, chances are not until the characters have become quite powerful. This question will never come up in some campaigns. It is entirely dependent on how your cosmos is set up and how much interaction you want between deities and mortals. The players may need to retire their characters if they become more powerful than the cosmos (or game master) is willing to handle. This could be at the request of the deities (as the only direct interaction between gods and mortals) or they could become ascended beings whose dedication to the tenets they held dear had caught the attention of a deity that felt their skills would serve better outside the realm of mundane existence.

The level of impact you wish the Celestial Realms to have on the Prime Material Plane will be related to how much direct interaction the deities and/or their servants have with mortals in addition to the access mortals have to these planes. Additionally, you must decide if other beings can enter the

Celestial Realms. This question **must** be answered satisfactorily if you do not want your players to question why is it that mortals – no matter how evil – can enter the Celestial Realms, but creatures from the Infernal Realms cannot. Then again, you could leave the option open for creatures to visit any plane of their choice.

If one were to draw lines on a sheet of paper to represent the metaphysical axes of his cosmology, it would be easy to label one of them as “Celestial” and point to it as the general location of the Celestial Realms. This is an arbitrary mapping system and does not really tell you where a plane is located. That is precisely the point, though. Planes of existence within a cosmos do not have to be located in a physical location. The metaphysical poles provide a directional mechanism for laying planes out on paper; they do not dictate where your planes may actually reside in the cosmological sphere. It is best to just group them on paper and leave it at that. Otherwise, you may get caught up in details that eat up time you could be spending on the planes themselves or more important aspects of your game.

The Celestial Realms share many similarities. These similarities categorize a plane as a Celestial Realm. The main criteria for a plane to be ranked in this group are based on a benevolent nature. Additionally, Celestial Realms offer comfort and serve as the paradise-like rewards for those who adhered to their faith’s tenets. The planes do not sacrifice aspects of themselves. The Celestial Realms promote the concepts by rewarding inhabitants and travelers by shaping their thoughts towards an altruistic view and acting accordingly.

Since all Celestial Realms work towards the goal of benevolence, if nothing else, the inhabitants of these planes cooperate to achieve this end. It is not uncommon for a plane’s inhabitants to coordinate a plan designed to have an impact on a cosmological scale. Of course, such plans will be nebulous in terms of the intended goal to prevent disputes between the celestial beings involved in the endeavor. The more planes there are in the Celestial Realms, the more generalized and short-lived the plan will be to prevent it from falling apart.

This last point is important as it outlines the limitations of agreement and dovetails nicely into the differences between the planes. While the Celestial Realms may exude benevolence, which does not mean the inhabitants or concepts embodied by the individual planes are compatible on more than a superficial level. An example would be the relationships between like-minded religions. The philosophies that govern these faiths are exemplified in the planes their deities inhabit. As such, even if there are deities with similar views, there is no true agreement on what is pure and moral. The clergy and worshippers of a religion may come to blows or consider the other faith to be a rival – heaven forbid – a nemesis. To be sure, the celestial beings argue about these issues as well, albeit generally in a peaceful manner.

The differences between the planes are driven by the core values of each plane and the other metaphysical polarities in your cosmos. For instance if you have the Stasis/Probability axis in your cosmos, the Celestial Realms can be colored by the particulars of these metaphysical traits. Thus, you may have a spectrum of planes that run the gamut from a highly regulated paradise to one with where a laissez-faire attitude applies. And



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this is just from the introduction of a second metaphysical axis. Consider that the average cosmos uses four metaphysical axes; this gives seven spectrums to choose from. Imagine how many distinct Celestial Realms you can create and it becomes easier to understand why the native inhabitants of the Celestial Realms do not always get along!

### SIMILARITIES

We have seen the similarities of the Celestial Realms described in brief. But what are the unifying, and undeniable aspects of the planes that denotes their status as Celestial Realms. The three aspects below are essential when placing a plane in this collection.

- The Celestial Realms represent the ethical, the purity/piety of the cosmos.
- The benign hopes of the cosmos, in various forms, are embodied in these planes.
- The Vault of the Heavens is the neutral meeting point for the Celestial Realms.

The first point is highly important in determining whether a plane should be considered a Celestial Realm or not. Perhaps the hardest part of such decisions is not in the creation of the plane, but how pious you want the world(s) of the Prime Material Plane to be. The pantheons of deities that exist in your cosmos will surely have an effect on this matter. This will help you figure out what planes to include in the Celestial Realms and it will help you determine the degree of separation a plane should possess. Alternatively, your campaign world could be dominated by corruption when compared to the rest of the Prime Material Plane. The inhabitants of such a world may be dismayed by the location and themes of the Celestial Realms. This can serve as a plot point in your campaign's history. Of course, this does not clarify the piety of the cosmology, but it also removes any restrictions as to how you want it to be viewed by the players and their characters.

The themes of any given plane in the Celestial Realms have some form of hope or ethical desire. These qualities reflect the spiritual purity, highest cultural values of morality, or collective beliefs of the cosmos' mundane sentient species. While some cultures or races are predisposed towards amoral or sinister beliefs, the qualities discussed here are of a selfless nature. However there are some qualities of benevolence that are not selfless in nature. For example, a value of keeping to oneself can be perceived as selfish when in fact it is a view of respect by not interfering with others. Self-reliance and ownership of property are also seemingly selfish traits that most persons do not consider amoral or immoral.

The Vault of the Heavens is a benchmark plane of the minimum requirements of a Celestial Realm. It serves as a neutral meeting ground for the inhabitants of the Celestial Realms based on several criteria. The most important aspect that identifies a plane as a member of the Celestial Realms is not just its polarity towards the Celestial metaphysical pole, but also whether it can be reached through the Vault of the Heavens. This is important in regards to the fact that this plane represents one degree of planar separation and only connects to the Prime Material Plane and Celestial Realms. Thus, the plane exhibits the smallest and most nebulous number of traits that one can associate with themes of benevolence.

If you are using the four axes that this book uses as the standard cosmology, then it is important to realize that a plane can still be considered a Celestial Realm even if it has traits from four metaphysical poles. It should also stand to reason that any plane that has multiple polar affinities can have equal degrees of separation from the Prime Material Plane and still be part of the Celestial Realms. An example of this is a plane that has a degree of six for the Celestial, Energy, Stasis and Temporal metaphysical poles. While such a plane would be at the extreme edge of the cosmos, it is still a Celestial Realm in the default cosmology if it can be reached via a portal that connects it to the Vault of the Heavens. (The Vault of the Heavens is detailed in Appendix A.)

### DIFFERENCES

No matter how different a Celestial plane's motifs may be, it still must deal in a considerable degree of benevolence. When it comes to what constitutes a Celestial Realm, there are usually as many answers as there are faiths and philosophies dedicated to morality. For some, this may be seen as an unending paradise to the primal forces of nature while others see it as an eternity engaged in honest labor, free from unnecessary hardship and greed. For others, it comes in the form of physical and carnal pleasures that lift a being's enjoyment to ever increasing heights as a reward for faithfulness to the tenets of one's belief. This form of carnal pleasure is the reward to a culture or religion where sensuality is important so long as it is not at the expense of morals. As such, their final reward is the eternal bliss that a pure sensuality borne out of love and indulgence can impart. All of these planes offer their rewards without malice or harm for those who have earned their place in the Celestial Realms.

Effectively, the Celestial Realms can contain any themed plane with a benevolent bend. That means there is no reason a Celestial Realm cannot have a metaphysical polarity with other metaphysical poles. The only pole that a Celestial Realm cannot be aligned with is its polar opposite. As such, there is a spectrum of seven different poles, including the Celestial, which a plane can be aligned to and may have any combination of these seven to include no more than four (none may be opposed). It is easy to see how different a plane in the Celestial Realms can be from another with so many combinations possible. When the many spheres attendant to these planes are included, a dizzying array of possible variations is there for the game master's employment.

The differences do not stop there, however. The hazards of a plane, most often the response against malevolent actions, are also based on the themes and concepts of the plane. This means the response of the plane will be in keeping with its core values, resulting in a different response from each plane. As an example, a plane where mercy is stressed and any act where quarter is not given may exert severe penalties on the offender until mercy is provided. Charity of some sort must be given to another in distress before the penalties are lifted if the victim of the offender is killed. Alternatively, the plane may withhold assistance from the offender after one or more (depending on the plane) failures to give aid to another in addition to the penalization until he makes amends.

## HAZARDS

Benevolence does not mean the Celestial Realms are without hazards. As hinted at above, these planes do possess their own dangers for the evil or the unwise. The inhabitants of these planes see nothing wrong with the corrective measures a plane's physics exert to punish an individual despite how a traveler may view the methods. After all, the native inhabitants conform to the plane's laws and see nothing wrong with the nature of a realm that promotes the "correct" way of thinking.

The most important aspect of the planar hazards that can befall a character is normally easy to puzzle out. The prominent factor is that metaphysical hazards are based on the plane's design. In the case of the Celestial Realms, this means that no matter the tendencies towards any other metaphysical concepts, the hazards arising out of the metaphysical traits will always be fair. Planes leaning towards Order will be more predictable in the way hazards are suffered by a character that will not conform while planes that favor Order will be more sporadic as to when the character endures the hardships.

Metaphysical hazards are all well and good, but what about physical hazards? They exist. In fact, you can mete out physically grueling punishments in spades. Although shaped by its core values, the physical nature of the plane is separate from its metaphysical aspects. There is no limitation on the dangers that a plane's geography can present to the unprepared traveler. Just as the Infernal Realms do not hold the exclusive rights to punishments, the Celestial Realms are not necessarily safe. It is still possible for a character to fall from a cliff and plummet to his death.

Likewise, you should consider that physical hazards of a Celestial Realm are not specifically meant to kill mortals. The point is not to torture travelers, but rather the hazards are often recognizable and easily avoided if one keeps a level head. It should go without saying that there will not be signs pointing out the hazardous locales, but there will normally be signs, or a friendly resident who will tell a traveler of the hazards in the area. Characters stranded without a boat in an ocean on a Celestial plane are not any safer than if they were on a Prime Material Plane world in the same predicament. Thus, they are just as likely to drown if no one comes to their aid.

The native inhabitants of the plane, however, will react differently than the plane. It is a rare plane indeed that is sentient and able to act against a character. As the game master, you can interpret and envision this however you wish. The natives of a metaphysical plane can be thought of as being akin to the immune system of a creature. The plane has its own function and its inhabitants have theirs. This relationship is symbiotic, but not indicative of a native's behavior.

Benevolence also does not mean a Celestial Realms native cannot be prejudiced. In fact, each plane and sphere therein will have fixed value systems and moralities. While it is generally true that these beings are willing to help others, this does not mean that all of them are willing to extend a helping hand. The denizens of the Nether Realms often take the brunt of this unwillingness to help, but not all celestial beings turn their backs on aiding these creatures. This stems from the belief that redemption can be achieved by anyone, including the cruel and vicious beings attuned to the Nether metaphysical pole. The driving factor as to what a Celestial Realm inhabitant will and

will not do depends on the plane's core values and the patience to help someone change their opinion to match the plane's.

While the nature of the plane may be unyielding in enforcing corrections to prevent malevolent acts, the inhabitants are more willing to accept a being's flaws so long as one attempt to shed those impulses are taken. Benevolence and mercy may be the watch words of the celestials, but this does not mean they will hesitate to attack their attackers. This is in addition to any who prejudices a celestial. After all, being merciful and kind does not mean stupid or unresourceful.

## PHYSICAL FEATURES

What do the Celestial Realms look like, are they airy realms filled with winged spirits in flight, fiery realms where the passions of the pious are given physical form or gardens of earthly delight? The physical look of a plane does not need to conform to the ideals the plane embodies. The physical laws of the plane may be skewed towards these concepts, but they do not have to be. You should not feel compelled to choose a physical trait that corresponds to the concepts of the plane. It is possible to have a Celestial Realm that is composed of a physical element that is usually not considered to follow the themes and concepts you have chosen.

Chapters 2 and 3 were presented first to show you the wide array of choices you have when determining the physical look of a plane. In all, there are five main types of physical features presented in this book: the Prime Material Plane and the four elemental planes. A Celestial Realm may be comprised solely of one of these "stock" physical features or it may be a mix of them. Mixing the features is not unlike what you would do with elemental spheres. The highly creative game master might well invent some entirely new and different physical descriptions for the Celestial Planes.

However, you are free to combine materials to form a sphere that is not elemental in nature. What it comes down to is this: there is no wrong way to design a Celestial Realm. You are free to use and discard any elemental materials and/or their properties to design the plane you envisioned. That means fire can be made of fluffy cloud-like material so that it can give off heat but not burn anyone who touches it. This is surely the case on the Empyrean Plane of pure fire...at least in regards to the pure at heart.

The rest of the physical features of a Celestial Realm follow a similar pattern. For the sake of continuity, the material will be presented in the order used throughout the book. Remember that the only rule you need to follow is to not compromise your vision of what the plane looks like. Thus, on the matter of gravity, each plane dictates how it works. Use the concepts you have chosen to see if there is a leaning towards light, heavy or no gravity.

Continuing with that view, the core values the plane embodies affect the methods of travel that are available. It makes sense that a character cannot walk through solid earth so long as the basic aspects of the plane do not run contrary to this idea. Of course, if you design it as such, it is possible to walk through solid rock, swim in air and fly through water. The methods of travel and how quickly a character can move using any method should be consistent if the plane has no polarity towards the Chaos axis.

The flow of time follows a similar pattern of benevolence. Whether or not it flows faster or slower than the Prime Material Plane is inconsequential in comparison to how it can be seen as beneficial to mortals. This may be a strange justification for metaphysical concepts to act in this way, but can be thought of as being akin to justifying someone's emotional state. The flow of time must be in keeping with the core values of the plane, which may make the reasoning unclear to travelers. So long as you can justify an inherent logic for how the plane works and the benefits to the characters for the flow of time, then there is not anything wrong with how you designed the plane. In general, as these planes do not have age and decay, the flow of time is not critical to them.

The Celestial Realms must possess a polarity towards the Celestial metaphysical pole. They may possess any number polarities in your cosmos so long as the total does not exceed the number of axes in your cosmology. Another consideration is whether the plane qualifies for another grouping based on your cosmology's metaphysical poles (as a Realm of Order, for example). If you are not looking for the plane to be identifiable with other polar groupings, you should limit the influence of the additional polarities to one degree of separation less than the Celestial polarity. For example, if you give a plane a polarity of 4 towards the Celestial and want it to have some influence from the Vitality and Chaos poles, their degree of separation would be 3 or less. *[In a d20 campaign, the Celestial Pole equates to the Good alignment. All planes that are aligned thusly must possess the Good alignment trait.]*

Alterations to magic, for good or ill, are difficult to describe. Think about the possible number of combinations of core values that can be used to create a plane. When you consider the possibilities, any system meant to be a guide becomes unwieldy and useless in a relatively short amount of time. There are a few commonalities, however, that help.

When determining how magic should be affected on any given plane in the Celestial Realms, look at the concepts, themes and ideals. Everything will ultimately be based on these choices. While magic that promotes the tenets of the Celestial metaphysical pole will be easier to cast when compared to spells that are done so out of selfishness, this does not guarantee the success of the spell being cast. Magic that runs counter to the core values of a plane will be hindered, regardless of whether or not they are cast in keeping with the Celestial pole's traits. These spells will always be affected adversely while spells that follow these aspects of the plane will be enhanced, even if the spell is normally considered to be Nether in origin. Remember that a spell's use is only as evil as it is intended to be by the caster.

Another important consideration regarding magic is the nature of the benign deities that are found dwelling on the plane. As



there are many variations in this regard, more guidance can not be given, for that is beyond the scope of this work.

### INHABITANTS

Once the deities inhabiting them are determined, populating the Celestial Realms is easier than figuring out the effects a plane should have on magic. Any creature you wish to live on a Celestial plane gains all the qualities of that plane. But what are those qualities, exactly? Unfortunately, there are too many game systems, and possible pantheons of deities, out there for one answer to sufficiently address the issues this question raises. Fortunately, there are a few litmus tests you can apply to assure that you get the right adjustments applied to mundane creatures.

Consider that Celestial creatures have some form of limited protection against items with a Nether polar nature. The more aligned the creature is with the Celestial pole, the higher this resistance will be. It should also be noted that the more aligned the item is to the Infernal pole the more damaging effects it has against Celestial beings. Thus, the effects balance out. Additionally, you can assign residents resistances against elemental- and energy-based attacks or environments. Any features you assign should have a purpose for survival on the plane or for the creature to carry out its function, such as an angelic being that constantly fights against nefarious creatures. Of course deities **per se** should be quite immune to mundane harm from any sort of weapon or occurrence.

Secondly, when assigning qualities to mundane-type creatures you are placing on a Celestial plane, you must consider the core values of the plane. Geographical aspects do have an impact, but the ideals of the plane have less of an impact when compared to its themes and concepts. The reason for this is that the inhabitants of a plane

are meant to be the living embodiment of these two aspects of a plane. Sentient inhabitants of the plane go beyond this by serving as the guardians of themes and concepts. The physical forms of the creatures should reflect these planar traits, but not necessarily be seen as indicators of a species' general disposition. This is not to say you cannot have physical features match the creature's personality; it is not a requirement and going against the conceptions players may have of what these beings should look like can add to the depth of your cosmos.

There is little else to add concerning unintelligent creatures that inhabit the Celestial Realms. The difference is that sentient creatures are the defenders of the themes and concepts of a plane while unintelligent ones are a part of the plane. Consider them as part of the natural process of the plane, thus while the plane is ideals given form, the unintelligent creatures are the themes and concepts in physical form. In short, these creatures are reflections while intelligent beings defend what they represent.

## INCORPORATING INTO AN EXISTING PLANE

While there are certain themes, concepts and ideals that are arguably exclusive to the tenets of the Celestial metaphysical pole, it is difficult to imagine a cosmos being supplanted by a Celestial Realm plane. This is why Chapter 1 recommends that you shift the origin point of the cosmos so that there are more degrees of separation towards the Celestial pole than the Infernal. Otherwise, if you leave the cosmos' poles equidistant and apply the traits, you end up with a cosmos where even the Nether Realms provide benevolence. Applying Celestial Realm traits to the cosmology as a whole can have contradictory or even unexpected results. You should avoid this unless you are looking for a challenge.

Replacing another plane with one that belongs in or is from the Celestial Realms also has challenges. Unless you are looking at rewriting a portion of a map of your cosmos, exchange planes that have the same degree of polarity towards the Celestial pole. Additional polar traits are inconsequential if replacing planes in this manner in regards to where the plane is in relation to the rest of the Celestial Realms. The degree of polarity towards the Celestial pole must be the greatest of any polarities the plane has. As an example, a plane that has five degrees of separation towards Order and four towards Celestial is not a plane that falls into the category of the Celestial Realms. It is a Realm of Order and replacing such a plane using its alignment towards the Celestial axis would be a violation of this method.

You do not have to use the above method for replacing a plane within a cosmos. If you are willing to remap a section of your cosmos, you can swap a plane from anywhere in your cosmos for a new Celestial Realm Plane. There is nothing to prevent you from using this approach. In fact, there are no requirements for you to consider when looking for a plane to replace. There are, however, problems with this method. Replacing a plane with one that has nothing in common with it changes the balance of the beliefs in a cosmos. By the very act of removing a plane that represents evil with one that is of a virtuous persuasion, you have pushed the cosmos towards a more benevolent state. While this may be an ideal situation for the inhabitants of the Prime Material Plane, consider that too many Celestial beings can be as troublesome as the nefarious creatures they replaced. Consequently, the new residents of the plane could be the infernal beings who inhabited the now defunct plane. Imagine the possibilities! The creatures could be struggling to fill their new role, or even trying to escape the plane.

The last aspect of incorporating Celestial Realms components into a plane is perhaps the easiest. Infusing a theme, concept or ideal into an existing plane is straightforward: you just tack the trait onto the previously existing qualities of the plane. As traits can be used by more than one metaphysical concept (illustrated at the beginning of the chapter with the idea of love), you may need to add a note to the trait is associated with the Celestial pole. If you are adding the trait to a plane that is well-known to your players, you may want the trait to manifest gradually. Who knows, it could serve as the source of a new mystery that draws your players deeper into the fantasy world you have been weaving.

These are traits likely to be found on Celestial Planes:

Altruism	Fidelity	Pride
Bravery	Frankness	Principle
Candor	Freedom	Reliability
Caring	Gallantry	Respect
Charity	Honesty	Reverence
Conscientiousness	Honor	Righteousness
Constancy	Hope	Selflessness
Conviction	Humility	Serenity
Courage	Industriousness	Sincerity
Decency	Integrity	Steadfastness
Dedication	Integrity	Trust
Dependability	Intrepidity	Trustworthiness
Devotion	Justice	Truth
Devotion	Liberty	Uprightness
Diligence	Love	Valor
Endurance	Loyalty	Valor
Ethicality	Mercy	Veracity
Fairness	Modesty	Virtue
Faith	Morality	Worthiness
Faithfulness	Peace	

## SUGGESTED NAMES FOR CELESTIAL PLANES AND SPHERES

**Beatific:** The plane of pure good.

**Concord/Harmonia:** The plane of balanced good, in balance with itself in all things beneficent.

**Cosmic:** The plane for all weal.

**Divine:** The plane of the beneficent.

**Heavenly:** The plane of the highest good.

**Empyreal:** The plane of pure fire and thus of purity of thought.

**Sublime:** The plane of the merciful.

**Elysian Fields:** Temperate, pastoral fields where the innocent and pacifists rest and the ground yields its bounty without work.

**Faunus:** Eternal home where souls live as wild animals of their choosing, free from unnatural states.

**Happy Hunting Grounds:** Endless plain filled with plenteous game to be hunted as needed.

**Heavenshire/Havenshire:** Resting place of the craftsman. A pastoral realm where one can make an honest living for eternity..

**Hyperborea:** The cold mountains. Rugged paradise of the barbarian/mountaineer.

**Oceanus:** The sailor's paradise. The eternal ocean dotted by archipelagos.

**The Far Shores:** The land of eternal bliss. All hedonistic pleasures denied in life are the reward of these souls, without the side effects.

**Winterheim/Bifrost:** Winter's paradise, the frozen forests and planes where the festivities of the hearth occur every day.

**Ysgard/Valhalla:** Fest hall of the valorous warriors.

## CHAPTER 6: THE NETHER REALMS

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**THE NETHER REALMS** possess physical traits, but they are secondary to the metaphysical aspects of the planes of the Nether Realms. The physical appearance of each plane is dictated by the core values it embodies.

What are the Nether Realms? To most, they are the punishments for those who live a depraved life; for others, they are merely a nightmare to overcome on the quest to power. The Nether Realms are the embodiment of the traits associated with the forces of darkness and unmitigated evil. While each cosmology determines what is corrupt and evil, it should come as no surprise that many of the same concepts can be found in most cosmos'. These planes represent the facets of immorality central to the cosmos.

The Nether Realms are the planes where malevolence reigns supreme. Different faiths hold different views as to what is malevolent and immoral, resulting in the number of planes referred to as the Nether Realms. Some consider the love of flesh as the greatest evil where others hold dishonor in supreme disgust. Then again, others can argue for sloth and not caring to use one's skills to their greatest potential as the vilest. Torture would also be counted amongst the qualities of malevolence. Murder, theft, treachery, arson, covetousness, envy, greed and lying are all high on the list of what is evil. Each master must create his own roster of traits and acts that are bad and evil.

It may seem strange for more than one plane to fulfill a cosmology's needs for cruelty and immorality. This is not the case, however. The purpose of each plane is not necessarily related to the purpose of another. The planes are the homes of deities and their extremely powerful servants and they are the final destinations of some of the spirits of the dead humans and their ilk. Thus, why would the gods of one pantheon live with the gods of another if they have different views? Chances are that they would not without a cultural link between them.

This book cannot answer that question, but it can help you define why this is when you design cosmologies. Most evil earthbound political powers do not work together unless they are deliberately striking a mutual enemy. Similarly, deities can live together but most likely would not. While they may be cordial towards one another, deities are not likely to agree on anything despite having similar concerns. If they are, they are probably plotting against one another. This helps to explain the multitudes of planes.

Additionally, the purpose of each plane will have more of an impact on your campaign when your players see how the cosmos is arranged and what concepts a culture venerates as embodied in the pantheon it worships. To put it simply, the values of the cultures and their deities might make the planes exist, or the existence of the planes and the malign entities dwelling on them might shape the cultures in question.

How do the Nether Realms work if they are based entirely on metaphysical concepts? The most concise answer is that they are not. Metaphysical concepts are the guiding force behind the physical realities that make up metaphysical planes. As an example, a plane where physical suffering is the highest tenet could have objects that look soft, but if a character accidentally

brushes up against something, the tortured landscape reveals itself by injuring him by from burning, freezing, hooking or cutting. Unlike a plane in the Celestial Realms, a malicious mindset will not protect the character from damage. Since the Nether Realms are concerned with the lack of morals, the planes are as likely to lash out at the residents of these planes as they are to attack anyone with virtues.

The above description provides a good sense of how the Nether Realms work. They not only embody core values, but the physics of these planes are based around them. While each plane works in a unique way, all of them stress malevolence. The planes foster an environment for their core values to spread to the inhabitants of the plane and those mortals who travel to the plane. Through this relationship, the inhabitants of the plane (and mortals devoted or corrupted by its concepts) try to spread the planes tenets to others and to increase the plane's importance.

How important are the Nether Realms to a cosmos? If the concepts of good, moral values and benevolent acts are not a factor, then there may not be a great need for numerous Nether Realms. The pantheons in your campaign represent the values of the cultures that venerate them. This is important as the tenets of the deities will necessitate what planes are needed and the views the worshippers have on how the cosmos is structured. You will end up with planes with different traits in the Nether Realms that are universally thought of as immoral. There is a chance, however, that a culture reviles a trait that most would consider virtuous. This is why metaphysical traits can serve different polar concepts. Even if you choose to not have evil planes, this chapter can still be useful in designing planes by helping you to define and avoid concepts your cosmos does not incorporate. Of course, if your setting is modeled on humankind, then it must have both the good and moral and the evil and immoral.

Despite a lack of planes that would be considered Nether Realms, the concepts and themes that are normally associated with them can be ported over to planes aligned with different metaphysical poles. Few traits, themes or concepts can be seen as tied to a metaphysical pole. An example of this is the concept of hate. This thought usually brings to mind the concept of brutality and unmitigated abuse, but that is the immoral view of hatred. What about the hatred of immorality (often referred to as righteous anger)? Although it is a form of hate, we normally view it as being just and have renamed it to show it is a more pure and virtuous quality that someone could possess in spite of the fact that it is still hate. This makes the topics in this chapter useful, no matter how your cosmology is arranged.

