



an oneiric fantasy role-playing game
by Denis Gerfaud

Book three:
WORLDS

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The author dedicates the second edition to Nitouche Pérégrine, Mendegloire, Anthrax, Torgen, Kandèle, Darald, Apollonia, Perce-Rêve, Tekram, Salmanazar, Terry Ierudis, Lhyod, Adernagor, Mélenmandir, Erigan, Arkabane, Sylphiane, Dramounda, Corwin, Paccoli, Arpagel, Alamin, Philomène, Liliás Banderlor, Tiburce, Kalibor, Gaël, and all the others.

RÊVE: the DREAM OUROBOROS

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to Julie

chapter 1: the Dream

What does the world of Rêve: the Dream Ouroboros look like? Is it a mere vaporous daydream or does it have a physical reality? How do its inhabitants reconcile dream and reality? These questions are addressed in this chapter. Herein will be found the legend of the Three Ages, the upheavals of the Great Awakenings, with the birth of the custom which gives the characters their raison d'être: the Journey, an odyssey along roads as well as across dream worlds.

a multiDream

The universe of *Rêve: the Dream Ouroboros* is in the genre of heroic fantasy, also known as medieval fantasy. It is the imaginary universe of old legends, fairy tales, and sagas, of *The King of Elfland's Daughter* and *Mistress of Mistresses*. Here there are kingdoms which border on the Unknown; vast, impenetrable forests, wastes inhabited by monsters; fortified cities crawling with a motley assortment of starving adventurers, fat burghers, mendicants, buskers, thieves, and guards; smoke-filled taverns where dice clatter on beer-stained tables; ancient, decrepit towers inhabited by magicians. In this teeming, baroque world intrigues are knotted and unraveled: there are duels, chases, sword fights, quests, curses, treasures...

Historically speaking, heroic fantasy universes never existed, and their geographies only exist in the imaginations of their authors. Witness Tolkien's Middle Earth, Jack Vance's *Dying Earth*, Leiber's *Lankmar*, Ursula Le Guin's *Earthsea*... the list goes on and on.

Such is the ambiance of the universe of *Rêve*, the kind of places one expects to visit there, the kind of creatures one expects to meet there, the kind of adventures one expects to live there.

Heroic fantasy worlds usually are based on a legend, a cosmology which legitimizes their existence and lays their foundations. The foundation of the universe of *Rêve*, that on which everything rests, naturally is dream. The world is dreamed in the literal sense of the word. But the essential thing to grasp is the point of view; or, in cinematic terms, where is the camera? The point of view in *Rêve* is not that of the dreamer, but that of the dream itself, or more precisely, that of the creatures being dreamed. The dream is always and solely perceived from within itself. Any justifications which might be conjectured are only pertinent from this point of view. From the outside, what is

there really? Giant reptiles snoring in their caverns, digesting their last meal before setting off to hunt their next one? Lords of light curled up beneath sumptuous canopies? Players rattling ten-sided dice? Whichever version you choose, none are of any interest whatsoever to the characters in the dream. They have no concern for the 'where' of the dreamers. This dream is their natural world. They fall asleep in it and wake up in it daily, even dream in it themselves. In this dream they are born, grow up, live, journey, suffer, and die. And for all that it does not seem to them to be a dream: it is physical, it is tangible, it is life. It is their world and they know nothing else.

Sometimes their philosophers say, "The world is but a dream of Dragons..." And most people react like one typically does to a philosopher: laughing, mocking, saying, "How could the world be but a dream? Isn't the ground solid, the sun warm, isn't bread nourishing, wine comforting? And none of that is real? You can't be serious!" Just as in our real world, the characters of *Rêve* are far from all being mystics. Only a minority—intellectuals, philosophers, High Dreamers—having analyzed their own dream experiences and compared them to their world's reality, have come to this conclusion. And this conclusion is the only one which is consistent with magic. Journeymen generally are part of this minority, given their own exposure to rifts in the dreaming and other oneiric experiences; they have had their eyes opened.

there is not just one Dream

The universe of *Rêve: the Dream Ouroboros* is in fact a multiverse (to borrow a term from Moorcock), which could be rephrased as a *multiDream*. The Dragons are infinite. Rarely is a particular Dragon spoken of—and even then only in the context of legends—the Dragons (in the plural) are almost always only mentioned. And if the

Dragons dream the world—that is, the world from which the players' characters hail—they also dream an infinite number of others, like so many parallel worlds.

If you create your own scenarios, or if as a player, you enter the world of another author, the milieu will necessarily be different, the mood and atmosphere will not be the same, you will not be in quite the same 'dream'. Rather than being an undesirable inconsistency, in *Rêve* this is totally acceptable.

The term 'dream' therefore carries a double meaning. On the one hand it means what is normally meant by the word dream, on the other it also means 'world', 'imaginary time or place', or 'adventure' or 'scenario'. Thus by changing scenarios one changes dreams.

As a result, there is no absolute 'world' in *Rêve* in the usual sense: no definitive atlas, no general geographical reference. The actual 'world' of *Rêve* is virtually infinite: it is the collection of all dreams.

Nevertheless, each scenario takes place within a specific region, with its villages, cities, forests, and hills, all specifically named and all of which can be mapped on a more or less large scale according to the extents of the scenario. But what lies beyond the edges of such a map? As those regions beyond are outside the ken of the given scenario, one might as well say that they are part of a separate dream. But one might also just as well imagine that this realm continues, with more forests, other hills, etc. Most of the time, its inhabitants are unaware of what exactly lies 'beyond', on the other side of the forbidden forest, or the swamp from which no one has ever returned. The Dream Keeper must improvise an extension of the geography of a scenario if she wishes for it to continue beyond its original borders.

