

*Caprisi's Introduction to the Planescape:
History and Cosmology for the Interested Reader
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Page 11, on *The Mythos of the Divine*, a poem that is part Creation Myth-part history.

Before a Beginning, any Beginning of the Many Beginnings. Before the Formless Chaos or The Far Realm even existed. Before the communal memory of the Spawn of the Aboleth. Before even the earliest Ilithid had travelled between the Stars and across Time. Before a Beginning, there was Eru, Illuvatar, The One, God. And God Sang, and from its Song came the Astra.

Moments after the Astral Plane burst into existence, before the raging Astra had time to settle into the Astral Sea as it is known today, it is believed that stray Thoughts and Dreams escaped the Plane into the Space Between (which we call the Border Ethereal) and coalesced in Those First Entities, the Great Old Ones. Even before the Cosmology had adopted its current form of the Planescape, these Beings drifted through Space and Time Immaterial. As they drifted, great Trails were left behind, pluming in their Wake. These Echoes of Sentience rippled across the Astral Sea to form the first Unstable Consciousnesses – beings of intent and direction, aware of themselves and each other, watchful and attentive. The Primordials.

The Early Primordials were more akin to these Great Old Ones than to the Gods, which came later. They were Aloof and Alien in nature, and precious little is known of them. They predate the early Deities which came before the Gods and were quickly destroyed. Those which were not destroyed drifted further through the Border Ethereal and are Forever Lost. Those which remained were Violent and Turbulent, beings of change and chaos. It is theorised by some that they suffused into the Far Realm, from which the horrors of the Aboleth and the Ilithid have come. Others splintered into ever smaller pieces which became the first Deities.

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The first Primordial mentioned in the Creation Texts was referred to as the Clasp, and is understood to be the Progenitor God of Time. The Clasp no longer exists in any meaningful way, though it is also believed that subsequent Gods of Life, Fate and Death can trace their Domains back to the Clasp. Others suggest that the Clasp is synonymous with Illuvatar and was not a Primordial at all. Such Speculation is empty and without merit.

Gods of Trickery, and the Domain of the Tempest, descended from the Primordial known as The Swirling Eye, whereas Gods of Knowledge and Nature, and also Life, descended from any of The Mother Prince, Prism, or Keane. Each of these beings passed through Multiple Incarnations, Splitting into smaller beings and shedding the Gods into existence. What exactly demarcates between the Great Old Ones, the Primordials, the Deep Gods, the Primordial Titans, and the Pantheons which followed is unclear, and will likely remain so. The boundaries of such being is ill-defined and ever changing.

Few Primordials are known to still exist today, and fewer still for certain. Such beings are what remains of the Great Old Ones, ever distant and brooding, alien minds which have been recorded as driving mortals mad. A Delicate Study of these Beings reveals tantalizingly little, as they have been described as Great Old Ones, Primordials, Titans and Gods through the Ages, and are shrouded in Mystery, Confusion and Eternity. One such example is Cthulhu, a Cosmic Entity reported to adopt a Hideous Form comprised of an Octopus, Dragon and Humanoid. Cultists of Cthulhu have historically been bent on the Consumption and Destruction of All Life. That such a Being exists beyond the Wilderness of Space is Truly Terrifying.

Another would be Dendar the Night Serpent, considered a Primordial, though rumoured destroyed by the Great Old One known as the Void Dragon. Such Rumours tend to originate from Elvish writings, many of which are now ruined or lost, and are themselves Worthy of Discussion and Study. What caused this rift in Deep Space between the Night Serpent and the Void Dragon is unknown, though the writings of Eldrad Ulthran, famed wielder of the Staff of Ulthamar, suggest that the Night Serpent attempted to supplant the Void Dragon from its slumber amid the Astral Sea. To illustrate the ever-changing Guise of these Cosmic Beings, the Void Dragon has also been called the Star Mother, Father of the Night's Sky and Witness to the Void. Certainly, anyone who travelled to the Astral Plane in search of Powers such as These would have to be wary of Angels, Devils, Slaad and Githyanki. Inter-Planar Roads such as these are perilous, and oft end in Madness, Death, Torment or Worse.

Page 118, from *An Introduction to the Inner Planes*.

The Inner Planes comprise those Planes which are not Separated by the Divine Gate, whose Great Golden Beams and Beads carve a path of Impossibility across the Planescape that even the Divinities must obey. These consist of the Prime Material Plane at the centre, with the Feywild above it and the Shadowfell below it. These are imitations of the Prime Materium, Replicas and Mirror Images which are Similar but Different. Where the Prime Material Plane is the Dominion of Mortality, made homely by its Oceans and Mountains and Forests and Caverns, the Feywild and Shadowfell are certainly not meant for the Mortal races.

The Feywild, also called the Plane of Faerie, is a land of Soft Lights and Wonder, where a traveller might just as likely find Death as they would stumble across Music. It is a Realm whose Compass recognises no Four Corners, where the Everlasting Twilight and Gentle Breeze are Axes on which to orient oneself. It is home to the Fey, to the Shadow Elves, to the Satyr and Treeant, ruled by the Lords and Ladies of the Summer and Gloaming Courts. Such Fey are capricious and mischievous and dangerous, born of swirling Chaos and Desire. They are forces of Creation, best regarded as Amoral, reigned in only by their irreverent and arbitrary traditions, codified and enforced by their Nobility.