When do these planes affect your game? There is no way anyone but you can predict how much influence a plane will have in your campaigns. Most games do not see the use of planes until the characters have become powerful enough to survive them. The planes may never play a role in your games, but that does not mean their inhabitants will not. Everything depends on how your cosmos is set up and how much interaction you want between extraplanar beings and mortals. The players may need to retire their characters if they become more powerful than the cosmos is willing to handle. When viewing this from the standpoint of

the Nether Realms, the powerful beings that reside there may threaten characters with oblivion. If you are playing a campaign where the characters are all villains, you could have them transform into minions of evil beings or minor deities. Either way, the characters are effectively removed from the game.

The level of impact the Nether Realms to have on the Prime Material Plane is related to how much interaction the deities and/or their servants will have with mortals. Also, you must decide if other planar beings can enter the Nether Realms. This question **must** be answered if you do not want your players to question why mortals – no matter how virtuous – can enter the Nether Realms, but creatures from the Celestial Realms cannot without notice. If you do not want to deal with possible complications, you could allow creatures from any plane of existence to visit any other plane.

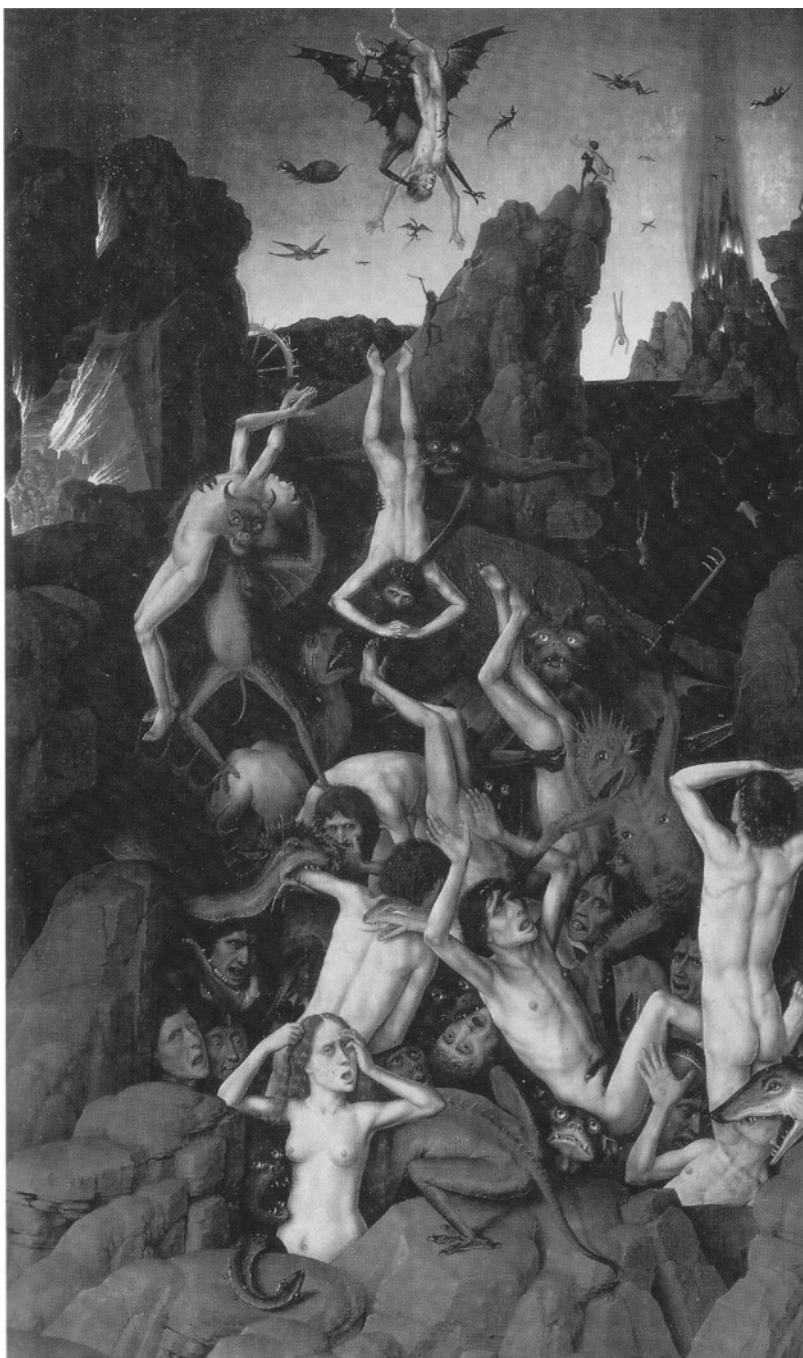
It is more difficult to answer where the Nether Realms are located in a cosmos. If you drew lines on a sheet of paper to represent the metaphysical axes of your cosmos, you are better off labeling one of them as “Nether” and be done with it than trying to figure out where you should place everything. That is because mapping is completely arbitrary and it does not matter what is next to each other on paper. Planes within a cosmos do not need to be located in a physical location. The metaphysical poles are meant to provide a directional mechanism for laying planes out on paper. The axes are not there to dictate where your planes reside; it is left to you to decide where planes are located in relation to one another based on their themes and portal connections. It is best to just group them on paper and use that as your guide to prevent you from being entangled in details that might not impact your game.

The Nether Realms share many similarities. These similarities categorize a plane as a member of the Nether Realm. The main factors for ranking a plane amongst the amoral planes of the cosmos are cruelty and deceit. The Nether Realms offer corruption, torture and decadence in abundance as well as serving as the hellish torments awaiting those who have shunned morality and refused to give comfort out of selfishness or spite. However, the planes are not tortured, corrupt or decadent despite how the landscape may appear. The Nether Realms promote those concepts by rewarding inhabitants and travelers by shaping their thoughts with temptations and emotional trauma that is meant to break the mind.

Once reduced to a state of despair, the victim is willing to do anything to survive. Nether Realms are quick to reward the selfish, but at a price.

The Nether Realms work towards a goal of malevolence or selfishness. The stronger dominate and oppress the weaker. As such, the inhabitants of these planes almost never cooperate. That said, it is not uncommon for a plane’s inhabitants to get together to coordinate for a plan designed to have an impact on a cosmological scale. These plans will always be nebulous in terms of the intended goal and the infernal beings involved in them have no guarantee from turning on one another at the earliest opportunity. The one thing that separates the Nether Realms from the Celestial Realms is that the beings of one plane are less likely to work with those of another.

This last point outlines the limits of agreement between infernal beings and shows the harsh contrast between the differences of the Nether Realms. While the Nether Realms may exude a passive malevolence, which does not mean the inhabitants or concepts embodied by the individual planes agree on anything. An example would be the relationships between like-minded creeds dedicated to cruelty. They will have similar goals, namely causing as much pain and suffering as possible, but they will not want to work together because of the need for the clerics to



passive malevolence, which does not mean the inhabitants or concepts embodied by the individual planes agree on anything. An example would be the relationships between like-minded creeds dedicated to cruelty. They will have similar goals, namely causing as much pain and suffering as possible, but they will not want to work together because of the need for the clerics to

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share power. Cooperation is not something immoral or selfish beings like to do. Even if the deities of the two creeds have similar views, there will not be agreement on how pain and suffering should be carried out or which method is best. The clergy and worshippers within a creed may come to blows over these issues. Think how they would react to another creed to the same evil god, let alone the members of another faith!

The differences between the planes are created by other metaphysical polarities in your cosmos. If you have the Order/Chaos axis in your cosmos, the Nether Realms will generally be colored by these metaphysical traits. Thus, you will end up with a spectrum of planes that run the gamut from a highly regulated Plane of the Hells (perhaps with a militaristic structure) to one where random acts of violence are just as likely to come from the plane as they are from the infernal beings that call them home. And this is just from the introduction of a second metaphysical axis. Consider that the standard cosmology uses four metaphysical axes. Imagine how many distinct flavors of misery and hate you can create and it becomes easier to understand why the native inhabitants of the Nether Realms do not get along.

### SIMILARITIES

What are the unifying and undeniable aspects of the planes that denote their status as Nether Realms? The three aspects below are essential when placing a plane in this collection.

- The Nether Realms represent the degenerate thoughts of the cosmos.
- The vile thoughts of the cosmos are embodied in these planes.
- Sheol is the neutral meeting point for the Nether Realms.

The first point is extremely important in determining whether a plane should be called a Nether Realm or not. One of the hardest parts of the decision is not in the creation of a plane, but how vile the Prime Material Plane can be. This helps you figure out what planes to include as Nether Realms and to determine the degree of separation a plane should possess. As an alternative, your campaign world could be the only virtuous one on a plane filled with decadent worlds. The inhabitants of such a world may be dismayed by the number of Nether Realms compared to the other metaphysical poles. This can serve as a plot point in the story of your campaign's history. This does not tell your players how depraved the cosmos is, but frees you to skew the view towards the perception you want.

The themes of a plane in the Nether Realms are some form of corrupted desire or aggression (sometimes both). These qualities are meant to reflect the spiritual impurity, lowest values of immorality, or collective beliefs of the cosmos' mundane sentient species. Many cultures or races of the Prime Material Plane value moral and spiritual purity. These are everything the Nether Realms are not. The qualities discussed here are mainly of a selfish nature, mainly because some qualities of malevolence are not readily identified as selfish. For example, being agreeable towards someone is generally seen as a selfless trait. But if that person is watching your every move in order to stab you in the back, that agreeable nature may be used to steer someone towards their demise. The individual who appears

to be the most devout may be the most depraved, using the virtuous traits as a cover of what is beneath.

Sheol serves as a neutral ground for the inhabitants of the Nether Realms. This plane is a benchmark plane of the minimum requirements of a Nether Realm and does not need to be included in a cosmology. Being selfish and malevolent helps, but the basic aspects of Sheol are fundamental principles of evil. To reflect its nature, Sheol is dark and brooding. It is similar to the Plane of Shadow in this regard, but what hides in the dark are the damned who despair their fate. Instead of being powerful beings, the darkness of the grave holds the damned who take out their lamentations of their doom on anything they are able. Thus, the plane exhibits the weakest and most nebulous traits that one can associate with themes of torture, despair, selfishness and hatred.

If you are using the four axes this book uses as the standard cosmology, then it is important to realize a plane can still be considered a Nether Realm even if it has traits from four metaphysical poles. It also stands to reason that a plane with multiple polar affinities can have equal degrees of separation and still be considered part of the Nether Realms. An example of this is a plane that has a degree of six for the Nether, Entropy, Chaos and Probability metaphysical poles. While such a plane would be at the extreme edge of the cosmos, it is still a Nether Realm in the default cosmology if it can be reached via a portal that connects it to Sheol. (The Vault of the Heavens is detailed in Appendix A.)

### DIFFERENCES

There are more differences between the Nether Realms than there are similarities. The fact that these planes are grouped together does not illustrate them as a cohesive group. The Nether Realms, of the four groupings presented in this book, are arguably the most fractured. Sure, the Realms in Flux deal in randomness, but they are consistent in the fact that they do not work together and that they never attempt a show of a unity. Unmitigated hate, suffering and violence are hallmarks of the Nether Realms, but how they approach this is what separates them from one another.

Some view the Nether Realms as an unending hell of twisted, primal urges. Others see these planes as an eternity of slavery, shackled and tortured with no rest in sight. Yet others view the Nether Realms as psychological and carnal abuses that continuously push a soul's anguish to deeper levels. There is no love or care for the doomed and punishments aplenty wait for them. Some of the damned, however, hold out that they may somehow claw their way through the torturous ranks to free themselves in order to join the ranks of the beings that mete out the pain they experience.

The Nether Realms can have any plane where the core values have a malevolent twist to them. These planes may have a polarity with any other metaphysical pole and still be considered a Nether Realm, except one: its polar opposite. If you use the four metaphysical axes in this book for your campaign, that gives you seven different poles (including the Nether) that a plane can have a polarity with and still be a Nether Realm. This results in a lot of combinations when you begin paring the plane's polarities with its themes and concepts.

The differences go beyond which metaphysical axes a plane is aligned to. On a malevolent plane, there is little more than hazard after hazard; but that does not mean the planes will provide the same hazards. If they do, the methods are not always the same. The themes and concepts of the plane help define the type of hazards a character is likely to encounter. So hazardous are these planes that the cruel and fiendish creatures that live here can suffer from the malevolence from their planes. Given that their minds are sufficiently twisted, it is more likely that they are likely to avoid some of the more common dangers. The hazards do not need a reason for why a being is injured.

## HAZARDS

As the planes where mercy is crushed and ground beneath the iron-plated boots of the infernal powers, there is no room for error. Mistakes are almost universally met with grueling trials. The amount of suffering may be in proportion to the error or it may be greater or less. Evil does what evil needs in order to demoralize the transgressor at every turn. The point is not to punish because a path was not followed, but because the punishment can be meted out. That is why the beings that live on these planes are tough and cruel. If you lived in a realm of hellish torments, you would eventually become uncaring and calloused. When the torments of the plane inflict someone else, these beings find it enjoyable, but when the tables are turned, they rue the double-edged nature of the plane.

Malevolent torments are not as easy to figure out as Celestial Realm hazards are. The biggest problem is that they are evil. The core values of the plane help determine what sorts of hazards should befall a character, but the colorization offered by metaphysical polarities can change the essence of the types of hazards. The plane's design will only go so far in helping you determine how the hazards of the plane should affect inhabitants and visitors alike. You are free to create the hazards you need, despite the concepts that comprise the plane. Cruelty does not necessarily respect boundaries. Planes that have a leaning towards Order, however, will have hazards that are fairly predictable in how they work, even if the trigger is not clearly understood.

The hazards are not just based on the metaphysical concepts of the plane. In fact, the Nether Realms have physical hazards in spades. Being a corruptive force, the Nether metaphysical pole fouls everything. The elements that comprise a plane will likewise be twisted. Liquids will be boiling hot, caustic or toxic, or maybe all three at once. The atmosphere of a plane will probably be poisonous, if not filled with gasses that hinder a character psychologically or physically. Brushing up against a tree or rock could reveal just how sharp the landscape is as the character bleeds from small scratches. There is no limitation on the dangers that a plane's geography can present to the unprepared traveler, it just has to be cruel.

The physical hazards of the Nether Realms are meant to kill off the weak. Heat and flame, cold and ice, pollution and poison, piercing and cutting, and other harsh and brutal things are all considerations for a nether environment. Think of it as a malevolent way of culling the herd. If a traveler is able to shrug off most of the damage thrown his way by the plane, then its real work begins. The planes of the Nether Realms work on a character's sense of morality to defeat it. As such, there are as many ways to break one's appeal to morals as there are themes

and concepts that can be combined to describe a Nether Realm. Any actions taken to benefit others are impeded and usually twisted away from their original intent. Some planes may be so vindictive that the act of trying to aid others marks the offender so he cannot hide from the fiendish denizens of the plane.

The native inhabitants of the plane, however, always react differently than the plane's physics. To begin with, it is a rare plane that is sentient and able to act against a character before he has had a chance to violate the plane's tenets. It is apt to describe the natives of a Nether Realm as being like a destructive immune system. The plane has its function and its inhabitants have theirs. This relationship is symbiotic, but not indicative of a resident's behavior.

One thing that is important to note is that malevolence does not mean the plane is immediately prejudiced against those who hold to other values. The nature of Nether malevolence is that it is an equal opportunity force. Everyone suffers equally and if it seems like one person is suffering more than another, chances are that it is only to enrage him so he attacks someone he sees as not suffering as much as him. Likewise, just because a being is possessed by malevolence does not mean it will not offer a helping hand. Of course, the individual on the receiving end has to determine if that hand is worth taking and what the aid costs. A fiendish creature never knows when a new useful tool will come its way.

The planes of the Nether Realms are usually cruel and relentless in the dangers they pose. The residents of these planes are not necessarily so. As mentioned above, a new tool can come along at any time. The intelligent residents of the Nether Realms are likely to use travelers to their advantage before eating them. This does not mean that they will not torture or eat their "tools" eventually, but they will try to find a use for them before inflicting torments on them. What seems crueler to you: offering comfort from the hostilities of the plane, or letting the plane make quick work of a traveler.

## PHYSICAL FEATURES

The physical look of a Nether Realm may be something out of someone's personal nightmare, but does this have to be the case? Why must evil look ugly if it can be just as sinister if dressed in beauty? Why must fire be seen as evil and water as a purifier when metals are purified only through heat and water corrupts the strength of steel? These questions are meant to help you reconsider the hellish torments of a cosmology. Not everything is bathed in fire, nor should it be filled with hideous features for no other reason than the perceived notion that evil is ugly. Just because the physics of a plane are biased towards the plane's traits does not mean that the land must have a predefined look. Beauty can be just as cruel and mischievous as it can be virtuous. Imagine a paradise located in the Nether Realms, but its beauty hides its poisonous nature. The taste of the sweet fruit could be enough to corrupt the soul, if not poison the body.

Chapters 2 and 3 present an array of choices for describing the physical look of a plane. There are five main types of physical features presented in this book: the Prime Material Plane and the elemental planes. A Nether Realm may be comprised solely of one of these "stock" physical features or it may be a mix of them. Mixing the features is not unlike what you would do with elemental spheres, except the materials do not disintegrate over time. Remember also that each plane of the Nether Realms



is likely to have attendant spheres upon it, and each of these might be very different or a reflection of some or all of the main features of the home plane.

You are free to combine materials to form a sphere that is not truly elemental in nature, but is a conglomerate. What it comes down to is this: there is no wrong way to design your Nether Realms. You are free to use and discard any elemental materials and/or their properties in order to design the plane. This helps give you the freedom to create your own unique visions of what passes as a hellish torment.

In keeping with the format presented throughout the book, the rest of the remaining traits for defining a Nether Realm are presented in the same order. This is to maintain continuity and has no bearing on the plane. Ignore any feature that would compromise your imagination when you visualize how the planes should be laid out. When you look at how gravity functions on a plane of the Nether Realms, the plane will dictate how it works based on the concepts you have chosen for the plane; so it can be light, heavy or no gravity if you like.

Using the plane to help guide you in determining the physical features it possesses, the concepts and themes the plane embodies affect the methods of travel available. It makes sense that a character cannot walk through solid earth so long as the basic aspects of the plane do not run contrary to this idea. The methods of travel and how quickly a character can use moving any method should remain consistent if the plane has no polarity towards the Chaos axis.

Time flows through the Nether Realms as is necessary for the plane to be inconvenient. The intent is for the plane to be as malicious as possible. However, the flow of time should not change from one visit to the next unless the plane has a polarity with Chaos. The flow of time may be faster or slower than what is experienced on the Prime Material Plane and how mortals view it is what gives the flow a malevolent twist. So long as you can justify that there is an inherent logic for how the plane works, then there is not anything wrong with how you designed the plane.

Regardless of how you design a Nether Realm, there is one aspect that will not change: all of them are polarized towards the Nether metaphysical pole. These planes may possess any additional polarities the cosmology has as the polarities do not exceed the number of axes. When a plane possesses multiple polarities, consider whether it qualifies for inclusion in another grouping (such as a Realm in Flux). This happens when one of the poles the plane has an affinity for is equal in strength to the Nether pole. If you do not want the plane to be shared by more than one grouping, you should make the polarizations for the other metaphysical axes one less than the degree of separation towards the Nether pole. For example, a Nether Realm plane also has a polarity for Entropy and Order. If the degree of separation towards the Nether Pole is 4, then the degree of separation for the other two poles cannot be higher than 3. *[In a d20 campaign, the Nether Pole equates to the Evil alignment. All planes that are aligned thusly must possess the Evil alignment trait.]*

Alterations to magic, for good or ill, are more difficult to describe. Think about the possible number of combinations of core values that can be used to create a metaphysical plane. Any system meant to be a guide to each aspect's affect on magic

becomes unwieldy and useless. There are commonalities, however, that will help you.

When determining how magic should be affected on a plane in the Nether Realms, look at the concepts, themes and ideals that you have used. Everything will be based on these choices. While magic that promotes the tenets of the Nether metaphysical pole will be easier to cast compared to helpful spells cast out of selflessness and benevolent intent, this does not guarantee a spell's successful casting. Magic that runs counter to the core values of a plane will be hindered, regardless of the Nether pole's traits. These spells will always be affected adversely whereas any spell that follows these aspects of the plane will be enhanced. However, the Nether metaphysical pole often corrupts the effects of spells, even ones that are usually thought of as being evil in nature.

#### INHABITANTS

Populating the Nether Realms is far easier than figuring out the effects a plane should have on magic. Especially when you consider most creatures from the Prime Material Plane, no matter how altruistic they may seem, are essentially selfish. Because of this, nearly any creature can live on a plane in the Nether Realms and gain the qualities of that plane. You should carefully consider how the game handles resistances to the elements as well as energies and metaphysical concepts. This will be a good measuring stick to help you determine which qualities should be assigned to a creature, regardless of the nature of the plane. Fortunately, there are a few litmus tests you can apply to get the statistical adjustments applied.

The first item to consider is that Nether creatures have some form of limited protection against items of a Celestial polar nature. The more aligned the creature is with the Nether pole, the higher this resistance will be. It should also be noted that the more aligned the item is to the Celestial pole the more damaging effects it will have against Nether Realm beings. Thus, the effects balance out when they have an equal polarity towards their respective tenets. Additionally, you can assign the residents resistances against elemental- and energy-based attacks or environments. Any features you assign should have a purpose for survival on the plane or for allowing the creature the ability to carry out its function.

Secondly, when determining how to assign qualities to mundane creatures on a Nether Realms plane, you must consider the themes and concepts for the plane at minimum. Geography has an impact, but the ideals of the plane have less of a defining aspect in these benefits and defects when compared to its themes and concepts. The inhabitants of a plane are meant to be the living embodiment of these two aspects of a plane. Sentient inhabitants of the plane go beyond this by serving as the keepers of those themes and concepts. The physical forms of creatures should also reflect these planar traits. Physical features can match the creature's personality, but it is not a requirement and going against the conceptions that players may have of what these beings should look like may add to your cosmology.

Unintelligent creatures inhabit the Nether Realms as much as their sentient counterparts. The difference is that sentient creatures are the defenders of the themes and concepts of a

plane while the unintelligent ones are part of it. Consider them as part of the natural process of the plane. Thus while the plane is ideals given form, the unintelligent creatures are the themes and concepts in physical form.

The principal sorts of inhabitants of the nether planes, other than the spirits of the damned, are: demons of many sorts, devils of many sorts, fiends of varying kinds, monsters of many sorts, and (deitai) serpents in various forms (usually fire-breathing).

#### INCORPORATING INTO AN EXISTING PLANE

While there are certain core values that are arguably exclusive to the Nether metaphysical pole, it is difficult to imagine a cosmology being supplanted by them. This is why Chapter 1 recommends you shift the origin point of the cosmos so that there are more degrees of separation towards the Nether Pole than its opposite. Otherwise, if you leave the cosmos' poles equidistant and just apply the traits, you end up with a cosmology where even the Celestial Realms seem to provide punishing tortures as rewards. Applying Nether Realm traits to the cosmology can have contradictory or unexpected results.

Replacing a plane with one that belongs in or is from the Nether Realms also has its challenges. Unless you are looking at remapping part of your cosmology, you should exchange planes that have the same degree of polarity towards the Nether pole. Any additional polar traits are inconsequential if replacing planes in this manner. They are unimportant in regards to where the plane is in relation to the rest of the Nether Realms, not their effects on the plane. The degree of polarity towards the Nether pole must be the greatest of any polarities the plane has. As an example, a plane that has five degrees of separation towards Chaos and only four towards Nether is not a Nether Realm. It is a Realm in Flux and replacing such a plane using its alignment towards the Nether axis would be a violation of this method.

If you are willing to remap a section of your cosmos, you can swap a plane from anywhere in your cosmos for a new Nether Realm. There are no requirements to consider when looking for a plane to replace. There are, however, more problems with this method. Replacing a plane with one that has nothing in common changes the fundamental balance of the metaphysical beliefs in a cosmology. The very act of removing a plane that represents vitality with one that is immoral, you have pushed the cosmos towards a more decadent state. While this may be an ideal situation for the wicked inhabitants of the Prime Material Plane, consider that infernal beings are bent on accumulating power for themselves. What would happen if the residents of the new plane were celestial beings who inhabited the defunct plane?

Infusing a theme, concept or ideal into an existing plane is straightforward: you just tack the trait onto the existing qualities of the plane. As some of these traits can be used by more than one metaphysical concept, you may need to note the trait you are adding is associated with the Nether Pole. If you are adding the trait to a plane that is well known to your players, you may want to have the trait manifest itself gradually.

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These are traits likely to be found on Nether Planes

Aggression	Disloyalty	Lying
Anger	Dissipation	Malice
Antagonism	Dissoluteness	Maltreatment
Arrogance	Domination	Mercilessness
Avarice	Duplicity	Negativity
Betrayal	Enslavement	Oppression
Brutality	Envy	Perfidy
Bullying	Fraud	Puerility
Conceit	Greed	Repression
Contempt	Guile	Resentment
Corruption	Harassment	Sadism
Covetousness	Hatred	Sloth
Cowardice	Hostility	Spite
Cruelty	Hubris	Subjugation
Cunning	Indolence	Suspicion
Cupidity	Indulgence	Treachery
Debauchery	Jealousy	Tyranny
Deceit	Lasciviousness	Unfaithfulness
Depravity	Lewdness	Unscrupulousness
Dishonesty	Licentiousness	Vindictiveness

### SUGGESTED NAMES FOR NETHER PLANES AND SPHERES

**Abyssal:** The plane with no end to the malign. The depths to which its depravities go is unknown and any unspeakable horror (imaginable or not) can be found.

**Infernal:** The plane of evil fire where devils dwell.

**Hades:** The plane of boredom. Everything is bleak and rather featureless.

**Pandemonium:** The plane of all demonkind.

**Tarterus:** The Plane of longing, where what one desires is just out of reach.

**Thousand-fold Hells:** The plane of torture. There is no sense of imprisonment, only never ending pain.

**Brackmire:** The frigid and sluggish swamp. It is a harbinger of disease and infections.

**Caina:** The hell of betrayers. The damned are paranoid of their fellow condemned who are out to get them as they play power games for eternity, but never seem to achieve anything.

**Court of the Damned:** For those who bent the law to their will despite its meaning, they are forced to work behind the bureaucratic system in tedious tasks before judging and being judged by their peers and being sentenced thusly.

**Gehenna:** The stinking, steep-walled chasm where refuse is burned. The noxious fumes and searing heat cause the damned to "die" from suffocation or be roasted alive before the cycle repeats itself.

**Incarceratia:** The eternal prison sphere. All forms of capital punishment can be found here, but the body is repaired after each horror is suffered to its fullest.

