

Planes

The Concepts of Spatial, Temporal and Physical Relationships in D&D

by Gary Gygax

For game purposes the DM is to assume the existence of an infinite number of co-existing planes. The normal plane for human-type life forms is the *Prime Material Plane*. A number of planes actually touch this one and are reached with relative ease. These planes are the *Negative* and *Positive Material Planes*, the *Elemental Planes* (air, earth, fire, water), the *Ethereal Plane* (which co-exists in exactly the same space as the Prime Material Plane), and the *Astral Plane* (which warps the dimension we know as length [distance]). Typical higher planes are the Seven Heavens, the Twin Paradises, and Elysium. The plane of ultimate Law is Nirvana, while the plane of ultimate Chaos (entropy) is Limbo. Typical lower planes are the Nine Hells, Hades' three glooms, and the 666 layers of the Abyss.

Assume further that creatures which can be harmed only by weapons of a special metal (silver, cold iron, etc.) gain this relative invulnerability from having a portion of their existence in either the positive or negative material plane at the same time they exist partially in the prime. Therefore, those creatures which can be struck only with +1 or greater magical weapons exist wholly and simultaneously in two planes (one of which is, of course, the Prime Material). So creatures which require attack of a +2 or better magic weapon then exist in three planes simultaneously, and so on. This brings us to the consideration of the existence of magical weapons in other planes and in multiple planes simultaneously.

If it is accepted that the reason that certain creatures can only be hit by magical weaponry is because the creature exists in two or more planes simultaneously, then it follows that the weapon must likewise extend into the planes in which the creature exists. At the very least it must be that the weapon extends into no less than two of the planes in which the creature exists, and these planes are those in which the creature has vulnerable aspects. This makes for a very complex relationship of planes to planes/swords and other magical weapons to planes. A special sword functioning with bonuses against certain creatures, or a special purpose sword, will have existence on only certain planes with regard to its special bonus, or due to its special purpose, but as most

weapons of this type also have a general +1 or better value, they also extend into all planes — or do they?

Perhaps the most reasonable way of handling this matter is to graph the planes which are existent in the campaign in question. Basic bonus weapons extend generally into planes which are once, twice, etc. removed from the Prime Material Plane of play. Those with special bonuses then have a more intense nature in the plane in which the creature they function specially against has its extra existence. And this also explains weaponry which does extra damage to creatures which can be hit by non-magical weapons. Let us assume that these weapons have their special existence on the plane in which the particular creature has its personal existence. Perhaps such planes are more accurately termed subplanes. Each type of creature has its own sub-plane, human, giantish, demoniac, or whatever. Furthermore, similarities of type indicate the same or closely allied planes.

As a side benefit of the use of this system, operation on the astral or ethereal by characters no longer poses such a headache to DMs. As magic weapons exist in those planes which touch upon the Prime Material Plane, any person armed with a magic weapon will be able to attack into the Astral or Ethereal Plane if they become aware that their opponent is operating in one of these planes.

Finally, what of magic swords of special nature or special purpose which are far removed from the Prime Material Plane? I suggest that these weapons can be removed no further than the number of planes from the Prime Material which equals their best bonus stated as a "to hit", i.e. a +2 can be removed by two planes and still retain its magical properties. Certain swords will have special treatment — the sword of sharpness and the vorpal blade most notably. On the other hand, a sword of life draining ability gains no such consideration, for it operates primarily on the Negative Material Plane. In any event, swords removed beyond the plane limit given will lose all of their magic, becoming nothing more than normal weapons. This same "law" can apply equally to those weapons, swords or otherwise, which have a simple "to hit" bonus.

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ABSTRACT ART IN THE DRAGON !!? Not really, this is a 2-dimensional diagram of a 4-dimensional concept. The concept is basically a concept of planes or dimensions and how to travel between them. There are two basic "areas" of planes in the diagram. The inner ovoid and the outer rectangle. There are also two ways to travel to these planes. The *ETHEREAL* will get you to any of the inner planes and the *ASTRAL* will get you to the outer planer.