Most Fey owe allegiance to one or the other of the Queens: Queen Titania of the Summer Court of the Seelie Fey, or the Queen of Air and Darkness of the Gloaming Court of Unseelie Fey. These Archfey are Powers Onto Themselves, forming Godlike Confederations.

The Shadowfell is a Plane Unique. Originally the Plane known as Skein, home to Mystra, Goddess of Magic and The Weave, the Shadowfell was a consequence of one of the many schemes of Lolth, the Dark Elf Goddess of Chaos, Lust and the Demonweb. Forging a temporary alliance with Orcus, Demon Prince and God of Undeath, Lolth learned the secrets of Undeath. She also extracted knowledge of the Negative Energy Plane where all Undead draw their fell strength during a tryst with the then God of Death, Nerull. Upon completing a Ritual devised by Orcus, Lolth merged the Negative Energy Plane with the Skein and waged war on Mystra, forming a new Plane which she called the Dark Compliance. Lolth overthrew Mystra and expanded her portfolio to become Goddess of Chaos, Lust and Dark Magic. Many of the Prime Gods, as well as the Elvish Pantheon known as the Seldarine, joined forces to push Lolth back to the Demonweb and performed a collective Ritual which drew Mystra back from the Astral Sea, returning the Goddess to her former power. The Dark Compliance could not be returned to the Skein, and Mystra has resided on the Plane known as the House of Nature with the Gods Mielikki and Silvanus ever since.

As a consequence, Nerull fell from favour with the other Gods, and was overrun by the sudden Overflow of Undead that threatened his mastery of Death. Certainly, this was the design of Orcus. He took the Soul of a powerful mortal Sorceress as his consort after she died. As the story goes, she had wiles enough to Overthrow him in his Weakness, and the Prime Gods did not come to Nerull's Aid. She ascended as the Raven Queen, Goddess of Death and Fate, erasing all knowledge of her Name, Race and Deeds During Life from all Written and Spoken Record, claiming the Dark Compliance as her own. The Raven Queen spent the next few hundred years disentangling the Negative Energy from the Remains of the Skein, and so the Shadowfell was Born. Soon, Kelemvor, Judge of the Damned, joined her. They are the only Gods that reside within the Inner Planes, on this side of the Divine Gate.

Or so the story goes.

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As well as the Feywild and Shadowfell, which can be reached via Natural Portals and Rifts as previously discussed, the Inner Planes also comprise of the Elemental Planes: The Elemental Plane of Fire, The Elemental Plane of Water, The Elemental Plane of Air and The Elemental Plane of Earth. These

Surround and Enfold the Material Plane in a ring, suspended within the Elemental Chaos. Here the Elementals reside, as do Giants and Dragons and other Creatures from Ages Gone By.

All these Planes are joined by the Border Ethereal, the Space Between the Planes, and further connected by the Entirety of the Ethereal Plane. And beyond that, all things find their way back to the Astral Sea. Such is the way of things.

Page 156, *On The Home of Deities.*

The Outer Planes are best known as the Home of Deities. These Planes are manifestations of Divine Will, for a God is as much a Place as it is an Idea. Travel to the Outer Planes is a truly complex endeavour, hampered by the existence of the Divine Gate. The work of Lord Mordekai deals with this in more detail. Suffice it to say that Astral Projection, for all its many dangers, is the safest route to the Outer Planes, travelling via the Astral Sea and its many Pools of Colour. Most often though, travel occurs by Portal to Sigil, City of Doors.

The Outer Planes themselves are joined together by two Cosmic Structures: The River Styx and The Infinite Staircase.

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The Gods of Civilization reside on the Planes which comprise the Seven Mounting Heavens of Celestia. This include The Blessed Field of Elysium, The Brightwater, the Realm of Trueheart, The Everwatch Mechanus, Hestavar the Light-Drenched Oasis, Ysgard, and The House of Nature.

Also on page 157.

But only a Fool would neglect the Betrayer Gods; those Gods which refused to leave the Prime Material Planes, resulting in the War known as the Calamity or the Godswar, culminating in the construction of the Divine Gate. These Gods include the likes of Orcus, Demon Prince of Undeath, and Tiamat, the Scaled Tyrant, Tyranny of Dragons, Lolth, Spider Queen of Goddess of the Demonweb, and Talos, Goddess of Poison and Disease, and even Auril Frostmaiden, Winter's Kiss, who resides Far Beyond in Winter's Hall of Pandesmos on Pandemonium.

Page 248, from *The Nine Hells and Things Better Left Untouched.*

The Nine Hells, also referred to as Baator among the Learned, home of Fiends and Devils, is not a place well-meaning people should wish to read about. Nor is it a place I wish to write about. It is a place of Law and Evil, where Souls of the Lost and the Damned go after Death to be enslaved and consumed by the Devils which reside there. Each Layer is a Plane unto itself, ruled over by beings which openly Rival the Creator Gods. Indeed, many of the Betrayer Gods reside here.

But the Hells are Truly the purview of the Archdevils. These are the most powerful, high-ranking Devils to have existed, progressing through the eternal hierarchy of the Devils, being reborn again and again more powerful than the last. These include even Tiamat, Goddess of Chromatic Dragons and Archdevil of Avernus, the First Layer of Hell.

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It is Right to Fear Asmodeus, who was Archdevil before the Age of Arcanum, Supreme of the Nine Hells of Baator, God of Sin and Reckoning of Hell.