**The Searing Wastes:** The place where those who could have given to the needy did not. There is no rest for those who hoarded what they could easily afford to give away. Their punishment is a desert devoid of any luxuries.

# CHAPTER 7: THE REALMS OF ORDER

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THIS GROUP OF planes is devoted to the concept of law and Order. These traits are secondary to the nature of the planes and are used as a reflection of what the planes represent.

When one thinks of Order, it usually invokes a sense of rigidity and of unchangeable forces. Is order really so rigid? There are two main schools of thought on this question. There are those who believe that, yes, order is immobile, unyielding and unable to compromise. The second group believes that order is always in motion, that it has a plan, a path that takes it towards a greater state of perfection. This latter group sees order as always evolving, but following a pattern. This predictability is why the former group sees the Realms of Order as unyielding. These views do little to define what the Realms of Order are.

For Order, have in mind the following descriptors: accord, agreement, calm, categorization, classification, commandments, conformity, constancy, conventionality, direction, firmness, invariability, habitual, harmony, inflexibility, law, management, organization, orthodoxy, peace, regulations, rigidity, rules, stability, synchronization, tidiness, tradition, tranquility, and uniformity.

The different shades of meaning in these terms are indicative of the number of planes Order might contain.

The Realms of Order are the reflections of the different views for how order works in a cosmology. No matter how you look at it, the Realms of Order are the planes where law is supreme. There are those who believe that order's greatest tenet is the tried and true method of trial-and-error. Some faiths claim that to search for the pattern that drives reality is the ultimate quest. Both of these views show order is always in motion. But what about quiet contemplation, or the act of not doing anything? It too, is a form of order. It is static and shows that order can remain still.

Without looking at order in this regard, it would be redundant to have so many planes representing what Order is. Order also represents law. This is because rules are the underlying aspect of an orderly society of free-willed inhabitants. How then, could a cosmology have one plane devoted to order when the legal systems can seem chaotic to anyone who does not know the rules? One broad category does not denote all possibilities within that definition. This is why there are a multitude of planes that comprise the Realms of Order. Several planes are usually needed in a cosmology to cover the broad category this chapter represents. Looking at the deities of a pantheon shows the need to have a barrier between the gods and their servants because they are not likely to share the same views as to how order is defined.

This book cannot answer every question, but it can help you determine what is best for your cosmos. Most people have a sense of order and generally follow a pattern in their daily routine. This not only provides stability, but it also gives the individual a sense of permanence and purpose. Unless you are referring to a dictatorship or a territory controlled by a warlord, governments are orderly organizations, even if they feel contrived and needlessly cumbersome. The deities of the Realms of Order are similar to the deities of the Celestial Realms as both are willing to meet with deities who hold similar

views in order to promote the goals that are their greatest concern. They may not see eye to eye, but they are more likely to work together for longer periods of time in order to advance the tenants of Order than their celestial counterparts.

For the above reasons, you can see why deities may live together on the same plane, but not necessarily next door. Order is the most important concept to these deities. Although this is the case, it does not mean deities must be cordial. The number of planes that belong to the Realms of Order makes sense when you consider these factors. Your pantheons are going to be less likely to work with deities outside of the group than they are with members of that "family." This increases the number of purposes required in a cosmos, but enriches your game as the values expressed in a pantheon are based on the cultures of your campaign world. After all, it is the cultures that create the planes in a cosmos, or perhaps are created by the deities of the system.

The descriptions provided so far have been nothing more than brief ones. As important as these descriptions are, they do nothing to help you to understand how these planes function. The planes are not entirely based on metaphysical concepts. Rather, everything in connection with the plane is guided by the core values that it embodies. An example would be a plane where water can only flow one direction. If the water encounters a barrier such as a mountain and gravity dictates that water must find the lowest point, the physics of the plane are overridden since water can only flow towards the direction that the plane has already determined. Some travelers may be mystified by this and find it counterintuitive. The inhabitants of the plane will not see this as a violation of logic, but rather accept it as part of the natural order of the plane.

While this description may seem far-fetched, it is important to realize that this is a good example of how a plane in the Realms of Order works. It is not enough to have a plane where everything is perfectly arranged the way an orchard might be. Organization is only a portion of Order. Predictability, on the other hand, is what you must address when you are creating a plane aligned to Order, so too structure and a general uniformity at least within classes on the plane. Everything from weather patterns to the way towns and roads are laid out is based on a pattern. It is this fundamental difference in the way the planes work that marks them as being Realms of Order. These subtle differences create an environment that encourages every living thing within the plane to conform to this standard, even if that pattern is not apparent to a traveler. This should not be taken as a sign that the planes are sentient. The planes are not necessarily conscious of the actions that they foster.

The next question which must be asked is how vital are the Realms of Order to your cosmos? Only you can provide a definitive answer. However, this book can help define some qualities that are normally associated with Order. These concepts include the rule of law; organization; and methodical, purposeful work. All of these are based on cultural values. The deities of a pantheon will give you details necessary to determine which orderly concepts are venerated. Even if you have no deities tied to the concepts of Order, you can still use

## THE END OF THE UNIVERSE—

### WHAT HAPPENS AT THE BORDER?

When dealing with a pocket universe of non-infinite size, there are borders to be dealt with for any visitors. While you would not have to deal with this in a universe the size of a pocket planet or solar system—assuming it is a round planet and the visitors would not be able to travel into space—you may have to deal with this if you are using a pocket city or kingdom. So, the following possibilities exist at the edge of a pocket universe.

**Solid Barrier:** The edge of the plane is a barrier. This can appear as a wall in a dungeon or castle, or as some strange barrier, either opaque or transparent. Regardless, the barrier feels solid and cannot be affected, changed or damaged by physical or magical effects.

**Illusionary Movement:** When one reaches the edge of the universe, it appears that one can continue moving, but the movement is actually illusionary. In other words, the players might continue walking on the edge of the world, and appear to be moving, but when they start to walk in the opposite direction, it soon becomes apparent that they have not traveled any distance at all.

**Warped Movement:** When a being or object reaches the border of the universe, they end up being teleported elsewhere into the universe. Usually this means a being will come out the opposite side of the pocket universe. However, other effects are possible, such as being automatically turned around 180 degrees in the opposite direction of movement—perhaps cloaked with some illusion or “seamless” terrain one can get lost in like fog or a forest so the being does not notice right away. Or, sudden teleportation can be used—the being or object ends up appearing in the center of the universe or in a random area.

**Planar Exit:** When somebody reaches the end of the pocket universe, they end up leaving the universe and exiting to an alternate plane. This is how many spheres work.

**Annihilation:** While rare, it is possible anything going beyond the borders of the pocket universe are annihilated, as one cannot exist past the barrier. In this case, there would likely be some environmental warning about this effect, such as a black or white void, warning obelisks, or other environmental barriers before the void to discourage travel.

The borders found in a pocket universe will likely depend on the environment inside it as well as the creator's intentions. A pocket kingdom might have some illusionary movement or warped movement at its borders, with its native inhabitants used to this effect.

If the reader is not familiar with Philip Jose Farmer's; *The Maker of Universes* series, you should obtain and read these books if you plan to have pocket worlds in your cosmos.

the material in this chapter to help you define other planes. However, it is unlikely for a cosmos to have no discernible planes of order. This stems from the fact that few cultures exist without order and laws, rules and regulation of behavior, even if only social pressure, as the driving force behind a traditions and government that define a society.

Even if you do not have planes that would be categorized as Realms of Order, the concepts, themes and ideals normally associated with these planes can be adapted to other planes. While Chapters 5 through 8 are designed as guides to illustrate how a metaphysical concept works, there is an appendix at the end of this book with keywords for tenants associated with metaphysical poles. Since few traits could exclusively belong

to any metaphysical tenet, traits normally thought of as being applicable only to Order can be used with its polar opposite.

To illustrate this point, we continue to use the example of love. Some people may argue that love cannot be associated with Order. After all, love is supposed to be dynamic, not rigid and unchanging. Law and order are capable of feeling love just as much as the Celestial Realms exhort a spiritual love. The main difference, however, comes not in the form of a moral trait, but one that is based on the ideal of stability. This illustrates love is not fleeting, but stable and everlasting. This form of love lacks the dynamics of Chaos. What it gains in exchange is the feeling of unfailing devotion. Thus, the material in this chapter can still influence the development of your cosmology.

When will these planes have an affect on your campaign? For the average campaign, they are not likely to have much impact in the early stages as characters are relatively weak and still learning about the world around them. They are games where this question will never be raised since the game master has decided these planes are out of reach. Basically, your gaming style will dictate when and if the impact of the planes will be an important part of the story. Another factor you may wish to consider is how much interaction you want between the deities and their worshipers. Most fantasy milieux assume a considerable amount of interaction between deities and worshipers; this based on ancient mythology and authored myth.

You may wish to have the players retire their characters when they reach a point where they are so powerful that they are beyond the scope you wish to deal with. When this occurs, the deities could send an emissary to the characters with an invitation to serve as near-immortal agents of the deity whose tenants each character reflects. Such an invitation would be seen as a reward for faithful adherence to a belief. Optionally, servants of another deity opposed to the adventurers could threaten them with oblivion or the destruction of the people they care about the most if they do not retire. Both of these examples rely on a campaign where interaction between the deities and mortals is possible. If access to the Realms of Order is limited or inaccessible, you will have to come up with some other form of justification for retiring characters.

This leads us into our next topic, which is the degree of impact the Realms of Order will have on the Prime Material Plane. This impact is reflected in how much interaction the deities and their servants have with mortals and how easy it is for mortals to access the planes. This is why you must determine whether or not mortals can access the planes as well as if extraplanar beings may step foot in a Realm of Order if they do not possess or are diametrically opposed to its metaphysical pole. If access is restricted to people who are in diametric opposition to Order, you **must** have a satisfactory answer for your players if they ask why it is the mortals - no matter how chaotic - can traverse the Realms of Order, but creatures from the Realms in Flux cannot. Failure to address this question may leave your players feeling your cosmos is unfinished.

There is one more issue that needs to be addressed before looking at the Realms of Order in depth: where do you locate these planes in a cosmos? You can grab a sheet of paper, does not matter if it is lined or not, to draw the metaphysical axes of your cosmology on. Label one point as “Order” and you have

pretty much defined where the Realms of Order are located. Of course, this is just a general direction and not an absolute. It is a general location because there is nothing that keeps a plane in an area while having a polarity towards Order. This is just an arbitrary system that allows you to organize your thoughts. That is the point. You could place the planes wherever you wish. The important aspect is not where this plane is located, but rather how the plane is connected through portals to other Realms of Order as well as the core values that define it. You should spend as little time as possible determining where the planes are beyond their degrees of separation from the Prime Material Plane.

There are similarities that define the Realms of Order. You should use these similarities as a way of categorizing a plane. The criterion you should use for determining whether or not a plane is a Realm of Order is if it is devoted to law or order. It is not necessary for the plane to embody both, although they are nearly synonymous, for law must be highly structured. There are some who do see these planes as paradise. Such individuals see Order as the greatest metaphysical concept. They would find this to be a paradise because these planes provided a studious environment.

All Realms of Order work toward the goal of providing structure, organization, regulation and order over the entire cosmos. Because of this, the inhabitants of these planes are likely to cooperate to achieve common goals. These are usually far-reaching and have an impact on a cosmological scale. Unlike the other metaphysical planes, these planes can be extremely long-lived. You can chalk this up to the principles of organization, a sense of structure, or the fact that many of these beings are not looking at the moral implications that their goals may impose. This allows for complex and subtle plots as part of the background of a cosmology.

Unfortunately, this does not provide a lot of detail in terms of how these planes are different. Chances are a cosmology will have planes in the Realms of Order that do not ascribe solely to the amoral view of law and order. It is more likely that there are planes colored towards celestial or infernal concepts. It would be misleading to believe that the inhabitants of the Realms of Order are not only cordial towards each other, but agree on many subjects. This is not the case. Since they are the planes of law and order, the Realms of Order inhabitants can spend centuries arguing over the minutest point. To emphasize this, think of a state consisting of nothing but lawyers, to just recall democratic government. Their sources of disagreement help to ensure us that the forces dedicated to Order cannot overrun a cosmos. As noted, a good example of how this works would be a modern democratic government. If you look at an assembly of politicians, regardless of their political affiliations, you will notice that no two members have exactly the same views. Unlike mortals, the residents of the Realms of Order are likely too set in their ways to put aside their differences.

Furthering the split between the Realms of Order, are the differences based on the other metaphysical polarities in a cosmos. For example, if you have included the Celestial/Nether polar axis, you will have three distinct flavors of law: one that is interested in the spirit of the law in view of mercy and temperance, one that cares only about the letter of the law and how it can be manipulated, and the one between those two poles caring mainly about the operation of the law as it exists. This

spectrum allows you to have varying degrees of ideas of how law is viewed by mortals. Imagine the number of possibilities if you include more than just two metaphysical axes in your cosmology! In this view, you can see why residents of the Realms of Order do not always get along.

### SIMILARITIES

We have seen the similarities of the Realms of Order described in brief. But what are the unifying, and undeniable aspects of the planes that denotes their status as Realms of Order. The three aspects below are essential when placing a plane in this collection.

- The Realms of Order are the anchors of stability in the cosmos.
- All thoughts and beliefs of what rational order is form the Realms of Order.
- The Clockworks is the neutral meeting point for the Realms of Order.

This first point is extremely important when you are determining whether a plane should be considered a Realm of Order. The main reason for looking at it this way is because the Realms of Order deal in core values based on law and order. When you have a clear idea as to how mortals view the metaphysical pole of Order, you will have an easier time determining the degree of separation a plane will have. Depending on how you want to set up your campaign, the location where your game takes place may be predisposed towards Chaos. Either way, these options allow you to build in plot points and story options to keep your players entertained. Both also give an additional benefit as you are able to remove restrictions placed on you to fully define why your cosmology is arranged the way it is and allows you to determine and in what light you wish the players to view the cosmos.

Some people may view the Realms of Order as a paradise of legal wrangling while for others, it is a collection of implacable and inflexible realms. The qualities that the Realms of Order represent are those that are inherent in the species and their cultures. In this manner, you are able to pick and choose which values of Order are seen as the highest or lowest states a mortal can achieve. Since few cultures are truly amoral and focus solely on how law should be enacted, the tendency of a culture is to express in its pantheon both benevolent and malevolent interpretations of order and law. This is an individual interpretation that helps determine what traits to present in a favorable or unfavorable light.

The Clockworks is a neutral meeting ground that serves as a gateway to the remaining planes of the Realms of Order. It functions in this role to illustrate the minimum requirements a plane must possess to be considered a Realm of Order. Having a polarity towards the Order metaphysical pole is not enough to qualify a plane. If it were, there would be several planes from both the Celestial Realms and the Nether Realms that would possibly qualify due to some minor affiliation with the Order pole. The affiliation towards the Order pole must share dominance or co-dominance with another affinity for a metaphysical pole. Having a portal that connects the plane to the Prime Material Plane through the Clockworks is another factor that helps establish the plane as a Realm of Order. The layout of the plane exhibits the most nebulous traits that can be associated with themes of law and order.

## GARY GYGAX'S — COSMOS BUILDER

If you are using a standard model cosmology, consider the impact of planes that have equal degrees of separation in two or more metaphysical axes. Any plane you design that has this trait should not only be a Realm of Order, but also as belonging to the group that has an equal value of separation.

### DIFFERENCES

No matter what motifs you use for a Realm of Order, it must still be centered on aspects of order or law, regulation or rules. How do you define what is orderly? What constitutes a law? There are as many answers as there are methods to organization, structure and interpretation of rules. Some may say this is a strange interpretation and that tradition should always hold sway. Others may see Order as a way to pursue a state of perfection by using a system that always evolves but in a pattern. If you were to translate this into an example between two churches that venerate the concepts of Order, you have varying degrees of views as to what the true answer is. Each view has a place amongst the Realms of Order.

It is true that a Realm of Order must have an organized system inherent in it, but that does not necessarily equate from one plane to the next. What this means is there is no reason why a Realm of Order cannot have polarity with other metaphysical poles. The only restriction is that no plane can possess a polarity with its polar opposite.

The differences between the planes do not end here. All one has to do is look at the types of hazards associated with a plane that has a polarity towards Order. While there are metaphysical concepts that cannot be violated from one plane to the next, each plane determines how and when violations are dealt with. For instance, if there is a plane were casting a spell requires a specific procedure to be followed and the caster finds a way to get around it, it is a violation of the natural order and there is a chance the plane will visit the effects of a damaging spell equal in strength to the spell that was cast on the offender. It is also possible that any spell or action that relies upon probability for success will fail immediately. If that is the case, any use of Chaos-based powers or skills will invoke an immediate response from the plane or its inhabitants. You may have a single punishment for all such violations or a series of punishments for each specific item that can be used chaotically. A third option is to use a one-for-one exchange. In order for something to happen, an exchange of equal value must be made to achieve the effect that may violate the plane's physics.

### HAZARDS

Just because something follows a pattern, does not mean it is without hazards. In fact, anything that does not follow or conform to the rules that govern the plane will be repeatedly injured until it does. The main hazard comes from the fact that a character may not know what the laws of the plane are. Native inhabitants, or those that are the incarnation of deceased human spirits dwelling on the plane or sphere thereof, are born or inculcated with knowledge of their plane's natural laws and are able to avoid the hazards violation of those physics would cause.

The most important thing to consider when discussing planar hazards born out of metaphysical aspects is how they work. They are part and parcel to the aspects that are at the heart of the plane's design. For the Realms of Order, the planes

are bent on orderly concepts that work to indoctrinate a sense of conformity. Through methodical approaches, structured existence is created. Anything a character wishes to accomplish must follow the order of the plane before it can take effect. Failure to follow the pattern may bring the wrath of the plane or its inhabitants, if not the cancellation of the act. Planes that have polarities towards other metaphysical concepts change how punishments are meted out.

What kind of physical hazards would you expect for a Realm of Order? This depends on how you want a plane to look. If you wish it to look like the inside of an enormous clockwork mechanism, the physical hazards will come from the teeth of the gears which would probably crush anything that passes through them. Then again, a plane could possess nice, orderly orchards along perfectly manicured and straight roads. As long as there is a physical structure that can be used to cause damage, a physical hazard exists. There is nothing that would prevent a character from falling off a cliff if he walked over the edge.

Chances are, whatever hazards you include are not specifically designed to kill a traveler. The planes of this sort do not necessarily go out of their way to kill people or cause undue pain. Depending on the traits a plane exhibits, it is possible that a kindly resident will direct characters on a safer path. Some physical hazards should be so apparent that there is no need for indicators or a warning to tell a traveler he is in danger.

The native inhabitants of the plane can also pose as a hazard. The residents of the Realms of Order are likely to be like the plane they inhabit. Thus, a character is less likely to be assaulted by a plane that feels he has violated the plane's tenets than he is its inhabitants. The plane has its own function and the inhabitants have theirs, albeit they generally end up being similar.

Perhaps the hardest thing for a traveler to get used to with the natives of the Realms of Order is that they are often indifferent to the condition of a traveler. This does not mean they cannot be prejudiced. What is more likely to happen with a native inhabitant is that they will be ambivalent towards the boom and bust a character experiences. Characters and extraplanar beings that revel in the tenets of Chaos are likely to draw the ire of the inhabitants of these planes. Any activity these individuals take that violates the values expressed by the plane will likely cause them to be attacked according to the regulations of the place, the assault as likely by arresting minions of the law as not.

While the plane may not actively work to force a character to follow the patterns of thought the plane promotes, the beings who live there are less likely to be passive. Whether or not they are friendly or vicious and then attempts to make a traveler think in that "correct" way depends upon the metaphysical poles the plane is associated with. Organization and method are the most important aspects these beings use when determining whether or not they should interfere with the activities of a traveler.

### PHYSICAL FEATURES

We covered the subject of what the Realms of Order look like in brief throughout this chapter. This is because it is difficult to conceive of the concepts of organization without illustration. As such, we have left it up to your imagination to figure out how to present the Realms of Order in physical appearance. Do planes necessarily need to have the look and feel a complex clockwork

mechanism or a highly ordered pastoral landscape filled with neat, arranged orchards? It is even possible to have a Realm of Order comprised mainly of fire that behaves in a very structured manner.

In terms of “stock” physical features from the Prime Material Plane to the elemental planes, there are five main types of materials at your disposal when developing your planes. A plane constructed completely out of clockwork mechanisms may not necessarily fall under one of these five categories, but this does not mean you cannot tweak the material presented throughout this book to fit your needs. You can also mix features from various elemental planes to achieve the effect that you are looking for.

The main difference between a Realm of Order and a physical plane is that you are free to combine the materials as you wish without having to worry about the mixing problems associated with elemental spheres. Keep this thought in mind while designing a Realm of Order: there is no wrong way to build a plane. It cannot be stressed enough that you should feel free to use any item you need to achieve the effect you want.

When it comes to the issue of gravity, look at the themes, concepts and ideals inherent in the plane. Each plane should dictate how gravity is supposed to work. By everything you detailed, you should be able to determine whether light, heavy, no gravity or a mix of all three should be present on that plane. It is possible to have exceptions to the rule on a plane. As with all things in the Realms of Order, these exceptions to the normal order of things will have a set of rules so they occur the same way every time they come up.

Another consideration to make when designing a Realm of Order is based on the physical features chosen for the plane. Since these are based on the core values that make up how the plane works, it will ultimately affect what methods of travel will be available. This makes sense if we consider that a character cannot walk through solid rock unless the physics of the plane allow it. Any strange tricks or “loopholes” inherent in the plane’s physics must be followed exactly every time they are used when a character seems to violate the physics of the plane. Thus, it is possible for a character to walk through solid rock if a loophole exists for the plane.

All the Realms of Order treat time in the same manner. This does not mean to say that time flows at the same rate from one plane to the next, but rather that time flows in a measured, orderly and predictable pattern. Time may flow faster or slower than it does on the Prime Material Plane. The plane will have an orderly procedure to not only mark the flow of time but also it will never vary from that meter (barring local distortions).

There is one aspect to Realm of Order that cannot be violated. These planes must possess a polarity towards the Order metaphysical pole. They may contain any number of polarities that are part of your cosmology as long as the total does not exceed the number of axes in your cosmos. You must also consider whether or not you want a plane to qualify for another

grouping (such as a Celestial Realm). If you do not wish for your planes to be identified with any additional groupings, limit the influence of additional metaphysical polar traits to one less than the degree of separation along the Order metaphysical axis. For example, if you give a Realm of Order plane a polarity of five towards Order and also wish it to be associated with the Vitality and Celestial poles, the degree of separation would be equal to four or less. *[In a d20 campaign, the Order Pole equates to the Lawful alignment. All planes that are aligned thusly must possess the Lawful alignment trait.]*

When it comes to magic, the alterations created by the Realms of Order are more complicated and thus, more difficult to describe. When you think about the sheer number of possible combinations of core values you can use in addition to the polarities you can assign, you can understand why there may be difficulty determining how magic works. The only saving grace in this regard is that a Realm of Order affects a group of spells the same way every time they are cast. With so many possibilities, you must use everything you have detailed for the plane to come up with a consistent system. One thing is certain regarding magic on such planes: if it functions at all, it always functions exactly as it is meant to.



Since everything is ultimately based on the choices you make, it is important to look at what these choices mean and what you envisioned. Magic that promotes the tenets of the Order metaphysical pole would be easier to cast when compared to spells that rely on Chaos. Magic that runs counter to the themes, concepts or ideals of the plane will be hindered or rendered unusable and ineffective regardless of whether or not they promote the tenets of Order. You may allow for certain spells to be cast on a Realm of Order regardless of the fact that they normally could not be if you determine a loophole allows them to be cast.

#### INHABITANTS

Setting out to populate your Realms of Order should be easier. (Consult your game system for possible inhabitants of these planes.) In addition to augmenting mundane creatures to live on a Realm of Order, you have to consider what the creature should look like. This goes beyond the qualities necessary for a creature to be considered a natural resident. Since there are so many gaming systems out there, it would be impossible for this book to cover how you should implement these changes or creatures you create specifically for the plane. Thankfully, there are a few litmus tests so you can create the adjustments you need.

The first thing that Order creatures will possess is some form of protection, albeit limited, against items of a chaotic nature. The more aligned the creature’s plane is with the Order pole, the higher this resistance will be. This resistance balances out when objects used against the creature are of an equal degree of separation from the diametrically opposed pole. You may apply additional traits to creatures based on the environment or as a form of energy resistance. Such features are meant to simulate the creature’s natural niche on the plane.

## Magic Systems and the Planes

Because there are many variations in the game systems used and individual campaigns, we cannot expect to provide a comprehensive list of all the changes you will wish to make. You can decide how magic works.

One important thing to remember, however, is that if your campaign is centered and based around travel throughout the planes, rather than just occasional excursions, and if you decide magic has a lot of differences on other planes—then you probably need to make sure the players are compensated for the alternate magical laws. What good is being a mage or priest if you cannot use most of your powers? Mitigate compensation by opportunity to learn how to use magic on new planes, for such is more akin to having the affected characters begin afresh at a lower capacity than it is removing a major portion of the reason they were selected to play in the first place.

While we are not saying players should always have unlimited access to their magical abilities—especially if dealing with the specific realm of a deity, for instance—it may be possible for heroes on other planes to figure out how to compensate for any differences or reductions in magical forces. As an example of this, one mage character was transported to a different planet where magic did not work. While there this character could and did learn the use of weapons, so when he was returned to his own world he was a potent force being able to both fight well and use spells.

The D20 system (and in some cases, Castles and Crusades) offers these possibilities. (Please note that in the standard d20 and LA game campaigns most magic usually works as-is on alternate planes, so these options are probably only necessary if you add a lot of rules to your system about magic).

- Specific Metamagic feats that might compensate for differences in magic on alternate planes.
- The use of Spellcraft and/or Knowledge the planes, perhaps providing a skill check or checks to figure out the weaves of magic.
- Class abilities (for core or prestige classes, or to replace other typical abilities for an existing class) that can slightly alter the mage or priest archetype to specifically enhance one who travels throughout the multiverse.
- Magic items that compensate are tuned to work on the other planes.

The LA game system offers these possibilities:

- A new order with Abilities specific for planar travel.
- Knacks to compensate for planar conditions.
- The use of Abilities such as Panprobability to figure out how to tap into the weaves of other planes.
- A new Ability dealing with planar magic or manipulation—“Planurgy” or something akin to that.
- Extraordinary Items that deal with the planes and magic on them.
- Increased potential to gain in some other Ability to compensate for the reduction or loss of an Extraordinary one.