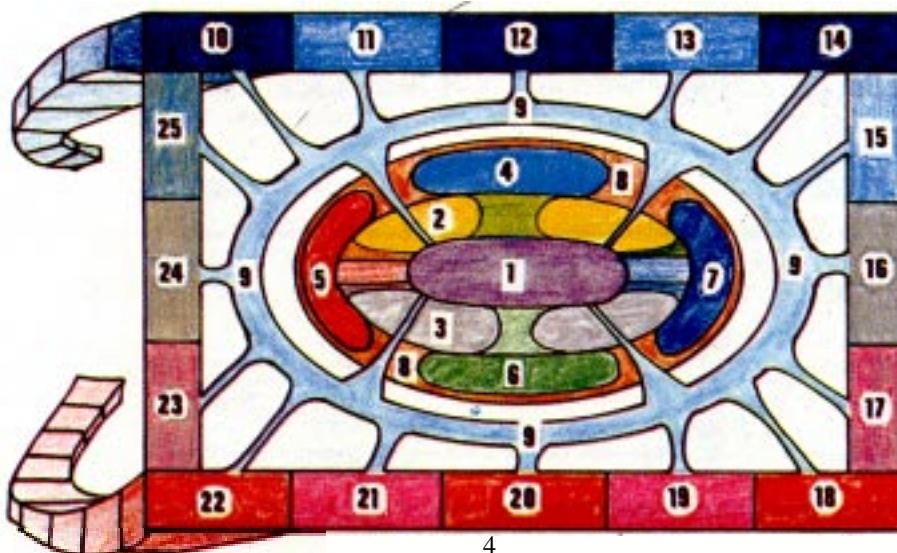
The INNER PLANES There are seven inner planes. The first (no. 1) is the Prime Material. The planet Earth and everything on it, all of the solar systems and the whole universe are of the Prime Material. The Fantasy worlds you create belong to the Prime Material. Numbers 2 and 3 are Positive and Negative Material Planes. Numbers 4-7 are the ultra-pure Elemental Planes of air, fire, earth and water.

The OUTER PLANES There are sixteen outer planes. The Outer Planes are a collection of the religious and/or philosophical goals (or anti-goals) of mankind and "the other intellectual species".

The ETHEREAL PLANE is the transportation "system" of the Inner Material Planes. Travel into the Ethereal is always of a magical nature by using spells or special artifacts. The *Oil of Ethereal*, a *Wish* and the new *Vanish* spell can be used.

The ASTRAL PLANE is the means of transportation from the Prime Material to the Outer Planes. There are two restrictions for the Astral "Plane". 1) The traveler must be in the Prime Material in order to travel into the Astral. The Astral can not be reached from the Elemental, Positive or Negative Planes.

2) The Astral will take a traveler to the first level of the Outer Planes. There are



THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOWNS IN D&D

by Tony Watson

Introduction:

Most D&D campaigns center around a dungeon and most of the players' time is spent in exploring the labyrinth and battling the nasties to be found therein. Rightly so; the depths are the place where the most fearsome monsters, trickiest traps and, of course, largest treasures are to be found.

As well, there is adequate coverage of wilderness adventures, with descriptions and rules especially pertaining to above ground quests and encounters.

Yet, though the rules suggest basing players in a town or village, few DMs. (*Dungeon Masters*) do much to "flesh out" the town and make it a place of interest in itself and not simply a logistics point for characters.

If imagination is used (and there surely should be no dearth of that in any DM), towns can be made enjoyable and worthy of exploration and adventures themselves.

Laying out a town can be time consuming, especially if you are already struggling to find the time to put together your underworld. Yet the effort is certainly worth it. Hopefully the following suggestions can serve as useful guidelines.

Part I. The Town Layout:

Ideally, the town laid out in a manner similar to your dungeon, and if possible, using the same scale. The multi-use of a graphic and scale system will make transference from the town to the underworld much simpler for the referee. I use a 3'x2' sheet divided into 1" squares, further divided into ten sections and call each tenth of an inch 5'. This makes for a highly realistic scale and a large town. However a regular size piece of graph paper will do just as well; again, transfer from your dungeon system.

