

"Know, O Player, that from the sundering of Law from Chaos to the Triumph of Science over Magic, lived the Worlds of the Perfect Dreamer. This Virtue ruled over the gods, valar, demons and devils, who in turn guided and blocked the ways of Dwarf, Elf, Orc and Gnoll. Hither came bold and lusty women and men of adventure, to ripen their Souls and their Treasure Bags in . . ."

THE WORLDS OF TANSTAAFL

Wargrypt • Terra Supra • Anarchipelago • Nu • Legos • Chaotia

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Introduction

For the collectors. "Volume 1" refers to the fanzines published under the titles *The Competitive Quest* and **Clear Ether!** in the Amateur Press Association (APA) published for *Alarums & Excursions*. Not all **Clear Ether!**s concerned themselves with Dungeons & Dragons (a term I use generically, as most fan do). With exceptions always possible, this volume, under a new name, will *not* be distributed in *A&E* because of the cost of such a high print run with a relatively low pay-off.

The Worlds of TANSTAAFL will not really be an APazine at all. Comments will not be exchanged. Interesting letters of comment (*locs*) will be published and replied to. Mostly, this zine will describe the "peculiarities" of my D&D system, both the mechanics and the playing field, the latter including such items as history, plot line and co-operative story writing. Some of the peculiar nature of my variant of D&D[®] is common to the fannish Long Beach fantasy/SF group, "SFALB," and this medium may be used to publish our work at "standardization" within our ranks.

Finally, **The Worlds of TANSTAAFL** is published for those who run characters in those worlds and those Dungeon Masters and Mistresses who wish to interface with them. Others may receive copies for exhibiting sufficient interest. Publishing schedule will depend on when something ought to be published. (This is technically known as "editor's whim.")

So mote it be.

Background Sketch

I discovered D&D when I moved to California in 1975. At the time, the first supplement, *Greyhawk*, had just been published; and so my system is based on D&D[®] (original) + *Greyhawk*. Other supplements were incorporated modularly; that is, add in the new classes, spells and psionics if you wish, or not. Innovation such as D8 (eight-sided dice) for fighter hit points were *not* incorporated.

Nobody could really understand the original D&D combat system so the *Warlock* rules (from *Spartan*) were adopted; again with modifications. They were comprehensive, realistic, and yet simple to execute.

The subject of alignment deserves a special mention. *Linear alignment* which mixed morality concepts with

entropy was first adopted and my first still-active world, **Terra Supra**, is based on it. Law = Good, Chaos = Evil, Neutral = Amoral.

When E. Gary Gyax and Company decided Law and Chaos could be either good or evil, I published the system of *Orthogonal Alignment* in *A&E* which made Morality and Entropy independent axes; Law, Chaos, and Neutrality could be each either Good, Amoral or Evil. Soon after Gyax went beyond trying to subdivide the quadrants further, but these made little sense to me. Further, his use of "Neutral" to mean Amoral as well as "between Law and Chaos" was quite confusing and not adopted.

Wargrypt was based on that system. For the record, I also published "Demons of Law" before Gyax decided Law/Evil should have Devils as Chaos/Evil had Demons. Sandy McIntosh is filling yet another gap with Neutral/Evil Fiends, and I hope to publish her development (with her illustrations) in the next issue.

At this time, three worlds are mostly active and are synopsized below. Others can be instantly set up and run if anyone dimension-hops over there. **Nu** is a neutral world, brand new (both puns of *nu*), virgin for the colonizing and corruption, like Narnia when Aslan started singing. **Legos** is a world of pure Law, filled with civilization and some conflict between Good and Evil but little room for individual initiative as both are over-ordered. **Chaotia** has the reverse problem; nothing is fixed in form or duration. A first approximation would be like living in Alice's Wonderland.

Terra Supra ("Over Land")

Terra Supra is a bridge forcibly built eons ago between **Legos** and **Chaotia**. The Elder Race of **Neutrans** ripped and warped two dimensions to create this world and supported it by the usual four elephants on a turtle and so on. It's flat, not a planetary globe, and you *can* fall off on the South West and North East. Only near the center, around the town of Pree on the site of the collapsed Neutran capital, does Neutrality hold sway. To the Northwest is ever-purer Law; to the southeast is ever-purer Chaos. As the lead armies of each approach Pree, Armageddon grows nigh. In fact, it has begun, although it will take several more campaigns to end this world properly. Now, I'd say it's good for high-level types, although one could still run low-levelers near Pree. Entrance is through the ITT, but a nearby Maze with an

Amber-like "Pattern" (to be walked, if your characters wish) contains the generator to power the dimensional strains. In the field fluctuation of this generator, no law of existence is safe.

Reminder: if you're bringing in characters, they will be faced by ignorance of "Chaos/Good" and "Law/Evil" by the inhabitants, not to mention "Neutral/Good and Neutral/Evil," "Chaos/Amoral" and "Law/Amoral."