When determining how to assign qualities to mundane creatures, use the plane's core values to determine if there is any further augmentation you should make. Geography will play some aspect, but the core values of the plane should be given more weight when considering which traits to give. As creatures are meant to be the living embodiment of these values, they should reflect that more so than geography would dictate. Sentient inhabitants of the plane take this embodiment a step further as they represent not only a reflection of the plane's values, but also serve as its guardians.

Little else could be added concerning unintelligent creatures. That is because these creatures inhabit their plane as much as the sentient beings. The only difference is that while the unintelligent creatures are part of the natural process and reflect the planes ideals, the sentient beings serve to further their cause throughout the cosmology.

### INCORPORATING INTO AN EXISTING PLANE

While there are certain themes, concepts, and ideals that are arguably exclusive to the tenets of Order, it is even more difficult to imagine a cosmos being supplanted by a Realm of Order. This is why Chapter 1 recommends that you shift the origin point of the cosmos so there are more degrees of separation towards the Order pole than Probability. Otherwise, if you choose to leave the cosmos' poles equidistant and just apply the traits, you end up with a cosmos where even the Realms in Flux seem to provide order. Applying Realms of Order traits to the cosmos as a whole can have contradictory or unexpected results. You should avoid this unless you are looking for a challenge.

Replacing another plane with one from the Realms of Order also has its challenges. Unless you are looking at rewriting a portion of the cosmos, you should exchange planes that have the same degree of polarity towards the Order pole. Any additional polar traits are inconsequential if replacing planes in this manner. That is because they do not have a bearing to where the plane is in relation to other Realms of Order. There is a drawback to this approach. The degree of polarity towards the Order pole must be the greatest of any polarities the plane has. For example, a plane that has five degrees of separation towards Nether and only four towards Order is not a Realm of Order. It is an Infernal Realm and replacing such a plane using its alignment towards the Order axis would be a violation of this method.

If you are willing to remap a section of your cosmos, you can easily swap a plane from anywhere in your cosmos for a new Realm of Order. There is nothing to prevent you. There are no requirements for you to consider. There are, however, problems. Replacing a plane with one that has nothing in common with it changes the fundamental balance of the beliefs in a cosmos.

The last aspect of incorporating Order components into a plane is perhaps the easiest of the three. Infusing a theme, concept or ideal into an existing plane is straightforward: overlay the trait onto the existing qualities of the plane. As some of these traits can be used by more than one metaphysical concept, it is possible you may need to add a note that the trait is associated with Order. If you are adding the trait to a plane that is well known to your players, you may want to have the trait manifest itself gradually.

# CHAPTER 8: THE REALMS IN FLUX

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**T**HE REALMS IN FLUX, like the rest of the metaphysical planes, are devoted to a single concept (in this case it is randomness). As such, there are many interesting factors associated with these planes. As you will come to see, the physical traits are the most notable reflection of their true nature.

Unfortunately, there is no way to really define what the Realms in Flux are. When you think of Chaos, what strikes you first? Is it the sense of randomness, or is it something more abstract and unstable? Does it have a shape, or is it something that is just too intangible? Some may believe that the true purpose of the Realms in Flux in a cosmology is to provide the unpredictable elements that make life worth living. Another group may believe that the only purpose of these planes is to confound all rational explanations and refuse to be defined in any meaningful way. These schools of thought do not answer the question of what the Realms in Flux are.

In truth, the Realms in Flux are reflections of the disorder of the cosmos. The differences in viewing how this disorder affects life are what give rise to so many planes dedicated to the metaphysical tenets of Chaos. Despite how you may personally view the argument, the Realms in Flux are dominated by the intangible qualities of randomness. Some people claim that the purpose of Chaos is to keep things moving to prevent static development from grinding a cosmology to a halt as entropy would have it. Others claim it is a backlash against the steady march that Order attempts to overwhelm existence with. If nothing else, there is one thing that can be agreed upon when it comes to Chaos: it is always in motion.

For Flux, have in mind the following descriptors: anarchy, capriciousness, chance, changeableness, confusion, disorder, disarray, eccentricity, fickleness, inconstancy, instability, irregularity, nonconformity, originality, peculiarity, quirkiness, randomness, turmoil, uncertainty, unpredictability, unruliness, vagueness, volatility, and whimsicality.

The different shades of meaning in these terms are indicative of the number of planes Flux might contain.

Because randomness defies any form of meaningful definition, it requires so many planes to illustrate just how fast and variable a concept it is. Chaos does not just represent randomness; it also reflects possibility and chance. The reason they represent these aspects is because some people are unwilling to accept that everything is predestined rather than happenstance and coincidence. Because of this it would be extremely difficult for one plane to contain all overarching aspects inherent to the metaphysical tenets of Chaos. While the attempts of this chapter are meant to give you a sense of what the Realms in Flux are, it is important to keep in mind that even this chapter with all of its help in providing some form of basis, can easily be ignored because chance is always changing. Chance is so powerful of a concept that deities of Chaos may or may not live together whenever they choose and however they see fit merely because it was a good idea at the time.

Perhaps it should go without saying that this book cannot answer every question you may have. This book should help

you determine what is best for the cosmos you are building. Defining a random plane is much more difficult than trying to define something based off of order and stability. That is because most of us have some innate sense of organization. But when you look at something that seems chaotic, it is much more difficult to grasp how it could be so when we, as a species, do not like pure, random chance. Governments do not act in a chaotic manner as it is impossible to establish power without some form of organization. If we were to observe the way people act, it would look random, senseless and without purpose. This is the closest thing that we can use within a society to show a form of randomness. There is no such thing as cohesion, or goals to be achieved.

As you can see from the examples above, Chaos does not need a reason to exist. Of all the planes in a cosmos, those that adhere to Chaos give you the most artistic license. Since nothing is set in stone, these planes can change on a whim. There is not supposed to be any rhyme or reason to why things happen the way they do on a Realm in Flux. To illustrate just how peculiar these planes are, deities or their servants may come to blows over the most nonsensical argument only to make up a few minutes later as if nothing had happened. This does not translate into beings who hail from the Realms in Flux as being forgetful. They are just spontaneous and quick to adapt. The Realms in Flux represent the traits most admired or reviled by a culture in terms of ingenuity and adaptation. Trickster gods fall under this category, which is why these planes are important.

Warning you that the descriptions provided for the Rounds in Flux are quite lacking would be an understatement and undermine the point. Take this chapter with a grain of salt and use it to justify your own whims. Remember that there is no true function for a plane that is aligned with Chaos beyond the concept of just being whatever it wants. That said, it is important to realize that randomness does have a place, and the continual functioning of chance is evident in the real world, of course! While anyone can say they know the true reason for the chaotic nature of these planes, the truth is these planes are meant to inspire the imagination of cosmology as well as to be an advocate for adaptation. Every theme, concept and ideal that a Realm in Flux embodies is meant to reflect these tenets of Chaos. An example of a plane that embodies the purest form of Chaos would be one where not even the land can retain its shape. Travelers to such a plane would be confounded by how anything could exist only to be forced to quickly learn that it takes sheer force of will to survive.

This may seem extreme, but it is important to realize that it illustrates the concept of adaptation that all Realms in Flux possess. These planes should be fun to create since there is no fixed standard to be held to. You could say that the Realms in Flux are predictably unpredictable, but then the planes would probably surprise you and be predictable for a short while. However, since there are themes that can be associated with any plane, it may be best to create tables of random of events based on the aspects you chose for the plane to help run encounters. The list does not need to be extensive nor does it need to be

randomly rolled on. Use spontaneity to come up with the best solution during an adventure.

If these planes are so random, how can they be vital to your cosmos? As with all metaphysical planes, the answer is left to you, although pointing to the real world where little is certain furnishes the rational reason for including them. This book can only help you create planes; it can not help you determine why randomness should be included in a cosmos. This book can greatly assist you identify the traits most common to Chaos. These are: randomness, spontaneity and change. As each culture places their own values on these concepts, you must decide how these planes will not only look, but how they are viewed by society, and the deities that represent the qualities of those planes. These planes are the homes of the gods and their servants for the pantheons venerated by the cultures of your campaign world. The lessons that can be learned from flexibility shine through as traits that are desirable in most cultures. Should you choose not to have randomness in your campaign, this chapter can still be useful if for nothing else than helping you to avoid the very thing you do not want in your cosmos.

Although this chapter has the least concrete amount of information, it will still be useful when designing a cosmos. Even without planes that would be thought of as Realms in Flux, the core values normally associated with spontaneity can be useful in other planes. Consult the descriptors above for ideas as to what planes might be found in Flux, keeping in mind the deities you will have associated with the plane and their attendant spheres.

It is possible to argue that love should not be associated with Chaos, but infatuation surely can be. This stems from the view that Chaos is too random and spontaneous for most people's tastes. They argue that this cannot truly be love if there is no stability. The question raised by such a view is how does one come to such a belief when art, music and poetry inspired by a spur-of-the-moment does not capture and equate to the value of Chaos as it concerns love? This is why metaphysical concepts have so many planes of existence. Not only that, but love can be expressed in many ways. Where better to see that expression taken to its extreme where multiple examples can be given at once? While in the last act if morality is involved, this form of love is meant to show that surprises can be beneficial.

How do you want these planes to affect your cosmos? If you are running a standard campaign, then this question can conveniently be set aside until the characters are powerful enough to explore these realms. The characters are still learning about the world around them in the early stages of the campaign. It is also possible that this question may never arise in your campaign based off of decisions you make during construction of the cosmos. You should use your gaming materials to determine when and if the planes will have an effect on the game. Until then, it should be used as part of the story's backdrop. You may also want to consider how large of a part the deities play in a campaign and ability to interact with their worshipers.

Depending on your playing style, you may have the players retire their characters when they reach a point where they are so powerful that they are beyond the scope of play for the campaign.

You must determine what is too powerful for the game. If it is to the point where the characters are nearly as powerful as the deities, emissaries may be sent to them with an invitation to either serve the deity who most closely reflects the ideals the character holds dear, or to possibly become gods. It is also possible that the servants of a rival deity will approach the characters warning them to no longer interfere or face the wrath of the deity they have offended. Both of these examples rely on a campaign where interaction between the deities and mortals is possible or common.

What is the degree of impact the Realms in Flux will have on the cosmos? This should be in proportion to the amount of interaction the deities and their servants have. This is why you must determine how accessible the planes are in your campaign. One of the reasons is because it is necessary to know in advance whether or not you wish to have extraplanar beings able to set foot in a Realm in Flux if they come from a plane that is polarized to be diametrically opposed to Chaos.

Where do you put the Realms in Flux in a cosmos? You can locate them wherever you wish. If you grab a sheet of paper and drew the metaphysical poles that run through your cosmology on it and labeled the endpoint of a line as "Chaos," you would create the arbitrary location where the Realms in Flux are suspected to be clustered. This is a general reference point and should not be seen as an absolute. Since you are dealing with the metaphysical pole of Chaos, there is no reason for you to consider the planes to be in any particular location at any given point in time. All of this is academic and does not need much time spent on it. Besides, it is not where a plane is located that matters, but what themes, concepts and ideals it embodies.

Despite the nonconforming nature of the Realms in Flux, there are similarities that can be used to define this group. These are meant to help determine if a plane is a Realm in Flux. The most important point is if the plane is devoted to randomness. While it is not necessary for the plane to always exhibit this trait, it is important that the majority of the time the plane does display a mutable quality. People who venerate the qualities of spontaneity and nonconformity see Chaos as the greatest tenet in a cosmos.

Something not to overlook is that these planes sporadically work to keep a cosmology in motion. While they may not have organizational skills, the inhabitants of these planes have a tendency to come together at times to combat a growing tide of order. These acts are meant to have a cosmological impact. There is no planning involved when attempting to break up a pattern of Order beyond finding where the greatest concentration of Stasis is located and then creating as much chaos as possible. Although these are short-lived activities, the impact that they have on Order can last for years, if not longer. The sheer speed and randomness confounds beings from the Realms of Order and has a tendency to set back their long-range plans. Moral implications are generally not considered in these acts of senselessness.

If you were not confused by these planes yet, you might be after this paragraph. The Realms in Flux **are not** meant to be understood, so this may help you figure out how you want your Chaos-aligned planes to behave. The Realms in Flux are consistently inconsistent. They are as different from one another as they are alike. So, in that regard, their similarities

are their differences. The bad news is that this makes describing how the planes are not that much alike a bit more difficult – but not much. Since it is much more likely that you will have a morality axis (such as Celestial/Nether axis used in this book), the chances of pure randomness without any moral bent is rare. This is the good news: it makes it that much easier to define randomness based on the degree of morality it is tempered by. Thankfully, the deities follow the same general pattern when it comes to whether or not they will work together or are cordial to one another.

The metaphysical polarities help to further divide the Realms in Flux into more manageable concepts. As was hinted at in the preceding paragraph, just adding a metaphysical axis for morality presents you with two very distinct styles of randomness. Towards the Celestial Pole, you will have Realms in Flux where random acts of kindness are more likely to be the normal expression of Chaos. If you move towards the Nether Pole, the Realms in Flux will play host to random acts of violence more often than not. By using such a spectrum, you can see how to divide too amorphous quality of randomness into more manageable chunks. As this book has three axes that it covers in addition to Order/Chaos, the number of possibilities (and thus, a tighter definition on randomness) further refines how you can approach the differences between the planes.

### SIMILARITIES

We have seen the similarities of the Realms in Flux described in brief. But what are the unifying, and undeniable aspects of the planes that denotes their status as Realms in Flux. The three aspects below are essential when placing a plane in this collection.

- The Realms in Flux are the fonts of discord and adaptability in a cosmos.
- All thoughts and beliefs for what is spontaneous and ungovernable give rise to the Realms in Flux.
- The Patchwork Lands are the neutral meeting point for the Realms in Flux.

The Realms in Flux are where discord and adaptability flow from in a cosmos to all parts within that collection of planes. Discord is used here not to describe a state of disharmony of a violent nature, but rather the constant trend to push against preconceived notions. This form of discord flows into the adaptability that a person needs to possess if he wishes to traverse these planes or survive life in general. The mind is forced to change with the flow of a realm that is always in motion, making mental agility sharper. Life is full of unpredictability. There is not always a reason for why things happen, sometimes they just do. Without ingenuity, a person (or an entire species) is doomed to be snuffed out by the slightest catastrophe. As much as there is a need for stability in a society, there is as much – if not more – of a need for unconventional thinking. This allows progress to continue.

The views of Chaos are mixed at best, just like those of fortune, good and bad. Everyone needs ingenuity, but few willingly embrace the unconventional and ever-changing nature that such a way of life brings. The societies and their pantheons, or chaotic deities within them, will have a huge impact on the way the role of Chaos is seen. Is it a friend, or is it an enemy? Some deities see it as both at the same time and they can be tied to

Chaos! When designing your cosmos, you may want to consider if the Prime Material Plane or the campaign world has become too static with the other being too random. Imagine the quests you can design to restore balance in such a setting.

There are bound to be some people in a cosmos who view the Realms in Flux as a paradise and bastion of freedom. This freedom may draw travelers to the planes, but that same freedom can also prove to be a curse. Consider the amount of restraint necessary to keep from doing something you would really like to do to someone who has offended you. Now, multiply that person's size and abilities a few times and you have a sense of how unwise it is to exercise unbridled freedom. It is important to remember that the qualities any Realm in Flux possess are a reflection of the qualities a culture or pantheon of deities places emphasis upon. Whether they see these values favorably or not is what ultimately these planes embody. This lets you pick and choose which traits you want to use in a Realm in Flux. With few truly amoral cultures, chances are your Realms in Flux will have some sort of bias to them.

The Patchworks Lands are a neutral meeting ground serving as the gateway to the Realms in Flux. The role of the Patchwork Lands is not just to illustrate how Chaos works, but to give you a sense of the minimum number of aspects necessary for a plane to qualify as a Realm in Flux. The mere fact of having a polarity towards the Chaos metaphysical pole does not immediately make a plane a Realm in Flux. Yes, it is touched by it, but that would mean that if a plane from the Celestial or Nether Realms had a touch of Chaos they would be Realms in Flux despite the fact that it is more of an afterthought. If such a plane were to qualify as a Realm in Flux, its polarity with Chaos would have to be equal to the highest polarities the plane possesses. It helps if the plane also possesses a portal that connects it with the Patchwork Lands as proof that it is a Realm in Flux, but that would be conforming, so it is not a requirement.

If you are using a standard model cosmology, be advised it is important to consider the impact of planes with equal degrees of separation in two or more metaphysical axes. Any plane you design that has this trait should be considered as a Realm in Flux and as belonging to the group that has an equal degree of separation.

### DIFFERENCES

The main item that differentiates one Realm in Flux from another is the motifs of the plane. These traits must still embody the randomness and spontaneity of Chaos. So long as it does not have a discernable pattern, then it is pretty safe to assume you have ensured that the plane is not orderly.

One form of chaos is not the same as another. Mathematics teaches that Chaos changes based on the conditions necessary for a random activity to take place. This means the chance of something happening on one plane will not be the same as the likelihood of it occurring on another plane. This is the reason that having more than one metaphysical axis in your cosmology is useful. The addition of other metaphysical tenets increases the chances planes with varying amounts of Chaos and other metaphysical traits will exist. There is nothing that prevents you from using any metaphysical pole with a Realm in Flux so long as it is not opposed to Chaos. Using the standard cosmology, this gives you six other metaphysical poles that can be used in conjunction with Chaos.



Dealing in terms of chaos and disorder makes it easy to find differences between the planes of the Realms in Flux. It is no exception when you consider how many different types of hazards can be associated with any plane possessing polarity to Chaos. Nothing is what it seems and can change at any moment on most of these planes. A hazard can occur randomly and without warning despite the fact a traveler has not gone anywhere. Standing still is the most dangerous thing a

character can do while on a Realm in Flux. This gives you the creative freedom in determining what kind of hazards may befall the characters. If you are so inclined to think of it in this way, consider it your best friend when players get out of hand.

#### HAZARDS

Just like the Nether Realms, many see the Realms in Flux as being full of hazards. This is not necessarily true. It may be difficult for some to view Chaos as being safe, but it is not a foregone conclusion that being inflexible will cause a plane to react unfavorably. The hazards that exist do not necessarily have to be incurred immediately. If they were, then it would be predictable and not in keeping with the spirit of Chaos. The main difference to keep in mind is that Chaos happens at a time of its choosing, which means that the hazard a traveler suffers may have been triggered by someone else long ago, or even on the other side of the plane. This is the reason why standing still on a Realm in Flux is a bad idea.

So how do hazards built around the concepts of Chaos work? There are no real physics that could be applied the same why twice, except when chance dictates that. Doing anything of the sort would seemingly defeat the purpose of the plane, but on reflection there is always a chance that the same thing will happen more than once. As these planes operate on the precepts of randomness, you have to consider how the hazards work in terms that do not necessarily reflect a physical cause. The planes are bent on disorderly concepts that try to break any sense of conformity a character possesses. Through random events, an unstructured existence is created. Anything the character wishes to accomplish must likely be done differently every time to be successful, as the odds are against uniformity of cause and result.

There is too much to cover on physical hazards that can be encountered on a Realm in Flux. Everything you include as the physical look of a Realm in Flux can be a physical hazard. Additionally, the degree of polarity to Chaos will affect how often the plane's landscape shifts. Each shift may create a hazard under the feet of the character. As these planes are only as stable as you want them to be, you will have to judge for yourself when any hazards would arise.

The planes you create are probably not designed to maliciously harm or kill travelers as soon as they set foot on them. If this is the case and a character is unwise, he could cause himself an extraordinary amount of pain simply by heedlessly walking into a physical hazard that is in plain view and easily avoidable. However, not all physical hazards are so easily caught before the character stumbles into them. Since the metaphysical planes shape their landscape based on their core values, there is probably a method that would allow the character to have some chance of reasonably noticing a hazard before it is encountered.

How do you randomly generate hazards? Create a random encounter list similar in concept to those in Chapter 3. These random tables will allow you to make a simple die roll, choose a hazard, and continue with your game play without having to

slow it down. Not only will this save time, but by preparing several lists, you can choose which list you will use at any given moment. The benefit to having several lists is that if your players do get a glimpse of them, they will not know which one you are using. Since these lists are meant to be interchangeable with other Realms in Flux, you may want to build them on a thematic basis so the lists can be recycled from one plane to the next.

The last thing to consider with planar hazards is the inhabitants of the plane. The natives are as unpredictable as the planes, most probably so as to form and actions. In an odd twist, this makes them similar to the inhabitants of the Realms of Order by virtue of how closely they reflect the tenets of the plane. It would be difficult to tell if the plane is self-aware or not, but given how strange the Realms in Flux are, it should not be ruled out. This random factor means a plane may become self-aware momentarily, for extended periods, or never.

What may be uncomfortable for travelers to get used to is the natives of the Realms in Flux generally do not care about them. This does not mean that individual inhabitants may not have feelings concerning a traveler, but the majority of them will pay them no attention until the actions of a traveler impact the planar being. Consideration should be given for the possibility that inhabitants may be prejudiced against specific traits a traveler may possess. If a prejudice exists, it will often be towards the polar opposite traits that the inhabitant possesses.

#### PHYSICAL FEATURES

The physical features of the Realms in Flux are difficult to describe. The layout and look of each plane is whatever you want it to be and may alter at any time. The planes do not have any specifics required for their physical appearance to make them feel like they are part of the Realms in Flux. If you want it to look like a primordial soup, then it will look like one; if you want them to be a conglomerate of shifting terrains, then that is what they will be. Consider that you could even have a plane composed of elemental earth where the shape of the materials always change, but are still a type of elemental earth.

Chapters 2 and 3 presented the “stock” looks of planes via the Prime Material Plane and the elemental planes. You can use a mixture of these planes or a few traits from a couple of them to create the look of the plane. If none of these resemble what you are looking for, augment them or create the landscape to look different than anything considered possible. These exotic layouts only enrich your game.

Gravity does not necessary care about the physical layout of the plane. You should look at how the core values affect the plane. Even when you use the plane’s core values, gravity may not work as a traveler expects. As such, you should consider the fact that it is possible for the plane to have leanings towards light, heavy, no gravity, or a mix of all three. Most planes will experience a change in gravity. The gravity will thus have a tendency to shift on some planes.

The methods of travel available to a character are dependent on the stability of the terrain. If the landscape of a Realm in Flux is always changing, then the methods of travel will likewise change. It is possible for a character to have the quickest method of travel available evaporate before his eyes. An example would be a ship on an ocean on a Realm in Flux that suddenly finds the body of water has turned to a sea of dust. Of all the metaphysical

planes, the Realms in Flux have the greatest opportunity for a character to walk through a space that was previously occupied by solid rock. This also means the character can find himself encased in rock.

Time is the most relative of physical traits a Realm in Flux possesses. The core values can be used to determine if time flows erratically or has a consistently measurable flow. Time may flow faster or slower than on the Prime Material Plane, or it may not flow at all without affecting how the plane interacts with the rest of the cosmology. These planes are the only ones described in this book that break the rules established in Chapter 1 concerning the change in time caused by warpage in the threads of a plane’s dimensional matrix.

There is one trait that must be possessed by all Realms in Flux. It is the only rule that is required for any plane associated with this metaphysical pole. All Realms in Flux must be polarized towards the Chaos Pole. The Chaos metaphysical pole powers the randomness of these planes. You can give these planes additional polarities up to the number of metaphysical axes your cosmos contains. If you do give a Realm in Flux more than one polarization, you have to consider whether you wish the plane to also qualify for another grouping in your cosmology. The additional metaphysical poles should be limited to one less than the polarization towards the Chaos Pole if you do not wish a plane to qualify for another grouping. For example, if your plane has a polarization of 6 towards Chaos and the plane is also aligned with the Nether and Entropy poles, the degree of separation for these planes should be no more than 5. *[In a d20 campaign, the Chaos Pole equates to the chaotic alignment.]*

Magic works, if it works at the time its use is attempted, in weird ways on the Realms in Flux. This makes dealing with the alterations to magic on these planes difficult to manage since, as it true with other elements, for its aspects are given over to bouts of randomness. Consider the number of possible ways something could be randomized based solely on the core values used to build the plane and you will find yourself in a similar situation with magic as with the need for random encounter tables for shifting landscapes. You can limit yourself to a few tables per group of spells or you can have a general list that is random for every spell.

Spells that run counter to the themes, concepts and ideals of a Realm in Flux will be diminished. This basically means that any spell a character casts that has a predictable effect will be affected adversely. Other spells that are affected depend on the core values of the plane. This means that even if the spell has a random effect, it will be diminished if it runs counter to those values. The physics of a plane can also play a role in determining whether a spell can be cast (such as a fireball being cast underwater). Otherwise, spells that are random in effect are likely to be cast successfully and enhanced in strength.

#### INHABITANTS

There are no limits to the types of creatures that can be found on one of these planes. Likewise, no consideration is needed to be given to the appearance of a creature. That these planes are always shifting and careful considerations of the qualities necessary for survival or one of these planes is unnecessary due to the lack of a stable environment. With the numerous game systems out there, this book cannot cover what qualities you should assign to a creature that you wish to alter so that

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it may be thought of as a natural resident of a Realm in Flux. The litmus tests used in the previous three chapters have some weight that allows their application to be used for these planes.

Are the physical forms of the inhabitants altered as the physical features, or climate, of a locale changes? If not, then something innate within such creatures must change so as to enable them to adapt to the new environment. For example, tall and thin creatures in light gravity might well become short and squat ones when gravity intensifies

Creatures polarized towards Chaos will have a form of limited protection against effects and items that are aligned with Order. The greater the polarization a creature has towards Chaos, the higher this resistance should be. This also means the more aligned an effect or item is with Order, the less resistance the creature would possess. You can also apply additional traits to a creature you think would be necessary for it to survive, such as resistances to forms of energy or penalties (if exposed to light, for example). These features help you to simulate the creature's natural habitat and to throw new twists on challenges the characters may have encountered before.

Another thing you should consider when giving special qualities to mundane creatures to make them appear more exotic is to look at the plane's core values. They can help you figure out what sorts of flaws and advantages a Chaos-based version of the mundane creature would have to live on the plane you are porting it to. Geography is probably the most useless trait to consider when determining how a creature should look. Themes and concepts carry more weight on the Realms in Flux than ideals ever will. This is because ideals are expressed through the shape the land takes while the theme affects everything and concepts have the most general influence over the behavior of the plane's inhabitants. These creatures serve as the living embodiment of the values that are most strongly nurtured by the plane. Your sentient inhabitants will take this a bit further since they have the ability to willfully act and change the environment around them. You could consider these beings to be the guardians of the tenets of Chaos, but that would require that they consciously choose to do something. In effect, by not protecting what is considered to be chaotic, these creatures break the conventions of preservation because they can create the randomness necessary to keep the planes from slipping into a predictable pattern. This is why you should not worry about the guidelines of this book if they interfere in your vision of how a cosmology should be.