A small village will do at first; you can save your ideas for a city of wicked splendor for later efforts. In any case, the size of the sheet you are using, and the scale chosen, will dictate the size of your town.

Now on to specifics.

If the town is going to be a fairly large one, you should consider whether it will be walled or not. This would be most likely if it were on the border of your mythical country and a sometimes-hostile neighbor, or if it were astride an important trade route or waterway. Also a town of almost any size would have a keep nearby or inside the town itself to house the ruling lord and his retainers, who would serve as the local law and order.

The designer must also decide the local terrain. A river or stream should be nearby for a water source as well as fields for sustenance farming. Is the town on the coast of a lake or sea? Is it an outpost in a heavily wooded or mountainous area? All these factors will determine the local economy and the type of wilderness adventures that players can have in the town's vicinity.

Once these primary decisions are made the actual planning may commence. Since most campaigns are set in pseudo-medieval times, a glance through some books of city plans of that era (and most libraries have at least a few) will be helpful.

The buildings themselves need not be large, or their rooms spacious. Avoid the supermarket syndrome. Most medieval dwellings and shops were small and consisted of only a few rooms. A large block could be laid out and contain a number of residences and shops, since this was often the case.

Second and third floors can prove to be a problem. I suggest these two methods: drawing in rooms and such of higher levels on separate sheets, one per level or, alternately, putting them in on the main map, but in a different color. I suppose you could dispose of upper floors entirely, theorizing that the action would take place on the lower floors anyway. Generally there shouldn't be more than three floors save in the case of a special tower or temple.

As you lay out the various buildings, it is probably easier (and more esthetically pleasing) to group like establishments in the same area. Here are some of the shops that could be included in a business district:

- armorers** — sells, repairs, and fashions armor and weapons
- cobblers** — shoes, boots
- cartographers** — wilderness and dungeon maps available 100-600 gp depending on remoteness of the area
- candlestick maker** — torches, brands, incense, candles
- weaver** — tunics, breeches, shirts, cloaks, blankets
- barbers** — haircut and shave one gp

seven levels in Heaven and nine in Hell. The Astral can only bring you to the first level of these Planes. A physical form of travel must be used to proceed to the other levels. Travel to the Astral "Plane" can be done with a wish or the Astral Spell.

Travel from Outer Plane to Outer Plane The Astral Plane can be used to travel from plane to plane, i.e. from Heaven to Elysium. A traveler could also move into an adjacent Plane, i.e. Heaven to the Happy Hunting Grounds, just by walking. Travel, by walking, could or should be limited to only one Plane to either side of the Plane that the traveler started in. For example, a traveler Astral Planed into Nirvana, so by walking he could travel to Arcadia or to Acheron.

- 1) Purple, The PRIME MATERIAL
- 2) Yellow, The POSITIVE MATERIAL PLANE
- 3) Grey, The NEGATIVE MATERIAL PLANE
- 4) Lt. Blue The AIR ELEMENTAL PLANE
- 5) Red The FIRE ELEMENTAL PLANE
- 6) Green The EARTH ELEMENTAL PLANE
- 7) Blue The WATER ELEMENTAL PLANE
- 8) Orange, The ETHEREAL PLANE
- 9) Lt. Blue, The ASTRAL PLANE
- 10) Blue, The SEVEN HEAVENS
- 11) Lt. Blue, The HAPPY HUNTING GROUNDS
- 12) Blue, The TWIN PARADISES
- 13) Lt. Blue, OLYMPUS
- 14) Blue, ELYSIUM
- 15) Blue/Grey, GLADSHEIM
- 16) Grey, LIMBO
- 17) Red/Grey, PANDEMONIUM
- 18) Red, The 666 LAYERS OF THE ABYSS
- 19) Lt. Red, TARTERUS
- 20) Red, HADES
- 21) Lt. Red, GEHENNA
- 22) Red, The NINE HELLS
- 23) Red/Grey, ACHERON
- 24) Grey, NIRVANA
- 25) Blue/Grey, ARCADIA



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