Wargrypt (obvious pun)

Wargrypt is a "Mount Lookithat." As far as anyone has discovered so far, the world is a giant volcano with the base lost in toxic clouds far below the summit. A hole in the side at Third Level (for it is a giant Dungeon) creates a semi-tropical "Overland" section.

The crater contains the Interdimensional Teleportation Transportation (ITT) station and the truest Free Market that can be imagined: *Freestall*. Anything can be bought and the prices beat anywhere else known. Coercion is completely prevented by an extremely efficient protection system, but once you walk down the Law, Chaos, Neutral, or Central stairs, anything goes.

Law and Chaos armies war for control of this interstitial world. Neutrants are rumored in quantity on the 4th Level, and 6th Level is continuous with upper levels of Hell, the Abyss, and so on. Each level (it has been discovered) contains three "embryonic" swords which suck souls and are ready to "snap on" to the discover. Like the three shards of the Runestaff (Levels 3, 4, 5), they are involved with the basic nature of the **Wargrypt** laws of reality and their eventual Fate.

One hardy expedition has "liberated" much of the wilderness on third level and established a castle there. Their leader, Erika (Sandy McIntosh's character), is the founder of a major heretical religion. A sortie by another group into the "regular" dungeon of Third Level has successfully raided the leading L/E Wizard, intensifying the conflict.

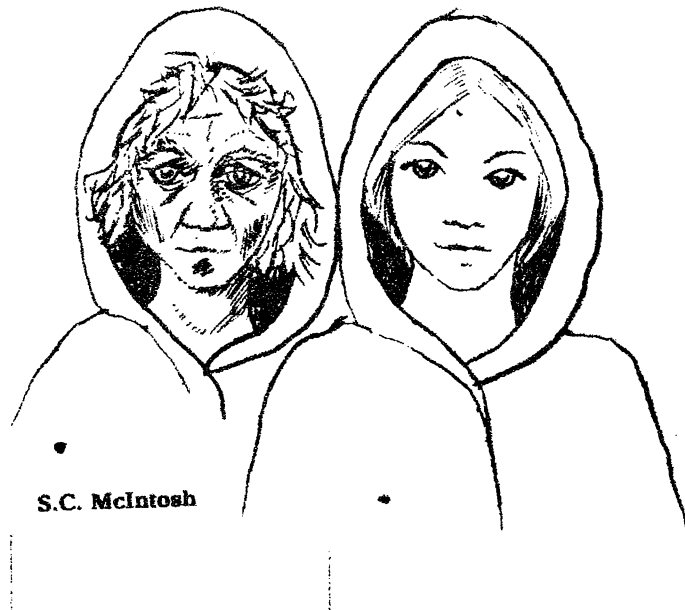
Much more will be revealed in future issues of **Wargrypt**, the most explored of the Six Worlds.

Anarchipelago

A world of ocean and icecaps, **Anarchipelago** is actually a round planet. There is a long string of islands across the equatorial region, and several other groups and lone isles, but no continent (except a sunken one). Besides lots of ship surface action, it also has a thoroughly populated ocean floor. On the surface, seafaring cultures such as British, Japanese, Viking, Polynesian, and others, like Elvish fleets, thrive.

The first expedition from offworld should arrive at the ITT transmitter just before you read this. It's located on a (mostly) Neutral/Good island known as Free Port. Yes, there are many types of pirates, orcish fleets, and could that sunken continent's elder race have Neutran characteristics? Even Cthulhu considers moving out of the neighbourhood.

Interdimensional Teleportation Transportation System and Such



S.C. McIntosh

There are several items which are common to all the **Worlds of TANSTAAFL**, just as there are special characteristics to each world. One is Tanstaafl, a Virtue (above angels, archangels and principalities), who maintains the Balance in many differing ways. Another is the common magic & miracles system. And then there's the mobility between the dimensional worlds.

If one knows how to use spells such as Plane Shift, or the ability to "Walk In Shadows" acquired by successfully navigating **Terra Supra's** Maze, one could cross between the Six Worlds at will, plus the planes (ethereal, astral, elemental, etc.) But for most, the ITT station is sufficient. And it is free. Undoubtedly it was created by traders who saw profit in moving goods and people between the dimensional worlds. No one is sure who maintains them, but the design seems suspiciously like the Science/Magic combinations of Neutrants.

Miracles

Religion is a subject of indefatigable debate. Suffice it to say as an introduction that (1) miracles are *not* interchangeable with magic and use quite different sources; (2) your characters *will* take it seriously even if you don't because they *see* them happen (same for magic).

In a nutshell (or as fire to a future powderkeg of discussion), magic arises from manipulation of nature by the mage, strange as that nature may be. It is *amoral*, though the Mages have morality. Miracles arise from divine and profane intervention; that is, the clerics "manipulate" beings who then provide the spells. They are free of alignment but highly moral (immoral), though the clerics may align (as may the gods and devils).

Supplementary Spells

This will be a regular feature in **Worlds of TANSTAAFL**, along with tales of adventures therein. See you next issue with both.

—Samuel Edward Konkin III

[To Be Continued Next Issue]