Having sentient and mobile creatures composed of liquid, metal, rock or vegetable matter is not a problem, of course. The same is true for colony life forms or anything else you can imagine in regards this matter.

There is not much to add when it comes to the unintelligent species that live in the Realms in Flux. The point is that the unintelligent creatures are just like the intelligent ones at every living thing on a metaphysical plane is meant to serve as a reflection of the plane's core values. If you need a difference, consider this: the unintelligent creatures are part of the natural cycle of the plane while the intelligent ones serve to guide and change that cycle as needed for the plane's values to be served.

## INCORPORATING INTO AN EXISTING PLANE

While there are certain themes, concepts and ideals that are arguably exclusive to the tenets of Chaos, it is even more difficult to imagine a cosmos being supplanted by a Realm in Flux. This is why Chapter 1 recommends you shift the origin point of the cosmos so that there are more degrees of separation towards the Chaos pole than Order. Otherwise, if you leave the cosmos' poles equidistant and just apply the traits, you end up with a cosmos where the Realms of Order provide some form of disorder. Applying Realms in Flux traits to the cosmos as a whole can have contradictory or unexpected results.

Replacing another plane with one that belongs in the Realms in Flux also has its own challenges. Unless you are looking at rewriting a portion of a map of your cosmos, you should exchange planes that have the same degree of polarity towards a metaphysical pole. Additional polar traits are unimportant in regards to where the plane is in relation to the rest of the Realms in Flux. The degree of polarity towards the Chaos pole must be the greatest polarity the plane has, however. As an example, a plane that has five degrees of separation towards Celestial and only four towards Chaos is not a plane that falls into the category of the Realms in Flux. It is a Celestial Realm and replacing such a plane using its alignment towards the Chaos axis violates this method.

If you are willing to remap a section of your cosmos, you can swap a plane from anywhere for a new Realm in Flux. There is nothing to prevent you from using this approach. Replacing a plane with one that has nothing in common with it changes the fundamental balance of the metaphysical beliefs in a cosmos. By the very act of removing a plane that represents law with one that is chaotic, you have pushed the cosmos towards a more disorganized state. Consider, however, that too many chaotic beings can be as troublesome as the orderly creatures they replaced. Consequently, the new residents of the plane could be the beings who inhabited the now defunct plane. Imagine the possibilities! The creatures could be struggling to fill their new role, or even trying to escape a plane that they are trapped on.

One last note for incorporating Realms in Flux components into a plane: it is the easiest approach for using tenets normally associated with this metaphysical concept. Infusing a theme, concept or ideal into an existing plane is relatively straightforward: append the trait to a plane's existing qualities. Since some traits are universal (illustrated at the beginning of the chapter with the idea of love), you may need to add a note to the trait as being associated with the Chaos pole. If you are adding the trait to a plane that is well-known to your players, you may want to have the trait manifest itself gradually so as to not draw attention to the changes. Who knows, it could serve as the source of a new mystery that draws your players deeper into the setting you have been weaving.

# CHAPTER 9: SPHERES, POCKET REALMS & NON-SPATIAL PLANES

AS THE FINAL chapter of this book, it is fitting that it bookends the material covered in chapters 2-8 as the final tools in the fantasy cosmologist's toolkit. With these tools in hand, you will be able to provide the quirks to your cosmos that will keep your players, or readers, guessing. These tools are meant to help you cover all of the strange planar traits that are part and parcel to the fantasy genre. Where the tools presented at the beginning of the book allow you to create vast tracts in a cosmos, think of these tools as the odds and ends that bring out the minutiae.

In some respects, these tools are nothing more than reinterpretations of the major tools that were presented in Chapter 1. The application of these tools is different enough that they warrant their own descriptions. Each tool is introduced separately before explaining how the tools are used, as they share a lot of similarities.

What are spheres? Spheres are essentially regions in a plane that differ from the main qualities of its parent or defy its physics. A good example, mentioned in Chapter 1, is the planets of the Prime Material Plane. With the majority of the plane an empty vacuum, every celestial body is a sphere. But spheres are used for much more than just round objects that are found in space. Spheres are also a way for you to create a region that defies the expectations of players. Furthermore, such places are dictated by various mythologies as well as occult teachings.

Spheres can bring a section of one plane to another. Spheres can be of any size, so long as they do not encompass a plane's boundaries. Within the sphere, the effects of an interloping plane might hold sway, or some conditions of parent plane might be altered by intensification, reduction or complete change. Thus, if you have a sphere (not an elemental sphere) on the Plane of Water governed by the Plane of Fire's physics, then it will be a self-contained region of flame that is never extinguished. Spheres are essentially whatever you want them to be, or what is dictated by a mythology selected to be a part of your cosmos, such as Valhalla. They fill the role of the one-tool-that-fits-all by allowing you to make a region into whatever you want.

In fact, that is the purpose of the sphere. It allows you to leave your mark on a region that defines it as being unique and memorable. Planes are meant to be awe-inspiring components of a mythology. They are the "other worlds" where the gods and the creatures of legend live, often in separate spheres thereon. What is better than having the ability to create places in your cosmos that your players will remember for years to come? It is possible that you may create a region so well loved by the players that they will want their characters to revisit it time and again.

But the purpose of the spheres goes beyond this. They are not just tools that allow you to create memorable locations. The spheres also serve as the heart of how planes work. Spheres are the only form of a dimensional matrix that does not require the use of magic or other devices to cross its boundaries. Spheres allow characters to visit the planes, or a close facsimile thereof, without leaving their world. When you get down to the nitty-gritty of it, spheres are so powerful that they do not need to change a region's traits to something far beyond the plane to

know it is a sphere. A sphere could be invisible until the effects of a spell are distorted. Conversely, a sphere's influence could be so heavy-handed that the contrast between it and the plane is so apparent that it would be difficult for the characters to not know what they were looking at.

What is more confounding is that many are easily visible and may allow viewers to see the effects of the environment within the sphere. Of course some spheres are hidden, especially those belonging to a deity as a home. This is part of how a typical sphere of the Prime Material Plane works: The boundaries are easily seen in these instances, but that does not preclude anyone from entering or exiting the affected area. Going back to the worlds of the Prime Material Plane, there is nothing that keeps the character from breaking free of a planet's gravity well and sailing the void between worlds. The only catch is that they need to overcome gravity and be able to survive the extreme heat and cold as well as the airless depths of space. If it was not for these factors, the character could simply step across the boundary between a world and the void without aid. This is most easily seen as a character falling towards a planet does not bounce off of the boundary of the world's sphere. While it requires aid to break atmosphere, the results with crossing a sphere's boundary at ground level are the same: a character just has to step through.

Then again, spheres can be made solid. Part of what makes the sphere a unique tool is that it easily accounts for the changes of a plane's nature as a localized "disturbance." You should devise what a localized disturbance means for you in your cosmology. The definition of what spheres are and how they work is meant to be vague, for there are many different kinds of spheres, and many belong to a deity or group of deities.

What function do spheres serve and are they important? Honestly, that is like asking someone else how important your ideas and imagination is to you. The question is important and raised for the sake of illustrating how valuable and influential spheres can be. Spheres are perhaps the most useful and immediately applicable of all the cosmological tools for creating otherworldly experiences for the characters in the early stages of their adventuring careers. When including deities in play, spheres become doubly important.

Imagine a lush oasis in the middle of a desert. While oases are real, you can think of them as spheres. A character dying of thirst or looking for a respite from the heat does not care how the oasis got there. Chances are that he is too overwhelmed by the fact that he will not die of thirst to contemplate why this spot in the desert is not as dry as the rest of it. The oasis will undoubtedly be important to such a character. The sphere can play this role in any environment. Spheres are one of the few cosmological tools that can not only pose as hazards, but paradises that can grow and contract. The area will either turn into the contents of the sphere, or revert back to its natural state before the sphere replaced it.

Spheres can affect your campaign without the influence of the cosmos. Remember, anything that is a semi-permanent to a constant deviation from the natural environment of a plane

is the same thing as a sphere. That is why spheres have such a wide application. Short of a magical effect that the characters can possibly dispel, the sphere serves as a way to change the world around the characters in a way that deepens the mysteries of the cosmos. This makes the sphere one of the most useful (and ultimately important) tools that can be applied anywhere at anytime.

Perhaps a better question to ask is when spheres will affect your game. Since spheres could be omitted, why bother adding them to an already complex cosmology? Because the broad strokes you use to paint a cosmos with dimensional matrices that make up the planes floating through the Space-Time stream sometimes are not enough to truly make the cosmos seem alive. The spheres are necessary in many mythological pantheons but can also serve as your largest toys. They allow you the ability to create anything you want. Play with them when you feel inclined to do so, but you might want to think twice before leaving them for others to find. You do not have to put all of your toys away when you are done, but the point is to have fun with the idea of what spheres are and how you can use them.

The importance of an object is determined by how much value you place in it. Spheres are no exception. You have to decide how important spheres will be to you and your game. Does the thought of creating extraplanar regions anywhere in the cosmos excite you? If it does, then spheres are a very important tool and will have an impact on your game. The purposes of spheres range from general to specific. You will have to decide what the limitations of these objects will be on an individual basis.

Location is the last item to look at in the introduction to spheres.

While spheres can be located anywhere, you have to determine not only their size, but also their locations. Spheres, unless they are strange, are located in a precise location. This means if a character visits a sphere, it will be in the same spot when he comes back to it, barring some event that removes or relocates the sphere. This makes the sphere stand out. Even though many dimensional matrices are thought of being as infinite in size and most planes are equally as large, they do not have a

fixed location the way a town does on a map. We group them and give them polarities to make our lives easier and make their use and impact on game play manageable.

Even if you have a sphere on an infinite plane, the sphere is immobile. The object may follow an orbital pattern like other structures, but this does not have to be the case. What matters is that the sphere is essentially in the same spot, despite a lack of landmarks that would help a character find it. The character should not have trouble returning to a sphere that follows this example if he has the ability to navigate the relatively uniform space of the plane.

The second tool this chapter covers is the pocket realm (or universe). In many ways it resembles the sphere in function; however, there are differences between the two. Pocket realms require magical or mechanical aid in order to reach them. Additionally, they always have specific points of entry. In fact, if it was not for their fixed points of entry, there would be no difference between a pocket universe and a plane that is nested inside of another plane. Pocket realms are generally finite in size and smaller than a plane.

Pocket universes are probably more common than spheres in their creation and usage by characters. Anything from a bag that is bigger on the inside than the outside, a hidden laboratory, and even something as innocuous as a "portable" hole are all examples of pocket realms. They are arguably one of the most used forms of plot device and rewards in the fantasy game genre. The device is so effective and well-used that it can be found in the science-fiction genre as extra-dimensional and subspace pockets. As such, you have probably seen them used in quite a few tales or games.

The examples above highlight how varied and useful this tool can be. But why would you want to use a pocket universe when you could just nest a dimensional matrix within another one? Pocket realms have a limited access, whereas planes nested within another plane can usually be reached from any point on the plane that contains them. This is an important

distinction and it puts limits on how the planes function. Again, spheres that are the creation of and home to a deity or deities might be an exception to the general accessibility of them.

Imagine a game where there are no portable closets or other equivalent. How do the characters haul around the equipment that would make their lives and adventuring careers easier? They could use pack animals, but the pocket realm hidden within a

## SPHERES & ANOMALIES ON THE PRIME PLANE(s)

It may be hard to consider the possibility of spheres on the prime planes. Spheres make more sense in the strange worlds of the elemental and cosmic planes, not here. However, spheres can exist on the prime.

First off, not all Prime planes are the same. Some can and do act as our own universe—in that case, spheres would be very rare if they existed at all. But maybe your campaign's prime universe is a bunch of floating spheres in a sailable firmament, or flat worlds on a chessboard (with illusionary skies), or orbs that ride the backs of gargantuan monsters or animals. If that is the case, then yes, the use of spheres makes sense.

However, even in a Prime Material Plane where we assume most of the physical laws of the universe exist as they do here, there are still potential uses for a sphere. For instance, if your campaign has spontaneous anti-magic zones (or areas where magic is more robust), perhaps they are caused by spheres where the entropy polarity is greater. Perhaps spheres can be used to explain an isolated border kingdom run by a vampire where the sun never shines and it is hard to leave, or a sphere can be found inside a "hollow world," with the laws of physics changed within the sphere so the place exists without changing the planetary traits of our own earth.

There can also be dimensional anomalies existing on your Prime Material Plane or home world. These are relatively small areas where the anomaly is inaccessible from all sides save one place where a portal exists that enables entry of all moving through it. Perhaps the fables Shangri-la is found in such a place. For example a small, mist shrouded valley of five miles in length and one mile in width is normal when entered from any boundary, save one passing between two giant boulders through which a stream passes. When entered at this place, the anomaly is revealed as an area of 500 miles in length and 100 miles in width, a place bounded by impassable cliffs or yawning chasms save where the stream flows out of it into the normal space of the world. Thus what appears to be a vast wasteland of inhospitable sort might, if entered through a dimensional portal, reveal an even larger anomaly with terrain and climate quite different from the wasteland that exists in other dimensions. The dimensional anomaly is discussed in the *Eye of Glory* novel written by Martin J. Dougherty.

canvas bag, a door that can be slapped on any vertical surface, or a hole that can be dropped on the ground not only gives the character freedom of movement, but allows him to forego an extensive baggage train that would otherwise be needed to carry all of his magical equipment and tools. Would you or your players like to deal with bookkeeping for the cargo train they could end up with?

How do pocket universes work? They are essentially isolated planes. They are not so isolated that they cannot be accessed, however. Pocket realms have a specific entry point that is (usually) fixed to a specific location. If this point is movable, the character must still enter the pocket realm wherever the entrance happens to be located and must exit from the same portal; regardless if the entry has moved, many of the pocket realms still have one entrance and one exit.

Pocket realms are not limited to just one entryway. They may have several entry and exit points. What matters is that pocket universes are not accessible from any location. The number of portals is not important. In fact, a pocket realm can have access points on several planes and still be a pocket universe by virtue of the fact that access requires knowledge of where the portals are located. Nothing prevents you from having a plane like this, but if you have too many connections, then the plane is less of a pocket realm than it is a very selective (and secretive) planar or sphere crossroads.

How important are pocket realms to a cosmos? This question depends on the style of game you are running. Pocket universes can serve villains and heroes alike to escape a life-threatening situation they can then wait out before reemerging from their hidden sanctuary. Pocket realms can also be used to create hidden chambers in a laboratory or dungeon where important items are kept from prying eyes. The uses of a pocket universe are many and makes their application that much more useful.

There is no test of what passes for importance when using the tools in this book. With that said, the nature of the pocket realm makes it one of the more user-friendly tools in the book. The examples presented earlier are some of the most loved uses of the pocket universe. Pocket realms can also be used to create planes that eventually expand and gain the size and status of a plane. When you see what the pocket universe can do, you will know how useful and important it is in your cosmology.

Pocket realms, similar to some spheres, have specific entry and exit points. Regardless of where the plane is located, it will have a fixed location (or series of fixed locations) where a character can enter or emerge from. Thus, you have to define the method and location of a portal in enough detail for the characters to know that they can not enter from wherever they wish. Many of these pocket universes will not be places the characters can enter. Most pocket realms characters encounter are “extra-dimensional closets.” Pocket realms are the work horses of the cosmos, holding the odds and ends of the beings that live there by serving as storage spaces.

It is important to remember that the pocket realm’s entry point can be portable. Despite this, it is a fixed location. Even if the entry point of the pocket universe is attached to the mouth of a sack, it is still a fixed location (the mouth of a sack) because it does not move from that item regardless of where it is. When you create a portal for a pocket realm that can move between

different points, make sure they are fixed locations; otherwise, leave the entry point fixed on a portable object.

The last tool that may further enhance the depth of your cosmos is the non-spatial plane. Two examples of non-spatial planes were introduced via the Ethereal and Aethereal Planes. However, these are not the only non-spatial realms that can exist in a cosmos. Non-spatial planes are the strangest of the strange in terms of the tools this book contains since they defy the normal definitions of planes.

Fortunately, describing the non-spatial planes is not any more difficult than trying to define the Realms in Flux. Non-spatial planes are realms that have fewer than four dimensions. All non-spatial realms are thought to be infinite in size, but since they usually have no depth, it is impossible to tell. It is possible to exit a non-spatial realm only to find one’s self mere inches from where he entered the portal, despite how far he seemed to have traveled. Alternatively, the character could have traveled a few inches through the non-spatial realm only to find he is on the other side of the world or plane! This is why non-spatial realms are difficult for many to comprehend.

What purpose does a non-spatial plane serve in a cosmos? This question is important if you are including the Ethereal/Aethereal Plane in a cosmos. These two regions of a non-spatial plane serve the same function: a medium that keeps the planes separated from one another without restricting access to them.

The purpose of the non-spatial plane is to allow you to have a parent plane with several connected planes (with separate and isolated concepts) subordinate to it. The planes generally have similar themes, but are separated by virtue of their natures. Keeping the planes isolated in this way reinforces the concept of the separate status of the planes. The non-spatial plane serves to separate the planes from one another, without having them nested in the parent plane. They can be accessed without traveling back to the parent plane or the non-spatial realms.

How do these planes work? The function of the plane does not change much from the way the Ethereal/Aethereal Plane works. The difference is that a non-spatial realm housed by a plane does not suffer from psychic storms. The non-spatial realm can have mild psychic storms if the nested planes have some opposed views. Chances are such problems will be rare.

When you look at how a non-spatial realm should work, you have to look at the cosmos as a whole. You can have multiple non-spatial planes within the cosmos. One of the biggest clues you have comes from the cosmological dimensional matrix. If you think a plane cannot play host to non-spatial realm, keep in mind that the dimensional matrix that holds the entire cosmos does just that. You can nest non-spatial realms within a plane, but you cannot nest a non-spatial plane within another non-spatial realm. Trying this would result in both realms being torn open and sucking everything in while they explode, perhaps taking out a few planes.

If these planes can be destroyed in such a violent manner, why are they important? If your cosmology allows for players to amass that much power, there is little to say about how delicate the situation is. Anyone with that much power should either be a deity or an over-deity of such magnitude that, although they have the power to cause such destruction, they have more important things to do with their time. Non-spatial planes serve

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as a way to keep planes separated enough that traveling from one plane to another is not something anyone can do.

The non-spatial realms allow you to restrict access to sections of a cosmos unless the character has the means of not only traveling through the non-spatial plane, but also finding and accessing the correct path that leads to the plane. Of course, you do not have to have a cosmos that is overly complicated. Simply gloss over the details for locating the path to the plane and tell the player that his character does not have enough knowledge or experience to reach the plane in question.

As you can see, the impact a non-spatial plane would have on your cosmos is pretty significant when you look at how it can block access to areas of the cosmos you do not want the players to explore yet or they are realms no mortal was intended to access. This latter point will generate interest in trying to figure out how to do what is supposed to be impossible. Non-spatial planes, therefore, have a huge impact on your campaign.

The level of effect a non-spatial realm will play on any campaign is directly related to how you handle them. When you couple the purpose of the non-spatial plane with the importance you wish it to have, you will see just how much of an impact it will have. You should consider both the deities' use of such places and whether or not you want to allow the characters to have access to the planes only after they have reached a certain level of power. If this is the case, you then have to determine if you are going to apply the same restrictions on extraplanar beings. In case you have made this decision applicable to all travelers regardless of the plane of origin, then a powerful being must send them across the non-spatial plane until they are able to do so without help.

Where do you find non-spatial planes? Since they effectively have no dimensional space, they are hard to find. A character has to know what he is looking for if he is going to find one of these planes. This is why in early stages of a game most characters have limited to no access to non-spatial planes. Given the way cosmos' are designed, a character can only find two non-spatial planes: the one that the plane is surrounded by and one that could potentially be contained by the plane's dimensional matrix.

Non-spatial planes do not have an actual location; which is why they are difficult to find. The character can learn about what non-spatial planes (if any) are accessible, but it requires study in how to find them or through the use of magical items that grant access to the plane. Magic items of this sort are generally limited in use, meaning the character will only have a short amount of time to traverse the non-spatial plane before either being stranded or sent back to where he was before entering the non-spatial plane. Non-spatial planes follow the same rules as nested dimensional matrices; they can only be accessed if you are on a plane (or sphere) that borders them.

### SIMILARITIES & DIFFERENCES

These three tools share one thing in common: they are the components you are most likely to use after you have laid out the majority of a cosmos. Additionally, they are the three tools that allow you to bend the rules of a plane without necessarily requiring you to place a region as its own fully formed plane. But, this is where the similarities end. The unique aspects of these tools make them highly specialized and thus completely unrelated to one another. However, what they lack in commonality in appearance

they gain in sharing the same purpose. While this chapter contains these tools, you should not see them being lumped together because of similarities beyond.

### SPHERES

So, there you are, you have great scenarios planned, but they seem bland. What do you do to enliven them? You can either throw more monsters or plot twists at the characters, or you can use a sphere. Spheres are ways to change the landscape around the characters to not only provide a unique experience, but to also give you another option in keeping your players entertained. They can also serve as another mystery you can add to a game.

One of the great aspects of a sphere is that it can be used to bring a bit of the greater cosmos to the Prime Material Plane (or anywhere else, for that matter) so the players do not have to travel there. Spheres accomplish this by having a barrier that separates the environments on either side of the affected region from spilling outward, but they do not prevent passage. As such, this allows characters to have an otherworldly adventure without leaving home. Spheres allow you to do this and more.

However, the effects of a sphere do not have to generate strange environments outside of the plane's nature. Many spheres augment a few traits rather than completely supplanting a plane's physical traits. In fact, the majority of the spheres the players' characters are likely to encounter are ones where there are changes to the area, but these are subtle and the changes apply only to how magic works. You can scatter spheres around your game world and disguise their nature – permanently or otherwise.

### SIZE AND LAYOUT

Despite their name, spheres do not have to be round. Think of the term as being a shortened version of the phrase "sphere of influence," because that is what many spheres are. Spheres influence the region they cover. This region can be of any size, but generally is less than the size of the plane. This size trait is deceptive because a sphere could be just shy of being infinite so that what is inside the sphere seems infinite, but there is always something just beyond its edge.

The layout of the plane is the key when designing a sphere. Not only are you determining the shape of the sphere, but you are also assigning qualities to the affected region. There are no random tables to help you determine how to lay out the area and effects of a sphere because there are too many qualities you can assign and because spheres are plot devices, even those that are home to deities and their ilk. Leaving the design of spheres to random chance is something that you should seriously consider the impact of. If you like the idea, you can use the random tables throughout this book in order to help you figure out what you want to use to help you generate a random sphere.

One of a sphere's interesting features is that while you can cross into its area, an invisible barrier can still block access to whatever is on the other side of it. Characters may think that the barrier – which is being fed by the sphere's physical features – is the outer edge of the sphere, but this is not always the case. Spheres merely define a region that has planar features/traits that differ from the parent plane. You should not feel obligated to follow these rules if they do not serve your game. You can

place a barrier on the sphere's perimeter to keep the characters out (or in – your choice). Additionally, such a barrier could be a cyclical thing that lowers periodically.

If you feel you are having trouble designing a sphere, do not hesitate to flip through the book to get an idea of what you want the sphere to accomplish or what effects you think are fitting. Since spheres are inherently otherworldly locations, the more exotic, the more intrigued characters are going to be. However, the same guidelines for determining if a plane is too dangerous for the characters should be used when building a sphere. If it is a location you want them to explore later, then you can make it as deadly as you wish to enhance the mysteriousness of the region while keeping the players out of it until you are ready to spring that story element on them.

Spheres can be used as a villain's stronghold. Either the sphere is the stronghold, or it surrounds it. The location may be inaccessible to the characters. Of course, the dastardly resident must be quite powerful to have a fortress deep within such a hostile sphere.

Look at the size of a sphere. There are no defined limits, and there is a reason for this: the size of a sphere (and its shape) can change. A sphere can grow or shrink over time, or even change its shape. The contents can also change. You should think of spheres as an all-purpose tool since their very size and layout can change before the character's eyes. If your players demand an explanation, you could give them one or let the sphere cycle through its changes before it returns to the state they were familiar with.

#### HAZARDS

What sorts of hazards could plague a sphere? This is entirely dependent on the nature of the environment within its confines. Basically, whatever you place inside a sphere will determine what kind of hazards would affect the characters. These hazards do not have to be based on the physical elements. You could use metaphysical concepts on a sphere that affect the characters as if they were on a plane normally with those traits.

A sphere can also remove the hazards of a plane. Consider a sphere that mimics the Prime Material Plane but is in the Elemental Plane of Water. The sphere could have an island the size of a planet inside it. Characters that enter this region would be safe, but could possibly be trapped until they can break away from the sphere's gravity. You can use spheres to create safe

zones on a plane hostile to characters. Spaced every so often, you could create a series of spheres along the characters' path to their destination to give them a chance to complete the adventure.

There is nothing written that says that a sphere must possess the same traits as its parent plane or the same hazards. Spheres are meant to alter qualities of a plane. No other tool is designed to create the anomalies that appear throughout a cosmos. The sphere is the only tool presented that allows you to create really weird or anomalous effects and design locations that will leave

a lasting impression with your players in a way that the grand vistas of a plane can not.

One of the quirkiest aspects of the sphere is that nothing about it needs be natural. Despite that, it is possible to find natural hazards in it. Natural hazards encountered in a sphere are a mixture of both the parent plane and what is inside the sphere. Creatures caught in a sphere could be changed so that they can survive while the sphere's influence persists. These creatures would be unharmed by the changes and would probably revert back to their original forms if the sphere disappeared. The quirky nature of the spheres lets you get away with things like this and more.

Do not feel constrained by the plane where you are putting the sphere. The traits of the plane **may** play a role in the sphere. Natural hazards are no exception. The plants and animals of the plane could even be replaced entirely with the flora and fauna from another plane. Also, who says you have to put everything back in order when the sphere disappears? You could leave the vegetation and creatures behind and let the characters deal with all the problems the changes cause.

#### PHYSICAL TRAITS

The physical traits of a sphere can be anything. This is one of the neat tricks spheres can perform. They are the tool that breaks all of the rules. Spheres allow you to feel free about the creation of quirky and silly regions. With something that is meant to fit into any role – comedic or dramatic – the sphere gives you the

most freedom to change things.

Where gravity has a definite weight on the elemental planes and the Prime Material Plane, spheres do not have such restrictions. You could have a sphere filled with Elemental Plane of Earth and no gravity. Who is going to stop you? The only people you have to answer to are your players. If they are satisfied with what you have created, then go with it and give yourself the benefit of

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the doubt that they are not going to be ranting and raving over an experimental sphere you thought was a good idea.

Figuring out what methods of travel are available in the sphere depends on the landscape within the sphere, the effects of gravity and the changes to how magic works. Chances are you have already determined what methods of travel are available. Since spheres are meant to be quirky, you do not have to follow preconceived notions for what forms of travel are available.

Probably the strangest trait that a sphere can possess is its ability to change the flow of time. Most spheres do not affect time. However, there is the occasional sphere which does have a localized distortion on time when compared to its parent plane. Time can be speeded up or slowed down by the sphere. No consideration must be given to the plane except for the relative appearance of the speed at which time passes inside the sphere when viewed inside or outside the affected area. The flow of time and the effects caused by a sphere should be carefully considered.

A sphere normally possesses the same polarity traits as its parent plane. That being said, spheres do not have to follow this general guideline. When you consider some of the story impacts spheres can have, it makes more sense to have polarity traits that differ to show the uniqueness of the region. The issue when discussing polarity is that changes you make are likely to have an influence over time or magic despite factors that would otherwise have no effect on these two aspects of a region. *[In the d20 system, this translates as a True Neutral alignment on a standard Prime Material Plane. On other planes, this would be the equivalent of sharing that plane's alignment unless otherwise altered.]*

The augmentations a sphere can have on magic are where this cosmological tool shines. You can have anything from persistent effects to spells that can not be cast. Spheres can also enhance effects or contain them so that the region outside the sphere does not suffer from the ill effects caused within. This does not equate to a barrier that prevents magic from working; rather, it establishes a way for mages to practice spells and have magical duels without risking damage to those outside the sphere. This usage of the sphere is practical when you consider that a series of magical barriers would have to be erected to perform the same function while a sphere can be a permanent effect that does not need to be maintained.

The possibilities are truly limitless when you consider how you can use a sphere to influence how magic works. As with a plane, you should use physical and metaphysical traits to determine how magic is affected. This is not a hard and fast rule. Because of the quirky nature of spheres, you can ignore this advice and assign any qualities you want despite the appearance within the sphere. Keep in mind that any deviation from what the characters expect to find within the cosmology will come as a surprise.

### INHABITANTS

Unless the sphere was created by someone, the chances of it being inhabited by any sentient creatures or beings are reduced. This does not mean that spheres are not habitable. On the contrary, despite the exotic nature that some spheres may possess, it will likely be inhabited by some life form or forms that find the environment comfortable. These may be the creators of the sphere or explorers who found it and never left,

along with transplanted life forms to enhance the ecology of the place. The fact that spheres may be inhabited by extraplanar creatures only goes to show that it does not matter how the sphere came into being. What matters is that when designing a sphere, you place inhabitants inside it without needing to justify their existence or the sphere's.

The same thing applies to unintelligent creatures. Unless native to that environment in the sphere or somehow transported, there is little chance that they will inhabit a sphere otherwise friendly to them. It is easy to see why this is the case when you consider how hostile the environment can be outside of the sphere. There is one further caveat to this restriction on unintelligent creatures. If there were sentient beings that inhabited the sphere who are now gone, it is possible that they may have left behind creatures and plants from their native plane that served as pets, food sources or guardians. Unless such creatures require constant care, assume they would survive without attention.

### INCORPORATING INTO AN EXISTING CAMPAIGN

A sphere cannot be used to replace any aspect of a cosmos. Spheres were meant to be a way to change or embellish a small portion of a plane. If you are looking for a way to supplant a cosmos, you should look at other planes. The chapters in this book will give you a good indication of what qualities you should adapt for use with a cosmos as a whole. Spheres do not accomplish this because they are virtually collections of traits that are applied to a small region on one specific plane.

When you use the sphere, keep in mind that not only is it not meant to supplant a cosmos, it is not meant to supplant a plane either. That being said, it is possible to use a sphere to supplant a plane with the sphere's traits by growing so large that it encompasses the plane. In such case you have two options: you can move the plane to a new part of the cosmos or this sphere may shrink and disappear in a cycle where the sphere and plane dominate the entire plane intermittently. This is an extreme use of a sphere, but it does not violate the purpose for using spheres. Imagine a plane that alternates between a paradise and a hell through such a sphere!

Finally, spheres have no traits that are unique to them and cannot be applied to any plane in a cosmos. It is for this reason that a sphere has no traits that it can impart on a plane. A mere quirk on one plane can be used on a plane somewhere else. This is why spheres should not be used as a way to augment an entire cosmos or a plane. Anything that you do as a sphere can be done as a plane.

### POCKET UNIVERSES

You find yourself in position where a plane is too much and a sphere is too easy for the characters to access. Maybe it is not even that. Maybe you are looking for something to hide or store a bunch of useful goodies that you want the characters to earn through searching or some other form of work. Perhaps that is not even the case. What you may be looking for is a place to hide a mysterious laboratory or someone's personal paradise. That is where the pocket realm comes in.

The sphere allows you to create an extraplanar experience without the characters necessarily having to go anywhere. The pocket universe, however, lets you create a separate dimensional matrix that could be hidden behind a closet door. It takes more

effort to reach, but that otherworldly experience still is not that far away. The benefit of using a pocket realm is that it is not necessarily tied to the plane where the portal is located, for the portal accessing a pocket universe can be a portable one. A pocket realm allows you to create a niche that as exotic as it may be, does not deserve to be turned into a full plane but has the potential of becoming one. It is just what the name implies, a small universe unto itself, that contains little or a vast number of things. This is why the pocket realm is a popular and useful tool.

Pocket realms can be used to store personal items. Imagine opening a closet that should only be a foot deep is in actuality the size of the house it is attached to. Although this is merely a use of extra-dimensional space, this is a minor sort of pocket realm in action. It has a fixed location from which it can be entered. There are also portable pocket realms, as discussed earlier in the chapter's opening. While such pocket realms are not necessarily tied to a plane, they are tied to the object and do not violate the rule that a pocket universe has a limited access.

A pocket realm cannot be accessed from any location the way a plane can be. While pocket universes may be contained by a plane, they are not nested the way dimensional matrices can be to form layers. Rather, the pocket realm is tied to a specific location, or series of locations, where a character must be in order to gain access to it. This limitation is why they are referred to as a pocket universe. If it was not for this limitation, its separation from the principle universe, a pocket realm would be a plane in its own right.

#### SIZE AND LAYOUT

Pocket universes can be used to create an exotic environment or a vast mix of ordinary and/or exotic ones. This defines a pocket realm. Pocket realms may be of any size, but they are generally not infinite. The size of a pocket realm does not dictate its place in the cosmos or due to its physical area. Size is used as an indication of how powerful of a being it took to create the pocket realm.

As an example, the typical wizard who creates a pocket universe usually does so for storage space, a secret laboratory, as a way to protect valuable and rare goods, or as his own personal playground. The latter example shows a character with a great amount of power. In comparison, a powerful deity could create

an entire plane of existence that dwarfs the private playground of some mortal.

Pocket universes do not necessarily share any traits with their parent plane. You are not expected to create a realm that is a carbon copy of the parent plane. As such, you are free to assign any traits you wish. This will achieve the effect of creating an exotic location outside of the plane, but not entirely separated from it. A pocket realm may be attached to any plane, or non-spatial plane. It cannot, however, be attached to another pocket realm if the size of the realm being created is larger than the original.

## COSMIC OUBLIETTES

Pocket Universes are used in many cases to keep things very protected. Thus, another main use of a pocket universe is to keep things or entities hidden from those looking for them. The benefit of a pocket universe, particularly one involving extra-dimensional space, is that they are very hard to locate. If the space can only be entered via a limited portal, other dimensions such as the Ethereal, Aethereal and Shadow cannot reach it. This makes such a place hard to find, except perhaps by attempting to search the entire dimension that makes it up. Pocket universes are hard to scry as well unless you know where to look—even powerful beings such as deities of considerable rank might find such location techniques highly difficult if not totally impossible.

Thus, one use of pocket universes is to either act as a vault, a place to store very valuable (or dangerous!) items, or it can be used to imprison powerful or dangerous entities (along with other dweomers or ensorcellment to keep the being's own power neutralized). Depending on the magic used, some vaults are more hidden than others. (Lesser magics just create extra-dimensional space that might be reachable by other means, while more powerful magics would create a true isolated pocket universe of non-dimensional sort, keeping things protected and isolated.)

Prisons for powerful creatures are likely to take advantage of your cosmology to keep potential liberators away. For instance, in *Dance with Demons*, it was revealed the prison of the chief antagonist was located in a pocket universe that was only accessible by going through the celestial and empyreal planes, then using the keys to open a gate to it—this lessened the chance of fiendish nether-beings from accessing the prison (although in that story other ways of opening the gate could be used).

Other such places are those created by use of the "Forlorn Encystment" spell in the writing of Jack Vance, and the prison in which the demon Orcus was incarcerated in the fiction written by Fred Saberhagen.

The best prisons are probably kept in an isolated, protected or dangerous part of the multi-verse, with border zones, buffers and guardians.

authoritative than this book. No matter what, it is still a game, so have fun with the details and do not hesitate to please yourself and your player's desire for what you feel is an enjoyable gaming environment.

In all respects, you should see a pocket universe as its own plane of existence. It is therefore subject to its own laws of physics, and may have any polarities desired. All of the qualities assigned to a pocket realm are done in the same fashion used for creating a plane. This will help you keep in mind that the pocket universe is a separate entity from the parent plane where the portal is located. By using this mindset, you can create a pocket realm without feeling obligated to have it share traits with the parent plane.

While you may create random tables to help you generate a pocket realm, this chapter does not contain any random tables for joining sides. There are many variables to be taken into consideration for the layout and size of a pocket universe. This is not to say you should not leave details to random chance, but that you should leave few of those choices to chance. If a very powerful character is creating a pocket realm, do you think that he would use random chance to design his vision?

If you feel stuck in any area of the design of a pocket universe, do not hesitate to flip through the chapters of this book to help you come up with an idea. So long as everything is suitable for the campaign you are running, there is nothing wrong with using random techniques or designing a pocket realm that seems odd to your players. Let your story lines, your players, and the campaign setting you have created or have based your game upon act as guides to determine what is suitable and what is not. They are more

**HAZARDS**

Pocket universes are the planes that do not need to contain planar hazards. In fact, most pocket realms are devoid of them. The creator of a pocket realm would have to intentionally include planar hazards for them to exist. This is why pocket universes generally do not have any hazards based on planar traits. Imagine you are creating your own private realm that no one else had access to. Would you intentionally make it hazardous? If such a plane is supposed to be a sanctuary, it is doubtful. In the same way, why would a character in your campaign do the same?

This is not to say that a plane cannot possess hazards. A deity creating a pocket realm may very well incorporate planar hazards into the pocket realm due to his nature or because it is an aspect of his portfolio of power. Alternatively, the plane could be designed as a prison. In such an instance, the designer would want to include planar hazards.

If you look at portable items that contain pocket realms, they will be neutral in environment. A possible exception would be a pocket universe that is being used as a refrigeration system. While this may seem corny, there is no reason why a character could not make a portable refrigerator in a game where magic can accomplish anything. Let's ignore the more exotic items for the moment. If you take the basic essentials of a pocket realm being used to store personal goods, it is generally small and designed to hold no more than a relatively few cubic feet worth of material. In such a limited space, there is no reason a planar hazards should exist unless the item is cursed.

The more exotic the pocket universe, the more likely there are to be hazards from planar and physical elements. Since there are no requirements to model a pocket realm after, it is up to you to determine what is exotic.

**PHYSICAL TRAITS**

Pocket universes are similar to spheres as their physical traits may be anything you wish. There is nothing that precludes you from using any aspect of the elemental or metaphysical planes described and Chapters 2 through 8.

**CREATING PLANES AND SPHERES**

Mortals and mortal magic is limited in scope. The first thing mages (or perhaps priests) may learn is how to access existing extra-dimensional space. This is just creating very small pockets, usually measured in feet or meters and usually devoid of all features. At this point the mage is also learning how to access the other dimensional matrixes. Eventually, the mage may learn how to create such things based on tapping imagination—for instance, pocket rooms with furnishings. Such places are smaller on their exterior dimensions than they are when measured from inside, sometimes the disparity is great, such as a hut containing a palace-sized interior. Examples of these sorts of extra-dimensional spaces are found in folklore, "Baba Yaga's Hut," and authored fiction, the hut of Sheelba the Wizard as created by Fritz Leiber for his tales of "Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser."

The highest achievement one can do is to create a true dynamic pocket universe. It will usually take a mage of the greatest experience to be able to create a pocket universe, and it will probably be limited in terms of miles. In this case, usually, the realms of imagination are mixed with magical energy to create a small pocket universe. Unlike simply manipulating dimensional space and creating inanimate objects, this also can create environmental effects, such as advanced climate conditions, and perhaps even normal flora and minor fauna. Creating life, however, is usually the province of others, especially when dealing with sentient life. So wizards might usually populate pocket worlds with other life forms via summoning or other such dweomery, even resorting to the transportation of mundane things from the normal world to their created "universe."

Of course, deities (including demigods, demigods and powerful supernatural beings) can create vast pocket spheres and universes. In the case of spheres, deities can manipulate their will on the greater planes, making their own spheres within the greater realms, and can do things mortals can not such as changing the laws of magic in that realm or populating that realm with beings they create. Only the greatest of deities can manipulate an entire plane, and it is unlikely even they could create new dimensions, although they may be masters of the energies within one of the poles of a dimension (time, probability, vitality and entropy, for instance).

Mortals may also be able to create very limited spheres in limited cases based on the dimensional matrix's own laws. For instance, a plane of thought where all imagined can become real may allow one to create a zone of reality. This could also be the case on other planes that allow mental energy to manipulate matter—certain planes of chaos, for instance, might respond to the concentration of a mortal. In both cases, this would be very limited in scope, and all other beings would have the same power—limited by personal power and experience, of course.

Remember, these are supposed to be the private playgrounds and storage closets of the cosmos. This gives you free reign to do whatever you want to a pocket realm. The physical traits you assign should follow some logical thought (even if it is only logical when placed in the context of the pocket universe's planar and physical traits).

If there was any trait that a character would love to play with when designing a pocket universe, gravity would be amongst the top choices. Who could resist the temptation to create a realm where gravity has little power? Characters that have the ability to create their own pocket realm are likely to shape it into a reflection of their ideal paradise. If the character creates a pocket universe that requires physical traits, he is probably not creating a storage closet. The pocket realm has been created as a sanctuary, stronghold, or are giant experimental lab for the creation of living animals that could not survive elsewhere. For these reasons, a pocket universe may have zero, light, normal or heavy gravity.

Traveling through a pocket realm is similar to traveling anywhere else. The same general rule of thumb should be applied to determine which methods of travel are available. Since the landscape can be shaped however the player wishes during its creation, you can determine what methods of travel will be available when the pocket universe is created. Although it does not have to conform to the standards of an existing plane, what one would normally consider as the way to travel across a terrain feature may not be the case. A pocket realm could be designed so that characters have to swim through rock and climb the surface of water.

Pocket universes may operate with their own sense for measuring time. This may be the same as the parent plane, the cosmos, or it may be as different from these as any other plane that influences how time flows. Use the core values that have helped guide the physical layout of the plane to determine if time should be faster or slower than the parent plane. If one of the characters in your campaign is constructing the pocket

universe, feel free to override the player's wants concerning the flow of time to avoid any abuse of the rules.

Since the plane does not have to look like any other plane in the cosmos, it stands to reason that the pocket universe designed for purposes other than storage does not have to have the same polarity as its parent plane. The creator of the pocket realm always has the option of applying polarity traits to a pocket realm. Since this can be a game-breaking value, you are free to limit the number of degrees of separation a character may apply to a pocket universe. Thus, it would be difficult for a character to create a pocket realm that has the sixth degree of separation for a metaphysical pole up when the parent plane is the Prime Material Plane and you have only allowed for pocket universes to vary by two degrees. *[In d20 terms, this translates as the True Neutral alignment on the Prime Material Plane. For other planes, the pocket realm uses their alignment as the default.]*

When considering the types of augmentations that can be used on magic in a pocket universe, look no further than what can be done with a sphere. That is because the same rules apply. You are free to use any form of modification to magic as you desire. In fact, wizards who construct a pocket realm as a private residence generally modify the way magic works in favor of the spells or schools of magic the character favors. Pocket universes vary as widely in their effects on magic as any other tool in this book.

Pocket universes should be treated as separate planes when determining how magic is affected. While the realm may affect how magic is enhanced or diminished, the metaphysical polarity of the pocket universe **must** be taken into consideration. Metaphysical polarities do not have to have any affect on how magic works, but they generally have an impact on how magic works. Do not hesitate to review a pocket realm a player wants his character to create with augmentations to magic. Some options may prove to be devastating for the game mechanics, giving the character an unfair advantage he was never meant to have.

#### INHABITANTS

Pocket universes large enough to serve as a residence are normally created by an individual or group for a special purpose. Thus, consider a pocket realm has sentient inhabitants. Someone had to build the pocket realm in the first place. It should be reasonable, therefore, that an intelligent being would be found

living in the pocket realm. It is possible that the inhabitants have been there for generations. Pocket universes may grow over time, allowing for the place to expand and accommodate the larger number of beings from the original inhabitants who left the pocket realm to their descendants. These beings are not truly native to the pocket universe as they originally came from somewhere else. If there are any discrepancies between the pocket realm's planar and physical traits and the inhabitants' special abilities, they must have some form of shelter (perhaps a sphere) or magic that allows them to live in the pocket realm.

Unintelligent creatures are also unlikely to be native residents

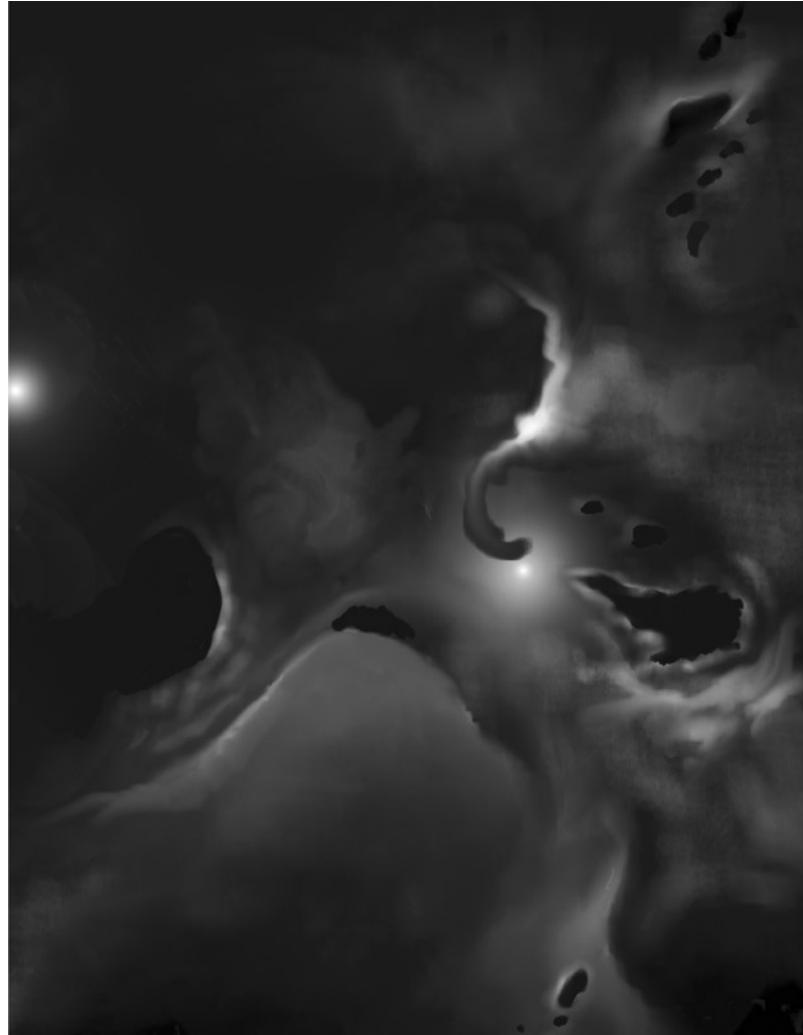
of a pocket universe. The exceptions to this rule are creatures that were specifically created for the pocket realm. Chances are they would not survive outside of the pocket universe and therefore can be considered natives of this plane. Despite this fact, these creatures do not have to have any qualities to survive the plane. The true purpose for creating such unintelligent creatures may be a mystery for the characters to solve. It is likely that a deity or powerful wizard experimenting with new living creations is responsible for the creatures.

#### INCORPORATING INTO AN EXISTING CAMPAIGN

Pocket universes come and go in a cosmos. Once the purpose has been fulfilled, it may cease to exist. The creator of a pocket realm probably has the ability to collapse it through the use of potent magic. It is much easier for a deity to do the same thing, however.

Given that these exotic locations are meant to be niches the parent plane does not have the space or location required, pocket universes are meant to serve as personal spaces within a cosmos. As such, pocket realms cannot be used to supplant a cosmos. It should be noted that a feature included in a pocket universe can be included in any plane. All the qualities that would therefore be assigned to a plane can be found in a pocket realm. Augmentations made to cosmos' as a whole come from such traits, and therefore are often not unique to pocket universes.

Normally, pocket universes are too small to replace a plane. This does not mean that they can not. However, given the relatively small size of even a vast pocket realm, it is unlikely (and rare)



that a pocket universe will become large enough to be a full-size plane and rarer still that it would replace an existing plane. One of the reasons for this is that a pocket realm is tied too closely to its parent plane for it to break free. If the pocket universe is tied to a non-spatial plane, then it is possible for such a pocket realm to become an independent plane. The planes of a cosmos can be viewed as having once been pocket realms tied to the Aethereal or Ethereal Planes in a standard cosmos. As a cosmos ages from its earliest stages, pocket universes grow to the size of planes. This approach should be used for pocket realms that you wish to become full-size planes at some point.

Finally, pocket universes may have traits that are not inherent to your cosmos, but it is important to remember that these planes are essentially reflections of possibilities in the cosmos. Characters are not likely to build pocket realms that do not contain traits found in the cosmos. It is more likely that these characters would build a pocket universe that is a reflection of the cosmos that they are a part of. If the character does wish to build a pocket realm that reflects qualities not included in your cosmos, you should weigh how much of an impact it would have on the campaign before you allow such a plane to exist. Planar traits that are not included in your cosmos can have detrimental effects on the game.

### NON-SPATIAL PLANES

This has to be the strangest tool in the cosmologist's toolkit. Non-spatial planes defy logic with their unique and mostly flat natures. A non-spatial plane is meant to separate a group of planes from one another. Whether these planes share anything in common is up to you, but it is not required. The purpose for using a non-spatial plane is mainly to separate a group of planes; so, despite any similarities they may share, they are not connected. This disconnection is meant to emphasize the differences between the planes that prevent them from sharing a relationship to one another.

Non-spatial planes allow you to create interesting groupings in a cosmos. Take for instance the Aethereal/Ethereal Plane. Using a sphere the Aethereal/Ethereal Plane is designed so that it is divided from itself. The inner section contains planes that are dedicated to physical features of existence. The outer portion houses planes that are vastly different from one another but all share the same fundamental nature: they are metaphysical traits given form. The so-called "outer planes" represent the qualities most important to the residents of the cosmos.

A non-spatial realm must be attached to a dimensional matrix. Using the example of the Aethereal/Ethereal Plane, it is attached to the cosmological dimensional matrix. Whenever you include a non-spatial plane in your cosmos, it will always be attached to a dimensional matrix. As such, a dimensional matrix may only possess one non-spatial plane.

It is possible to have a dimensional matrix inside a non-spatial plane with its own non-spatial plane attached to it. As with the

nesting of dimensional matrices, you may embed a non-spatial plane instead of a dimensional matrix followed by another dimensional matrix and then a non-spatial plane **ad infinitum**. You can sandwich these two between one another, but you may not place a non-spatial plane within another non-spatial plane (it has no substance). The lack of spatial attributes means that placing a non-spatial realm within another would cause them to collapse as it is meant to divide spatial planes from one another.

### SIZE AND LAYOUT

It is impossible to measure the true size of a non-spatial realm since it lacks the necessary dimensions. You can think of them as nowhere and everywhere, endless and tiny. Imagine the difficulty associated with trying to understand how someone can by rapid walking cover what seems like a week's worth of ground only to find himself mere inches on the plane from where the journey began. The strange aspects that govern the true size of a non-spatial realm can leave the character confused if he tries to ponder how such a realm can exist.

Given all this, you would think there is not much to this section concerning size or layout. It is because of this lack of spatial traits that requires as much time to be spent on describing the size and layout of a non-spatial realm as if it were any other plane.

The size within a non-spatial realm is more important than what it appears to be on the outside. Although non-spatial realms are much more likely to deposit the character a few inches from where he entered the plane, this does not preclude a portal on any other plane from doing the same thing. The size of a plane has little to do with how the non-spatial realms work.

The layout has as much to do with the way a non-spatial realm functions as does its size. Treat non-dimensional spaces as infinite realms in the same way as a dimensional matrix, even if the plane it contains is finite in size. While the true size of a dimensional matrix or a non-spatial realm may be finite, has anyone ever fully crossed to the other side and seen an edge?

## LINKING ROOMS AND NEXUSES

A nexus is a pocket universe which has many portals that link to one or more planes. Nexus dimensions are usually created by some mortal, supernatural entity or deity, and are rarely a completely natural occurrence. (However, a natural nexus could be discovered or exploited).

If nexuses exist, they will usually be used by those that know, discover or create them. Depending on the situation, this could be a limited cabal of people, such as a secret society, cult or fellowship. It could also be limited to those of a certain profession—mages of sufficient caliber learn of a nexus dimension to a network of portals across the world, while priests might learn of a dimension of portals to a pantheon's individual spheres.

If the nexus is multiversal in scope, accessing many planes across the probability dimension, then the nexus may be primarily a way to cross into alternate worlds. If this is the case, there will likely be communities built around the nexus, with a society that might seem a bit cosmopolitan in nature. A good example of this type of nexus can be found in the Gord short story *The Strange Occurrence at Odd Alley*. Other examples could be an entire city "at the edge of the multiverse," with many native inhabitants and loads of trade.

Of special note is the "linking room." A "linking room" (more likely a linking pocket universe) is a specialized nexus, pocket universe that acts as a nexus dimension. Specifically, it is a plane of either extra-dimensional or non-dimensional sort, that links to certain natural or manufactured phenomena on other planes—usually the Prime Material Plane. Specifically, you could have the "endless hall of doors," with doors that lead back to some doorway found on the prime plane, or the "maze of mirrors," which link to all the mirrors on a prime plane. Some creatures might inhabit these realms—for instance, fetches who can attack people thru mirrors, or a specific demonic race that sneak into homes via closet doors.

Non-spatial realms are also considered to be infinite if for nothing else than they may contain an unlimited number of infinitely-sized planes.

Planes that are embedded in a non-spatial realm should be treated as separate but equal. The non-spatial realm serves as a divider of planes with similar qualities. These planes are not inferior to the dimensional matrix that holds them and the non-spatial realm. Rather, the non-spatial realm keeps the planes from having direct contact with each other as is befitting for planes that have little to do with one another. The non-spatial realm and the planes contained within it share the same polarity as the plane it is embedded in.

Consider that the layout of a non-spatial realm does not have to have a defined look. The gray mist that was used to define the appearance of the Aethereal/Ethereal Plane was arbitrary. If the non-spatial realm is to be embedded in a plane with a polarity, feel free to make up an appearance that fits the concepts of the parent plane.

A non-spatial plane does not necessarily appear as if it possesses two dimensions. Unless you expressly identify it as being two-dimensional, a non-spatial realm will appear to be three-dimensional to the characters while they are on the non-spatial plane. A non-spatial realm does lack one dimension compared to the Prime Material Plane. If you look at the example of the Aethereal/Ethereal Plane from earlier in the book, you will notice that there is a lack of the element of time. This is not to say that time does not flow through the plane. Rather, it should be taken as an example of how the effects of time do not touch objects in that plane. Thus, a character would experience time passing normally although he would not feel a need to eat and he would not age. It is the lack of one single dimensional aspect (like time flowing without the effects of aging) that makes a plane a non-spatial realm.

## HAZARDS

What kind of hazards would you expect to find in a non-spatial realm? There is little one should expect to find since it is not meant to support life. These planes are meant as transitory systems. As such, characters are expected to make their way through the plane to reach their destination that lies somewhere within the non-spatial realm. This does not mean the plane cannot be hazardous. Consider that some of the planar dangers associated with a non-spatial realm spring from the nature of the plane itself. Lacking all the dimensions a normal plane has can have unfortunate effects on a traveler.

If you need to produce hazards for your non-spatial realms, you should look at the examples provided in the chapter on the Aethereal Plane. The majority of hazards that would plague a character traveling through a non-spatial realm are likely to be caused by psychic energy from the planes contained within the non-spatial realm.

The fundamental aspect of non-spatial realm hazards is that they will be as exotic as the plane. Additionally, any dimensional quality a non-spatial realm lacks cannot be part of the hazards that the plane possesses. This means that the Aethereal/Ethereal Plane could not use hazards that are based off of temporal effects where aging is a component.

## PHYSICAL TRAITS

Non-spatial realms have very little in a way of physical traits one would normally associate with other planes. This is why the example of the Aethereal/Ethereal Plane has been used throughout this section to illustrate non-spatial realms in action. Perhaps it is easier to view the non-spatial realms by using computer file storage as an example.

The actual location of a file on a hard drive may be a different location than the way you organized the file. Non-spatial realms form the same function although they take up no physical space, similar to the minute amount of space a folder requires to divide your computer files into an organized and coherent system.

Non-spatial realms do not normally possess a gravitational trait. This does not mean they have no gravity and characters are weightless. The character still weighs as much as he does on the Prime Material Plane, but he is not subject to falling. This lack of gravitational pull is due to the removal of one dimensional element from the plane. Although this is true of the typical model of a non-spatial plane, you are free to add the gravity trait to a non-spatial realm.

A non-spatial realm makes travel difficult. While the non-spatial realm may have a physical appearance, the most common method for moving through a non-spatial plane is the use of magic or a skill or mental ability such as Panprobability. If your non-spatial realm has a physical landscape, walking is an option the character can use to cross it.

Non-spatial realms can have an affect on time. It should be noted, however, that any effect a non-spatial realm has on time would generally be the same as its parent plane. If the plane affects time, it cannot have three spatial dimensions. The non-spatial realm must sacrifice a dimension (usually depth) if it affects time, regardless if time is sped up or slowed down.

There are two qualities that non-spatial planes must possess. The first quality non-spatial realms share with the plane they are embedded in is polarity. Thus, it is possible that a non-spatial plane will possess adjustments to its physical traits based upon polarity. The core values of a plane may also be transferred to a non-spatial realm. This is not a necessity, and you may assign a non-spatial plane its own core values.

The second quality a non-spatial realm shares with its parent plane is magical traits. Non-spatial realms have the same effects on magic as their parent plane. This means they will enhance or diminish a spell based on the qualities from the parent plane. A non-spatial realm will still affect magic that uses a dimensional element the non-spatial realm does not possess. As an example, a non-spatial realm with no depth will affect the range of all spells.

## INHABITANTS

As previously mentioned, a non-spatial realm does not need living inhabitants. Psychic emanations may appear to be living and may be part of the strangeness of a non-spatial plane. They are still not living regardless of how they appear. While not all non-spatial planes have psychic storms, they most likely will not have living inhabitants either. This does not mean sentient beings cannot take up residence on the plane.

## GARY GYGAX'S — COSMOS BUILDER

For the same reasons, unintelligent creatures are rarely encountered on a non-spatial plane. Unintelligent creatures cannot survive without a physical environment. This means a non-spatial realm must have physical features and be able to sustain life with a growth cycle. The most likely non-spatial realm that would support life would be one that has no dimension of depth where time flows normally. If these physical traits are included in the non-spatial realm, then it is possible to have inhabitants.

### INCORPORATING INTO AN EXISTING CAMPAIGN

Non-spatial realms cannot be used to replace a cosmos. In fact, it would be weird to imagine a cosmos based on the non-spatial realm's qualities. This is especially frustrating when you consider that the cosmos' dimensional matrix is used to determine the metaphysical axes in the cosmos and the degree a separation that is possible on any given axis. As such, you should refrain from using a non-spatial realm as the plane on which the cosmos is anchored.

A plane with spatial aspects cannot be replaced by one that lacks a spatial aspect. A plane cannot therefore be replaced by a non-spatial realm. An analogy would be akin to taking a baseball

and replacing it with a piece of paper. A pitcher could throw the paper after it has been crumpled, but it will not go nearly as far as the baseball. Everything that makes the baseball a baseball is analogous to a plane with its spatial features. The piece of paper, on the other hand, cannot be substituted because it lacks the necessary weight and spatial aspects that allow it to travel as fast as a thrown baseball.

Finally, non-spatial realms do not possess traits that can be transferred to other planes. Non-spatial planes have features that do not translate to anything useful for a plane. Unless you wish to remove a spatial trait from a plane, there is nothing about a non-spatial realm that can be used as a planar trait. Everything inherent in a non-spatial realm comes from other planes. Taking a planar trait from a non-spatial realm can be done just as easily by flipping through the pages of this book and finding qualities that are attached to spatial planes and applying them. After all, that is where a non-spatial plane embedded in a polarized plane gets its traits.

# A PPENDICES

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## APPENDIX A: SAMPLE PLANES

This appendix presents several sample planes. Four of these planes serve as examples based off material presented in Chapters 5-8 to illustrate the basic tenets the chapter expressed. Feel free to incorporate these planes into a cosmology or use them as a reference for building your own. To help you in this task, all of the material in this appendix is written using the format of the worksheets provided at the end of the book. Some entries may be modified, but these changes are based on details that would not affect presentation.

### THE VAULT OF THE HEAVENS

**Date/Version #:** 1

**Size:** Infinite

**Shape:** Appears disk-like

**Polarizations**

1. Slight Celestial

**Planar Traits**

**Theme:** Benevolence

**Concept:** Neutral

**Ideal:** Calm

**Physical/Elemental Appearance:** An open-air, rounded court yard, approximately 500 feet across, with a marble flagstone floor and an arched marble colonnade ringing the edge of it. Beyond that is a manicured lawn and beds of perfect flowers spreading outwards in all directions. Small groves of stately trees dot the endless vista. The sky above is a deep azure with the occasional white cloud drifting through it.

**Deities:**

**Major**

1. Unknown

**Minor**

1. Unknown

**Chief Extraplanar Races**

1. Unknown

**Encounter Tables**

1. N/A

**Description**

The Vault of the Heavens exudes a sense of well-being and restfulness. While it is not known to be home to deities or extraplanar races, the plane connects to all of the Celestial Realms. The plane speaks to the majesty of benevolence that waits just beyond the reach of the living as a final reward. Additionally, it is not uncommon for a character to encounter a celestial being. Most of these encounters will be with the servants on an errand for the deity they serve.

When a character first enters the Vault of the Heavens, he is struck by its beauty and overwhelming sense of calm. The flagstones beneath his feet gleam with the brilliance of polished stone upon which no one has ever set foot. The cleanliness of the floor, matched with its perfection of craftsmanship, carries over to the arched colonnade that rings the courtyard. The perfect, fluted, white marble columns tower over it. They are capped by a ring of stone arching from one column to the next 150 feet above.

If a character descends the broad, shallow steps ringing the courtyard, he stands on a lush, green carpet of grass. The beauty of the lawn is such that no earthly comparison can be made. The quality of care and the feel of the grass beneath one's feet is soothing and inviting. In fact, if a character lies on the lawn, he must make a check to resist falling asleep due to its soothing nature. Regardless of the success or failure, the character will feel as if he had a day's worth of sleep after one hour. Gentle zephyrs waft the perfume of blossoms across the lawn, so that all the senses are filled with elation at the fragrance.

The sky stretches off into the heavens as far as the eye can see. The sky is infinite in size and yet it has no discernable weather other than the occasional cloud. There is no sun in the sky, so anyone staring into the pure blue will not be blinded or scorched by the light of day. The air, no matter if the character is flying through it or lying on the grass, always feels comfortable. If a character stays on the plane long enough, he can watch the day/night cycle of the sky as the blue fades away and the brilliance of a starlit sky greets the night. There is no moon to disturb the display of the millions of stars that shine down upon the Vault of the Heavens, but it provides enough light for a person to comfortably read by.

The archways serve as portals to the other Celestial Realms. If the character knows how to activate the gateway, he can travel to that plane. Not all archways need to serve as portals, nor is an archway limited to serving only one plane. A character needs to know the correct archway and the trigger to open the portal in order to travel to the desired plane.

### SHEOL

**Date/Version #:** 1

**Size:** Infinite

**Shape:** Appears disk-like

**Polarizations**

1. Slight Nether

**Planar Traits**

**Theme:** Malevolence

**Concept:** Neutral

**Ideal:** Calm

**Physical/Elemental Appearance:** Dimly lit, oppressive. The landscape is only half lit by the gloomy twilight that fills the horizon while an inky blackness presses in from above. The landscape is dead.

**Deities:****Major**

1. Unknown

**Minor**

1. Unknown

**Chief Extraplanar Races**

1. Unknown

**Encounter Tables**

1. N/A

**Description**

Sheol is a patiently oppressive plane. The half light that rings the horizon provides only the most minimal illumination necessary to see the dead landscape that stretches before the character. No living creature claims Sheol as their home and no gods are known to reside here. The plane is not completely devoid of life, however. The beings who serve the malicious deities of the Nether Realms – willingly or as slaves – can be found occasionally wandering the landscape. Some stop to torture the restless damned that are caught between the torments that await them and the horrid mind-numbing boredom of the plane while others are traveling from one deity to another.

Entering Sheol makes a character feel uncomfortable. The poor lighting immediately penalizes anyone who is not used to low-light conditions. Characters adversely affected by the dimness will eventually adjust and see the landscape around them. At first glance, a character notices the ground is surprisingly dry. Dead trees, white from drought, can be found sporadically across the plane amongst broken earth and grave markers. Worms and beetles can be seen crawling over the moldy ground.

The ground is as inhospitable as it is fallow. If a character rests against a tree or on the ground, he will find it will be so uncomfortable that he must make a check to avoid becoming fatigued after one hour of rest. The wandering damned are never found lingering on the ground for long as the discomfort keeps them moving. Due to their lack of rest, the damned trapped on Sheol wander aimlessly in search of the correct portal that will take them to their final punishment. The lamentations of the damned can be heard as a muffled, inconsolable crying no matter where a traveler finds himself on the plane.

If the deafening silence that greets a traveler's ears when no sobs are heard was not horrible enough, piercing cries of agony from an infernal minion's tortures rip through the bleak landscape. Sounds seem to travel farther as the moonless and starless sky presses down upon the character. There is no weight from the sky, but the infinite blackness is inescapable. The dim light on the horizon only deepens the torture on the damned. No matter how far one travels towards a horizon, it – and the light – is always out of reach. If characters stay in Sheol too long, the cool air grows colder until it seeps into them. Anyone so affected suffers as if they have been chilled to the bone until they leave the plane.

If the physical features of the plane were not disturbing enough, the portals leading out of Sheol are dark, empty graves. The silently yawning plots are the only feature on the plane that

never changes; they are all perfectly dug graves awaiting a body. If the darkness and chill of the plane was not enough to shake a character's resolve, the air in the graves is icy and suffers under the effects of Deep Umbra from the Plane of Shadow, making it difficult to peer into the graves and see what may be lurking within. In order to access a portal, a character must know the correct trigger to open the portal inside the grave. Some graves have multiple portals while others may have none. Each grave is marked by a grave stone, making the process easier, even if it is still disturbing for the character to descend into a plot in the ground. When a portal is triggered, Sheol swallows the being that activated it. It will eventually turn into an empty grave again, but Sheol is patient.

**THE CLOCKWORKS****Date/Version #:** 1**Size:** Infinite

**Shape:** Appears disk-like as the plane looks flat no matter where a character is.

**Polarizations**

1. Slight Order

**Planar Traits**

**Theme:** Organized

**Concept:** Neutral

**Ideal:** Calm

**Physical/Elemental Appearance:** The plane resembles a well-organized and clean, clock shop. Despite this, there is a feeling of antiquity in the air. Clockwork devices are spread about the plane, some on pedestals while others feel freestanding. The sky above is a giant clockwork mechanism that cycles through day and night on a perfectly maintained schedule.

**Deities:****Major**

1. Unknown

**Minor**

1. Unknown

**Chief Extraplanar Races**

1. Unknown

**Encounter Tables**

1. N/A

**Description**

The Clockworks is a highly organized plane. Everything is categorized in its correct place, with the exception of clocks. Those are located throughout the plane. Although there is ample lighting, the checkerboard-patterned floor appears to fade away into darkness. The sky above is clear all the way to the clockwork ceiling, allowing a traveler to see the entirety of the clockwork dome. The fading of light gives a traveler the sense that he is standing in a column of soft light centered on him and fading out in a 500-foot radius.

When a character first enters the Clockworks, he is struck by the measured indifference of the plane. He feels as if he has just entered a strange shop where the gentle clicking of metal

or wooden gears slipping into place can be heard along with the occasional chime. There is a faint metallic odor with just a touch of oil in the air. Travelers also feel that there is a sense of quiet stoicism permeating the plane. In all other respects, the Clockworks appear benign.

Walking through the Clockworks strikes a character as if he is looking at a museum of strange mechanical devices. Every step through the gallery of oddities brings with it the unmistakable feeling of measure. The soft echo of each footstep is greeted by the whispered tick-tock of the machines. Here and there, the character can gaze upon what looks like the solar clock of a world from the Prime Material Plane keeping track of the positions of worlds. Some of these devices are extraordinarily large while others are small and delicate. In other regions of the plane, constructs of mechanical beasts wander in what appear to be pre-programmed patterns.

Although the floor is hard, a character can spread a blanket and have a good night's rest. The column of light eventually dims down to the light produced by a full moon. Any character resting on the plane must make a check to avoid being lulled to sleep by the gentle sound of the clocks. When a sleeping character awakens, he will find that nothing has changed except for the scene on the dome overhead.

The sky is darkened so much so that it is difficult to judge the distance from the floor to the clockwork dome that serves as the plane's sky. If one were to watch the dome, he would see the scene change from an azure sky, replete with mechanical clouds and birds that occasionally cross the face of the dome, to a starry night filled with millions of glittering lights. The night sky also has its own accoutrements of mechanical tracks for a parade of comets, shooting stars and planets.

The portals leading to other Realms of Order can be found between the spokes of gears, in archways and other enclosed spaces throughout the plane. Some of these portals may require a character to follow a specific pattern of travel through the plane (possibly using other portals) in order to correctly activate the gate that will take the character to the desired plane. While a portal is activated, the gears are still in motion.

## THE PATCHWORK LANDS

**Date/Version #:** 1

**Size:** Infinite

**Shape:** Appears disk-like as the plane looks flat no matter where a character is

**Polarizations**

1. Slight Chaos

**Planar Traits**

**Theme:** Randomness

**Concept:** Neutral

**Ideal:** Calm

**Physical/Elemental Appearance:** The plane referred to as the Patchwork Lands is a conglomerate of terrains that have been jumbled together. As a result, nearly any condition that exists in the cosmology can be seen at once.

### Deities:

**Major**

1. Unknown

**Minor**

1. Unknown

### Chief Extraplanar Races

1. Unknown

### Encounter Tables

1. N/A

### Description

The Patchwork Lands are permeated with the essence of randomness. The resultant changes the plane undergoes due to its affiliation with the Chaos Pole causes regions of the plane to migrate. For this reason, it is possible to see tundra adjacent to a section of jungle. In some instances, a section of an elemental material plane may appear as an amorphous shape that fills not only the landscape, but also the air above the plane's surface. It is hard to imagine anything living on these planes when the ground beneath one's feet can literally change as you watch it.

Characters who first step foot on the Patchwork Lands often find themselves in a border region between two sections of land. The quilt-like patches of land may not show that they are constantly shifting, but once the characters reach a mountainous region, they can see the geographic areas standing out in stark contrast to one another. The landscape can be seen sliding around like a giant number tile puzzle, fading out of existence, or morphing into a new environment before the adventurers' eyes.

On this haphazard plane each region has its own weather and light conditions as well, making it unnerving to characters that are used to a landscape that blends together as a whole and shares the same weather and lighting rather than the tile mosaic patterns of the Patchwork Lands. As a plane that exudes the most basic tendencies of the Chaos axis, this plane still has some sense of structure to it. For this reason, the areas of the plane act as square columns as both the landscape and the atmosphere have hard divisions. This allows for a character to literally step from the deep hours of night to mid-afternoon while moving from one type of terrain and climate to another.

Attempting to rest or sleep on this plane can be a daunting task for many travelers. However, it is not as difficult as one would believe. So long as the characters have provided for magical protections against any form of hazard (elemental- or weather-wise), they should be safe. That said, when they wake in the morning, they may find themselves an extraordinary distance from where they need to be.

Portals leading to other Realms in Flux or elsewhere in the cosmology are difficult to find. If they were easy to locate or recognize without some sort of training or magical aid, it would not be chaotic, would it? As such, any type of portal can be found on the plane with their keys being as random as the type of portal that is encountered.



This is an example of a cosmology where not all of the axes cross at one location. The offsetting of the Vitality/Entropy axis does not remove these concepts from the Prime Material Plane, nor do they exclude it from possessing mundane energy planes. This arrangement creates a Secondary Material Plane with a Partial Order polarity. All of the planes aligned with the Vitality/Entropy axis will also share this Partial Order polarity. Since the Secondary Material Plane can also have its own elemental and mundane energy planes, they too, will have the Partial Order polarity.

## APPENDIX B: TEXT HACKING

So there you are - you have a really great idea for a new cosmology. You flip to the pages of the book and come to a point that you realize something is wrong. The cosmology you want to create is not covered. Perhaps it is an elemental plane, or even a metaphysical trait you want to use. There is a simple solution that will help you create the material to build the plane you are looking for.

This book cannot cover every topic that can be used in a cosmology. Because of this, you should consider rewriting portions of the book for a cosmology that does not fit the standard mold. In essence, you will be writing your own *Cosmos Builder* based on this work. There is nothing wrong with adding ideas of your own, changing any words in this book to ones that are more useful for you. A great example would be using the Eastern tradition of five elemental planes. This book is based on the notion that you are using a cosmology centered on Western concepts of elemental planes. The Eastern elements are earth, water, wood, metal and fire.

A simple solution to create the Elemental Plane of Wood is to take the text for the Elemental Plane of Fire and rewrite part of it replacing all instances of the word "fire" with "wood" and by describing the tiers of that plane being made of branches rather than flames. The columns that support these tiers would be the trunks of trees. With a little more manipulation, you can change the planar hazards and encounter tables to match what you would find in a forest. You now have the Elemental Plane of Wood. The Elemental Plane of Metal is easily created using the Elemental Plane of Earth. With these planes, the majority of the work you need to do is replace the word "earth" with "metal" as the majority of the text will essentially be the same.

If you look closely enough throughout this book, you will find sections of material that are similar to other areas of the book. Some of this was done intentionally as part of the process for laying out the book to determine what subjects should be covered. In order to show the concept of how to use this book with ideas that are not within it, some areas have been altered so you can see how easy it is to create material. There are other locations where this has been done as well. However, those sections have been edited enough that it should be difficult for you to spot what may have been copied. Use this to your advantage as it will not only save you time, but it will also help you develop truly unique cosmologies.

## APPENDIX C: PLANAR SHAPES AND SIZES

This chapter presents a few random tables designed to help you choose not only the size – relative or absolute – of the plane, but also its shape. Shape does not refer to the landscape of the plane, but to its boundaries. Many of the planes are infinite in size with shapes that can be applied to them. Please be aware that not every size will be appropriate for a plane or pocket realms.

### SMALL PLANES/POCKET UNIVERSES

01-07	Small Sack (up to 1 cu. foot)
08-15	Large Sack (2-8 cu. foot)
16-23	Backpack (9-27 cu. foot)
24-30	Hole (10-125 cu. foot)
31-38	Closet (126-1,000 cu. foot)
39-46	Hut or Room, Small (1,001-3,375 cu. foot)
47-53	Cabin or Room, Medium (3,376-15,625 cu. foot)
54-61	Shack or Room, Large (15,626-27,000 cu. foot)
62-69	Dwelling, Small (27,001-125,000 cu. foot)
70-76	Dwelling, Medium (125,001-1,000,000 cu. foot)
77-84	Dwelling, Large (1,000,001-8,000,000 cu. foot)
85-92	Dwelling, Mansion (8,000,001-3,375,000,000 cu. foot)
93-00	Dwelling, Palace (3,375,000,001-125,000,000,000 cu. foot)

**Small Sack:** A pocket realm of this size can be hidden in anything from a clay jar to a coin purse or anything with dimensions measuring less than three linear feet.

**Large Sack:** The space equivalent to a large sack can be found hidden in any container that has less than six linear feet of space. Many containers that hold such spaces look like small cloth bags or clay wine pots.

**Backpack:** A pocket realm of this size generally has the capacity of a backpack. Many of these pocket realms can be found in sacks or casks that measure less than nine linear feet.

**Hole:** A pocket realm of this size is the equivalent of a ditch or a depression nearly the size of a grave. This pocket realm is normally associated with portable magical items that allow a character to access the hole from nearly anywhere. Pocket realms of this size are normally found in containers less than 15 linear feet.

**Closet:** This is another pocket realm that is mainly dedicated to storage – lots of storage. The closet-sized pocket realm is not necessarily something that an adventurer takes with him. Rather, this type of pocket realm is normally found in a cupboard or a cabinet and measures up to 30 linear feet.

**Hut or Room, Small:** The small room pocket realm has many applications. It is almost always anchored to a specific point, but there are instances of magic items that hold portable rooms to help get a character out of the elements. Small rooms in a fixed point are usually found in closets with 45 linear feet.

**Cabin or Room, Medium:** A medium-sized room has a volume that equals 75 linear feet. This means you could have a room that is 30 x 35 x 10 feet or one that is 25 x 25 x 25, or any

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other combination. This room, however, is generally hidden behind a door leading to another room, but requires a key to activate it.

**Shack or Room, Large:** This category is not much larger than the previous category, but it has a linear measurement of 90 feet. This is suitable for a hidden laboratory or extra-dimensional cellar.

**Dwelling, Small:** This is probably the largest portable pocket realm found in a magic item. The pocket realm of this size is comfortable enough to allow the character to hide away for an extensive period without being bothered by the outside world. The plane has a total linear measurement of up to 150 feet. At this size and larger, pocket realms are normally fixed to a specific point or attached to a non-spatial plane.

**Dwelling, Medium:** A plane or pocket realm of this size feels like the home of a well-off family. It has enough space to hold a nice-sized home, but not much else. The maximum linear measurement of a medium dwelling-sized plane is 300 feet.

**Dwelling, Large:** With a maximum linear measurement of 600 feet for its total volume, the large dwelling contains enough room for a home and a yard, if desired.

**Dwelling, Mansion:** A plane of this size has enough space for it to boast of ample room to live apart from the cosmology. With a total volume being equal to up to 4,500 feet, the plane can be used as a base of operations by a demigod or a villain.

**Dwelling, Palace:** With nearly a mile in all three directions (15,000 linear feet), this plane will hold nearly anything a character would need for a private home, to include a garden or other area of lush greenery complete with game animals or other wildlife.

### LARGE PLANES/POCKET REALMS

01-06	Planetoid, Small (1-2 miles across)
07-13	Planetoid, Medium (3-50 miles across)
14-20	Planetoid, Large (51-99 miles across)
21-26	Planet, Small Terrestrial (100-1,000 miles across)
27-33	Planet, Medium Terrestrial (1,001-4,500 miles across)
34-40	Planet, Large Terrestrial (4,501-8,000 miles across)
41-46	Planet, Small Jovian (8,001-12,000 miles across)
47-53	Planet, Medium Jovian (12,001-17,500 miles across)
54-60	Planet, Large Jovian (17,501-25,000 miles across)
61-66	Solar System (50,000 miles to 1 LY across)
67-73	Small Globular Cluster (1-100 LY across)
74-80	Large Globular Cluster (101-10,000 LY across)
81-86	Galaxy (10,001-200,000 LY across)
87-93	Galactic Neighborhood (1,000,000,000-15,000,000,000 LY across)
94-00	Infinite

Any plane that uses the sizes listed on the above table are large enough to provide the space necessary to fit whatever the plane, pocket realm or sphere needs to contain. These sizes are not appropriate for use as extra-dimensional spaces for storage. It is for this reason that they have been placed on a separate table.

No descriptions are given for the entries on this table as the sizes have been listed above. However, it must be clarified that "LY" stands for light years. Planes of this size should essentially be treated as infinite for game purposes, but they have an edge whereas a plane that is truly infinite does not have a reachable edge. Consequently, if you were to map out a plane with this much space, it would still have limits as to what could fit on the plane.

### SHAPES

The tables below apply predominantly to planes and pocket universes. As spheres do not have to have a consistent shape (they could look like a grid with empty spaces between the lines), the items in this section of the appendix may not necessarily be appropriate for the sphere you are designing. If the sphere is a fully random construct, then these tables may prove useful.

01-25	Cosmological Bubbles
26-50	Cone
51-75	Wedge
76-00	Dome
<b>EFFECT</b>	
01-33	Obverse
34-66	Inverse
67-00	Cylindrical

**Cosmological Bubbles:** This entry represents the tables that were presented for the appearance of cosmological bubbles in Space-Time from Chapter 1. For convenience, the tables have been reprinted below. Refer to Chapter 1 for the definitions of the entries for these tables.

### COSMOLOGICAL SPHERES

01-20	Amorphous
21-40	Spheroid
41-60	Irregular
61-80	Geometric
81-00	Flat (choose a category from above or roll 1d4)

### SPHEROID

01-34	Spherical
35-67	Ovid
68-00	Capsule

### GEOMETRIC

01-17	Pyramid
18-34	Cube
35-50	Octahedron
51-66	Decahedron
67-82	Dodecahedron
83-00	Icosahedron

**Cone, Wedge, Dome:** The last three entries of the table are listed together due to their somewhat misleading names. These shapes are not meant to imply a smooth surfaced object. The cone is the general shape of a mountain; a wedge is a crevasse; a dome, is a hill. When these shapes are selected, you should look at it from the perspective of the way the plane is structured, such

as an enormous mountain for the cone. This cone could have a volcano's caldera in place of a summit.

The important distinction for these planes is in their size. The distance is measured along the shape's longest axis, its base, apex, radius or face. Whichever measure you choose will have an impact on the area you have available for mapping the plane.

**Inverse, Obverse, Cylindrical:** These three effects are used to change which side of the shapes you are using. Inverse refers to the inside of the shape. For example, an inverted dome becomes a bowl. Obverse refers to the outside of the shape as the surface being used. The examples mentioned in the entry for cones, wedges and domes are examples of obverse uses. Cylindrical effects cause the shape to become elongated and may add another size measurement to the plane or to be mirrored so that an inverted dome would become a gentle sloped valley or a round cylinder, respectively.

## APPENDIX D: CORE VALUES

This book has spent a lot of time talking about *core values*. Very little has been done to give you a sample list of core values and their usage in building metaphysical planes beyond those found in Appendix A and the example using the concept of love in chapters 5-8. This appendix provides a few core values and how they may be used as a theme, concept or ideal. However, this appendix goes a step further by introducing a technique you can use to develop a list of core values and the traits they exhibit in any of the three roles.

When developing core values, using 3x5 index cards can help you develop individual traits. At the top of the card, place the name of the trait. You want to make it as general as possible. If the trait is too specific, it may be difficult to write down a few expressions of the trait when used as a theme, concept or ideal. If you feel stuck while working on a metaphysical plane, having a stack of these cards already created can help you pick out the traits you want by blindly drawing cards, or flipping through them until something catches your attention.

To get you started, you may want to take 20 cards and write down one-word answers for qualities you admire. Once this has been done, write down 20 one-word answers for traits you dislike. On each of these cards, put one or two examples of usage of the trait as a theme, a concept and an ideal. Try to keep these examples as neutral as possible. When you apply polarities to a plane, the traits will be colored as it is. Examples of what cards would look like follow with the sample traits listed below. Keep in mind that not every trait will be neutral nor will they necessarily work well as a theme, concept or an ideal. For space constraints, the examples only have one expression listed per core value.

### Benevolence

**Theme:** The plane exudes a sense of *succor*.

**Concept:** The inhabitants apply the theme in a beneficial way.

**Ideal:** The landscape itself works to benefit intelligent beings, perhaps by being pleasing to the eye, and/or soothing to the mind and body.

### Neutral

**Theme:** The plane follows the general qualities of its polarity.

**Concept:** The intelligent creatures of the plane embody its polarity via its theme.

**Ideal:** The landscape reflects the plane's theme as colored by its polarity.

### Calm

**Theme:** The plane quietly embodies its polarity.

**Concept:** The creatures of the plane show patience when acting on the planes theme.

**Ideal:** The landscape of the plane subtly exemplifies the plane's polarity and theme in form.

### Malevolence

**Theme:** The plane reflects the polarity in a way that is harmful to a character.

**Concept:** The creatures look for a cruel way to implement the plane's theme and polarity.

**Ideal:** The land itself is vicious and works against living creatures based on the theme and polarity of the plane.

### Organized

**Theme:** The overall quality of the plane feels regimented.

**Concept:** The creatures of the plane use specific methods to act on its polarity and theme.

**Ideal:** The landscape is well-defined, so much so that a natural pattern for a forest resembles an orchard. Things are regimented, and behavior is orderly at all times.

### Randomness

**Theme:** The plane spontaneously exhibits its polarities.

**Concept:** The creatures sometimes follow the theme and polarity of the plane.

**Ideal:** The landscape is a random assortment of qualities associated with the plane's theme and polarity. Things are haphazard in distribution, and behavior is disorderly at all times.

### Fertility

**Theme:** Everything on the plane is ripe or perpetually in season.

**Concept:** The inhabitants are either amorous, or overflowing in their actions that reflect the theme and polarity of the plane.

**Ideal:** The land is extremely fertile, allowing plants that embody the plane's theme and polarity to flourish.

### Spiritual

**Theme:** There is an enlightened sense of the plane's polarity.

**Concept:** The intelligent creatures of the plane focus more on how the theme can be applied to thought rather than physical actions, the immaterial rather than the material.

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**Ideal:** The landscape of the plane reflects its theme; this may be displayed in regimented forms.

### Physical

**Theme:** Planes with this theme put their polarities in action.

**Concept:** The intelligent creatures of the plane actively apply its theme.

**Ideal:** The landscape is highly attuned to the theme and polarity of the plane.

### Hate

**Theme:** The plane's polarity feels angry.

**Concept:** The intelligent creatures of the plane are intolerant of actions that go against the plane's theme and polarity.

**Ideal:** The landscape shows an angry version of plane's theme and polarity.

### Honor

**Theme:** The plane does not attempt to hide its polarity.

**Concept:** The sentient inhabitants of the plane work to apply the plane's theme and polarity fairly.

**Ideal:** The plane's landscape is open, making hazards easy to spot.

although the people experiencing this realm would feel as they would in the physical one.

An alternate form of travel is *projection*, varying called astral travel, spirit travel, psychic projection, dream form, etc. Basically, it involves an out-of-body experience—the mind, psyche, spirit, soul or other animating force leaves the body in an unconscious state. The physical form is left behind.

This non-corporeal travel has advantages and disadvantages. Projecting ones soul outside the body means the physical body does not experience potential damage or death. Depending on your campaign, this may be the only way to reach some of the far-off dimensional matrixes, such as a celestial sphere where souls dwell in an afterlife, or a dimension of dreams. However, there are risks that the psyche could be trapped by malevolent forces, leaving the body in a coma. The body can be attacked if not guarded, or possessed by malevolent forces. The spirit form might become lost and not able to get back. The body may die if a spirit is gone after a certain period. Or, some powerful attack that disrupts the soul may also kill the body.

### PORTALS (or Gates)

Perhaps the most common method of traveling to other dimensional matrixes is portals, sometimes called gates. Basically, portals are connections between one plane and another. A portal is a connection between two different dimensional matrixes, or in some cases another location on the same plane some distance away. Unlike the methods of travel mentioned above, this is not tied to an individual or object.

Bound portals are portals that are specifically constructed by some outside party, mortal, supernatural, deitai, etc. It is rare for a permanent bound portal to have been created naturally, although some stable portals might end up having frames built around them. Most portals are fixed in one area of space, but some can be created attached to portable objects like a hat, loop, bag, box top, etc, and can be carried around

Why do bound portals exist in “frames,” and usually appear as circular or square, and are usually two-dimensional objects with no thickness, and are framed by borders? It might have something to do with the role of dimensions. A door frame, for instance, intersects at right angles.

Unbound portals are essentially the opposite of bound portals: they can be found freestanding without the need of a frame. Some unbound portals may be suspended in mid air, or might actually drift and move. Large unbound portals that have an effect on the environment may be called *rifts*. A lot of unbound portals are temporary in nature—some are created by spells, others naturally occur. Many of these portals are invisible in makeup and can explain such reported legendary phenomena such as the Bermuda Triangle, fairy mounds and missing persons in general.

Most portals are small in nature, at least those found on the Prime Material Plane and on a planet. Large portals tend to not exist on planets as they can interfere with the general makeup of a planet, its gravity, biosphere or magical environment.

A *wormhole* is a violent tunneling between planes. The threads of the dimensional matrices of the two planes are forced to touch one another, usually across the void of a non-spatial realm like the Aethereal Plane, rather than inter-dimensional

## APPENDIX E: PLANAR TRAVEL, PORTALS (OR GATES)

You have gathered the collection of planes for your cosmology, but now how do you connect them, experience them and travel to them? After all, how can a plane exist to someone if there is no way to reach it or have its effects reach them? Once you build your cosmos, you need a way for your players' characters to traverse the multiverse!

### TRANSPORTATION

The most common form of travel to other planes is physical in nature. By physical we mean the transportation of one's physical self to another dimensional matrix. Metaphysically, the body transports itself from one dimensional matrix to another. This is usually explained in science-fiction as altering the vibration attunement of the travels to match the vibratory frequencies of the alternate dimensional matrix. This type of travel can be accomplished via magic or psychic abilities, or in a science-fiction/fantasy world via advanced technology.

In some cases, additional preparations are made. Straightforward travel across planes and spheres may be dangerous based on the environment. Some forms of transportation may also alter the characters physical makeup to adapt to the plane or sphere. For instance, one power might make a visitor to an elemental sphere of fire assume the form of a native of that plane. Another form of probability travel might transform the travelers into natives of that alternate reality—for instance a dwarf might be transformed into a human suffering from dwarfism in a probability that has no alternate races. In some cases, this physical transformation will be a given, as some metaphysical planes are only the realm of the spirits—in that case the body and spirit might become one in that realm,

space. Wormholes have perceptible lengths and appear to be a tunnel one walks or flows through. The other thing about wormholes is that they will usually have a natural flow of non-material matter, similar to a stream or river. This is most likely with elemental wormholes, which tend to bring in elements from that plane. The edges of these portals are usually called vortexes. Sometimes these can be dangerous and end up dragging people into their flow, akin to a whirlpool. In the “real” universe, black holes in outer space may actually be vortexes to other realms such as parallel universes—assuming one could survive the gravitational forces.

#### TRAITS OF PORTALS:

Portals can have any of the following traits. The only common thing about portals is that they are usually two-dimensional in nature, having no thickness, and that they link from one place to another.

- **Opacity:**
  - Invisible—nothing appears out of the ordinary—the portal appears to be empty space.
  - Transparent—there is a slight shimmering, something that is detectable on close inspection, similar to the air distortion in a desert or asphalt mirage.
  - Translucent—as above, but more pronounced, with a visible effect.
  - Opaque—looks like a solid object—either a natural substance, or some solid colors or patterns shifting that block what is beyond it.
- **Viewing State if Transparent or Translucent:**
  - Local View—the portal appears to show what is physically on the other side of it in the same plane.
  - Remote View—remote viewing means you can see through to the other side of the portal.
- **Flow:**
  - One-sided—in the case of a vertical freestanding portal, the two-dimensional portal only work from one side—if people go to the other side, it is treated as if it does not exist.
  - Two-sided—in the case of a vertical freestanding portal, both sides lead to the indicated location.
  - One-way—the portal only goes from one plane to another, not in the reverse direction—effectively a one-sided gate.
  - Two-way—the portal is bi-directional, goes both to and from the plane or sphere.
  - Multiple-locations—while rare, this is a portal that can go to multiple locations—for instance, with a two sided portal one side goes one way, another side goes another way, or the destination from one or both sides is to a plane or sphere from a set of possible destinations depending on time of entry.
- **Travel Experience**
  - Random—portals might be linked to many threads, shifting based on time, total random chance, or might malfunction due to instability.
  - Instant—when touched, a portal instantly takes effect. This will draw the user through as soon as they even touch the edge of the portal.
  - Instant with Suction—when touched, a portal instantly takes effect. This will draw the user and all near that individual through as soon as they even touch the edge of the portal.
  - Frame—the portal acts as the empty space in a frame—thus, a person standing in the portal could actually be in two planes or locations simultaneously.
  - Folded Space—this appears as some tunnel or other effect—in this case the users may feel like they are falling or flying through a something, such as — although rarely they may actually have to walk through it. This effect may be akin to Madeleine L’Engle’s “Tesseract” as described in her stories.

#### CONDITIONS FOR PORTALS:

Portals can have certain limitations on them. The following are possible conditions for portals.

- Portal is limited by environmental condition. The following could apply for this.
  - Time—works only during certain times. This could be related to seasons, or astrological patterns, the sun, moon, or just be based on a set number of hours, days, weeks, months or years.
  - Environmental Conditions—perhaps it works only for under certain weather conditions, or when exposed to a certain type of energy or matter.
  - Keys—Objects or conditions, usually created via magic, that activate the portal. Such types include the following
    - Command words spoken (or even thought).
    - Physical object that must be worn or used.
    - Sacrifices of objects—valuable minerals, or even sacrifices of animal or sentient nature.
    - Specific Magical spell.
- Portal is limited in what it allows through:
  - Limited to non-living or living substances.
  - Limited to certain types of matter. For instance, many portals do not let gasses pass through them, unless they are wormholes.
  - Limited to a certain species or subspecies.
  - Limited to a certain racial stock, age or sex.
  - Limited to a certain ethical outlook, profession or

practitioner, such as a portal only one who can wield magic can use, or a portal that only one who venerates a certain pantheon.

- Specific keys based on a very specific condition, similar to what would be activated by contingency magic's.

That is what portals do; they are the doorways between the planes and/or spheres that allow a character to move by walking or otherwise from one plane to another. You have to also look at how portals are structured. Will they all require the same key? Must all portals be contained in a bound space, such as a doorway? Does a portal lead to more than one location if a character has right keys for each plane?

The types of portals you allow to exist on a plane or sphere may be based on a plane's or sphere's polarity and its core values, or it may be based on a preference you and your players share for a form of convention to exist in the game. Conventions basically establish standards that are uniform throughout the game's cosmology. This is akin to the way it is easy to recognize items in a video game that have a similar function. Portals all have the similar function of bridging planes or spheres with doorways, but that does not mean they all lead to the same place.

When designing a portal, you must determine how it should be activated. Is there a special key that fits into a lock, or are the keys to portals gestures, feathers or tokens? Generally, a key will reflect the nature of the plane, but this is not a hard-and-fast rule. The object could be as random as a piece of lint that takes a character to a plane made of clockwork gears to something as intangible as a cat's breath in a vial to reach a Celestial Realm. The purpose of keys is to prevent a portal from being accessed by anyone as well as a way for a portal to stay dormant when it is not in use. This is especially important if the portal happens to be the way to a character's house or a closet. The character will still want to use his home (or closet) without interference from a portal. Additionally, is the key used up when the character steps through the portal, or does it change every time the portal is accessed? Also, how long does the portal stay active after a key has been used?

What is on the other side of the portal? While it is probably the plane the characters are trying to reach, if the key is the wrong one, will it send them to some other location in their game world? Does the portal change locations on the destination plane? Does it do the same on the plane where it is being accessed? Perhaps the most important question of all: can the characters use the same portal to return home, is it a one-way trip, or is the portal temporary?

These are all questions you will have to ask yourself for each portal. To help limit the number of questions you would have to deal with whenever you need a portal, you can include some of these questions in the description of your plane. If you look at the planes in Appendix A, you will see that some of these questions have been included in the descriptions of how the planes function. The bound spaces of the Clockworks are an example of at least one question being answered for every portal found on that plane.

You might wish to refer to portals that transfer one from place to place within the same dimensional matrix as gates, or you may simply note that such places are limited portals.

## APPENDIX F: BUILDING THE COSMOS

Putting together a cosmology is pretty straightforward: you create the number of planes you want, and put them under the umbrella title of your game world's cosmology. At the end of the book are blank forms meant to serve as aids in covering the major details of a cosmology, a plane, as well as spheres and pocket universes. However, this section is meant to help you think about what elements you should have in mind when setting out to build your cosmology.

It is important to realize that while the collection of planes make up the reality of that cosmology, you have to lay the groundwork with such choices as the number of metaphysical axes your cosmology will contain as well as what the polar opposites of each axis are. This is the minimum amount of detail that you can get away with before moving on to the planes themselves. Chances are that in the early stages of developing your cosmology, anything beyond this would have to be changed when you can take an overall look of the planes you are including. The rest of the details that can be filled in on the cosmology outline worksheet should then be filled in. This sheet also has places for detailing any quirks you want the cosmology to have that deviate from a neutral one. Finally, there are lines for listing the major and minor pantheons (or individual deities) that are venerated by the majority of the cosmology. This sets the scope of the ethoi of the various dimensional matrices of your cosmos.

The decisions over the details of a plane are the same. Unless you are building a physical plane, the plane needs to have at least one polarization (even if it is a neutral one). Also consider that unless you specify otherwise, a plane is considered to be infinite in size. You can use an absolute value, or you can use a word to describe a range for the plane's size (giving it some wiggling room, if you will). Appendix D includes a series of keywords to help determine the core values of a metaphysical plane. The three core value traits for the metaphysical planes are detailed below.

**Themes:** Themes are the overall values expressed by the plane. What this means is that the plane and its inhabitants possess this value, to a greater or lesser degree, as part of their appearance and/or temperament. The polarity (or polarities) a plane has does skew these values, but it does not override them to the point that the polarity outweighs the themes. This is important as the higher the degree of separation a plane has from the cosmology's origin, the stronger the metaphysical value is supposed to influence the core values of the plane so that they are in keeping with the plane's polar nature.

A plane can have as many themes as you wish. The themes do not impart specific bonuses or penalties unless you assign a statistical value to them. The polarization imparts bonuses and penalties to a plane, so any additional effects will adjust this value. It is recommended that themes not be used in this manner without some form of justification for why the adjustments made by the plane's affiliation with a metaphysical concept are not enough. If the adjustment only affects a specific item within the context of a plane's themes, then the adjustment should be applied. This warning concerns global adjustments which would increase the bonus/penalty value the degree of separation is meant to represent.

**Concept:** Concepts are the values of a plane to which the inhabitants are most attuned. Concepts are always related to

the themes. In fact, think of this value as being a concept of the plane's overall themes. Concepts help you to determine how the inhabitants of a plane should be reflections and active participants of the plane's themes. You may want to limit the number of concepts associated with each theme to one or two. The more concepts you have, the more difficult and unwieldy it becomes to express the theme or themes of the plane.

Think of concepts as not only their own individual values, but also as a refinement of the themes they are associated with. Concepts are not meant to be subsequent values. A concept that takes the neutral (or pure) quality of the plane's metaphysical polarity as the active reflection of the tenets the inhabitants embody. Concepts represent the emotional values of a plane's themes.

**Ideals:** Ideals serve as a further narrowing of the theme a plane expresses to a more specific subject. However, where concepts apply to the living creatures (excluding unintelligent plants), ideals apply specifically to the plane's landscape. Ideals should thus be treated like concepts in that you should limit one or two per theme. If you use more than two, chances are you will run into problems with the plane seeming too generic and lacking the exotic qualities the core values are supposed to help create. This is why it is suggested that you use a couple of ideals at most per theme; they will help create the unique look of a plane without overwhelming it.

How do ideals truly differ from concepts? For one, they are meant to apply to the physical, such as land, and to represent the physical reflection of a plane's themes as opposed to the active and more dynamic concepts that creatures possess such as mind and spirit. This does not mean to say that a plane's landscape is locked into a static form because of the ideals you have chosen, but rather that the land will stay close to the subject of the theme it reflects. For example, if a plane has love as the theme and comfort as the ideal, then the plane will have a softer nature to it; perhaps not only looking pastoral, but also being soft to the touch, its climate moderate, winds gentle breezes, etc.

You may also want to determine which deities or pantheons call the plane home (along with their servants), the chief races, and encounter tables for the plane. These elements help round out the general information on a plane so that it may be detailed at leisure. Armed with this information, you will be able to map out any portion of a plane as necessary when an adventure on a plane takes a detour.

When designing your cosmology, it may be useful to start with the center and work outwards. The elemental and energy planes along with the Prime Material plane will help with the physical layout of the rest of the cosmology. Remember that the metaphysical polarities and the core values of the plane will be a factor in how the plane looks. In order to establish these planes, however, it is easier to have the core of your cosmology in place so you do not have to go back and readjust the metaphysical planes later.

## APPENDIX G: A BRIEF NOTE REGARDING THE ASTRAL PLANE

In this work, the Astral Plane is generally subsumed in the Aethereal one, although it is likely an extra-dimensional one, a plane that is outside all others, but still a part of the cosmos. (See Chapter 4) However, you might well wish to have the Astral as a separate plane within your cosmos. In such a case, assume it is as pervasive as is the Aethereal, reaching into all parts of the Prime Material Plane as well as bordering on all the other planes within your cosmos.

As an aside, the extra-dimensional plane is one that does not contain the same dimensions as the remainder of the cosmos, it is a place outside of all others yet within the whole, and touches one, some or all parts of it without being a part of any place it touches.

In many other aspects it is also akin to the Aethereal, save that when sojourning in the Astral Plane the wayfarer is seemingly surrounded by the void of space and stars are visible everywhere when traveling. Thus there is nothing to be found within this plane, although encounters with other astrally traveling persons or creatures, even potent deitital ones, can occur.

The traveler on the Astral Plane is connected to his home plane by a thin line, a silver cord. This connection enables instant return to the plane or origination, but the silvery thread can be broken by attack or due to the Astral Storm (see Chapter 3, Elemental Plane of Air, Hazards, Storm). While a traveler is able to manage the Astral Winds, in a storm where such wind speed exceeds 299 mph, the silver cord will be broken, and the traveler will be lost, and must find his own way back to his home plane. Such an event can be as serious and life-threatening as the game master desires. It may entail nothing more than a long and difficult trek seeking the way to the astral traveler's own plane, or it might be a hopeless situation.

## COSMOLOGY OUTLINE

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date/Version #: \_\_\_\_\_

GM: \_\_\_\_\_

No. of Metaphysical Axes: \_\_\_\_\_

Maximum Degree of Separation: \_\_\_\_\_

Metaphysical Poles:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

11. \_\_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_\_

### Cosmological Quirks

Themes: \_\_\_\_\_

Concepts: \_\_\_\_\_

Ideals: \_\_\_\_\_

Physical/Elemental Traits: \_\_\_\_\_

Planar Groupings: \_\_\_\_\_

### Pantheons:

Major

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

11. \_\_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_\_

Minor

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

11. \_\_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_\_

**COSMOLOGY OUTLINE**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

GM: \_\_\_\_\_

No. of Metaphysical Axes: \_\_\_\_\_

Maximum Degree of Separation: \_\_\_\_\_

Metaphysical Poles:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

11. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_\_

**Cosmological Quirks**

Themes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Concepts: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Ideals: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Physical/Elemental Traits: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Planar Groupings: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Pantheons:****Major**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

11. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_\_

**Minor**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

11. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_\_

## PLANE OUTLINE

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date/Version #: \_\_\_\_\_

GM: \_\_\_\_\_

Cosmology: \_\_\_\_\_

Size: \_\_\_\_\_

Shape: \_\_\_\_\_

### Polarizations

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

### Planar Traits

Themes: \_\_\_\_\_

Concepts: \_\_\_\_\_

Ideals: \_\_\_\_\_

Physical/Elemental Appearance: \_\_\_\_\_

### Deities:

#### Major

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Minor

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

### Chief Extraplanar Races

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

### Encounter Tables

1. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

**PLANE OUTLINE**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 GM: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Size: \_\_\_\_\_

Date/Version #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cosmology: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Shape: \_\_\_\_\_

**Polarizations**

1. _____	5. _____
2. _____	6. _____
3. _____	7. _____
4. _____	8. _____

**Planar Traits**

Themes: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Concepts: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Ideals: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Physical/Elemental Appearance: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Deities:****Major**

1. _____	4. _____
2. _____	5. _____
3. _____	6. _____

**Minor**

1. _____	4. _____
2. _____	5. _____
3. _____	6. _____

**Chief Extraplanar Races**

1. _____	3. _____
2. _____	4. _____

**Encounter Tables**

1. _____	5. _____
2. _____	6. _____
3. _____	7. _____
4. _____	8. _____

# SPHERE/POCKET UNIVERSE OUTLINE

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
GM: \_\_\_\_\_  
Size: \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Plane: \_\_\_\_\_  
Persistence: \_\_\_\_\_

Date/Version #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Cosmology: \_\_\_\_\_  
Shape: \_\_\_\_\_  
Location: \_\_\_\_\_

## Polarizations

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
4. \_\_\_\_\_

## Planar Traits

Themes: \_\_\_\_\_

Concepts: \_\_\_\_\_

Ideals: \_\_\_\_\_

Physical/Elemental Appearance: \_\_\_\_\_

## Deities:

### Major

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
4. \_\_\_\_\_

### Minor

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
4. \_\_\_\_\_

## Chief Extraplanar Races

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

## Encounter Tables

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
4. \_\_\_\_\_

# SPHERE/POCKET UNIVERSE OUTLINE

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
GM: \_\_\_\_\_  
Size: \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Plane: \_\_\_\_\_  
Persistence: \_\_\_\_\_

Date/Version #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Cosmology: \_\_\_\_\_  
Shape: \_\_\_\_\_  
Location: \_\_\_\_\_

## Polarizations

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
4. \_\_\_\_\_

## Planar Traits

Themes: \_\_\_\_\_

Concepts: \_\_\_\_\_

Ideals: \_\_\_\_\_

Physical/Elemental Appearance: \_\_\_\_\_

## Deities:

### Major

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
4. \_\_\_\_\_

### Minor

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
4. \_\_\_\_\_

## Chief Extraplanar Races

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

## Encounter Tables

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
4. \_\_\_\_\_

*There are always those who are brave and strong, who possess powers of the arcane and who long for more. Those adventures, those Seekers, strive always to plunder the depths of the world.*



## Gary Gygax's Castle Zagyg

Beneath the shadows of that ancient, dreaded  
Castle stands a town of stout walls and  
cobbled ways, where the bold gather . . .

*Castle Zagyg Vol. I: Yggsburgh*

In hushed tones they recount tales of a terror  
that dwells in the tumbled ruins  
of the upper works, that was the wizard's tower.  
*Castle Zagyg Vol. II Castle Ruins*

*For over three decades we have waited for the ultimate dungeons. We have longed to hurl ourselves into those deeps and unearth what lies hidden . . .*

Beneath the tumbled ruins of the tower lie a nest  
of narrow passages, deep pits and darkened crawls,  
where the wizard crafted eldritch sorcery.

*Castle Zagyg Vol. III: The Dungeons*



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