But more often than not Journeymen use other crossings to get from one dream to another. Understand that this might mean going from one realm to another, but also going from one scenario to another. For the journey is as much oneiric as it is physical. These crossings include:

Rifts in the dream, which function like teleportation portals from one parallel world to another;

Blur dream, through which a Journeyer travels like a road leading from one world to another, crossing the Limbo between them;

Grey dream, which functions as if the Journeyer had just awoken in a new realm, retaining but a

foggy and grey memory of the vague, supposed physical journeys which have brought him there.

These crossings are described in detail in the following chapter, *From One Dream to Another*. For the characters of *Rêve: the Dream Ouroboros*, the geographical continuity of their journeys are a mere minor concern.

a world without gods

There are no gods in *Rêve*. This is one major departure from a typical heroic fantasy milieu. Other than that, most every thing else is consistent with the genre.

True, the Dragons are the creators of the world and in that sense fulfill the role of gods. But there the similarities between *Rêve* Dragons and other fantasy gods ends. The characteristic common to heroic fantasy gods (and mythological ones, for that matter) is their ability (and tendency) to appear on the mortal plane, and that mortals can also visit the gods' plane. Hence arise dialogues, conflicts, pacts, sacrifices, prayers, interventions, religions, cults, ad nauseum ... Gods confer powers on mortals in exchange for ... what, exactly (the thing has never seemed to make much sense to me nor been very clear)?—let's say in exchange for their 'faith'. Furthermore, the gods seem to need mortal worshippers in some sense, and vice versa.

None of that with *Rêve's* Dragons. Dragons do not need mortals. If one wishes to speak of need, the only thing the Dragons could be said to need are their dreams. But these dreams include mosquitoes, humans, and the stones on a beach with the same lack of discrimination. Do mortals need the Dragons? One may as well ask if music needs a musician. The question is irrelevant, and even if it comes up, it is meaningless and changes nothing. Mortals and Dragons not only exist on different planes, but their planes of existence are not even parallel. The reality of the Dragons includes the mortal world if only as a vague and minor peculiarity. If the Dragons were gods, they would be inexorably divine ones, and nothing more.

Oneiros, Hypnos, Narcos, and Thanatos (dream, sleep, paralysis, and death) are not gods, but principles, cosmic laws—the only ones which need concern us within the Dreaming. Deifying or basing a cult on them (one could try) would both change nothing and be as meaningless as a cult of the Universal Gravitational Constant.

One traditional aspect of heroic fantasy role-playing is therefore not reproduced here: gods never ceasing to meddle in the affairs of mortals, and vice-versa.

But let's not draw any hasty conclusions! The absence of gods does not necessarily mean the absence of religions. The great metaphysical question which people have in all times asked themselves—why do we exist?—may equally be asked by the characters populating the worlds of *Rêve: the Dream Ouroboros*. The fact that the world is but a dream may be interpreted differently by different

individuals living in different circumstances. Such an interpretation might be philosophical, like most High Dreamers', or superstitious. Said superstition might give rise to the cult of a particular Dragon—be it founded on an entity, monument, or relic of ancient times—with its accompanying hollow and corrupted ceremonies, and its blind and bloody fanaticism.

the three ages

Just as life and death are inseparable, so too is the notion of the dream inseparable from that of awakening. The world is a continuous creation, but if the dreamer ceases to dream: negation. A grave question arises: can the Dragons wake up? Unfortunately, the answer is: yes. Two kinds of awakening are considered: individual and collective.

As professional dreamers, the Dragons have rather complex oneiric lives. On the one hand, each individual Dragon has its own personal dream; and simultaneously, the sum of all dreams is dreamed by all Dragons. (This is similar to what are referred to in psychology as the individual unconscious and the collective unconscious). When a creature dies, its Dragon (the one who dreams that creature specifically) has just awoken. Nevertheless, as this creature also exists in the dreams of all Dragons, the awakening of one dreamer has no other effect.

When several Dragons awaken together, on the other hand, it's not just genocide but a cataclysm, an upheaval of the physical world which manifests in the dreams of the remaining Dragons. And when the majority of them awaken, it's the end of an Age. Thus an Age is defined as the period between two collective Dragon awakenings.

Two Ages have already passed and serve as the historic and legendary backdrop for the world of *Rêve: the Dream Ouroboros*, which takes place near the beginning of the Third Age.

the first age

The First Age was called the Age of Dragons. It was the beginning of time, the beginning of dreams. In this era more mythological than truly historic, the Dragons enjoyed dreaming of themselves. In their dreams they lived in fabulous palaces, surrounded by a myriad plants and animals, which their abundant inventiveness never ceased bringing into being. But, in their power and infinite dream, they dreamed a race of beings especially destined to serve them: humanoids. Primarily these were the

gnomes and humans, but some more eccentric Dragons also created other avatars: humanoids with porcine heads, humanoids who were completely blue, lizard-men, and so forth. Creatures who were too dissimilar were left to inhabit different kingdoms, but this did not prevent skirmishes and wars. No matter! This, too, could only delight the Dragons, lovers of spectacles, and who thereby shed tears of joy.

The First Age lasted an eternity. It lasted until the gnomes, most industrious of the humanoids, discovered the first gems, dream stones *par excellence*, stones by their very nature magical—said to be the tears of Dragons. This discovery was followed by the first enchantments, and thus was born magic. Creatures of their own dreams, suddenly the Dragons were no longer the sole masters of it, and, as might have been expected, took this new development very badly. In order to rid themselves of this new nightmare, they awakened *en masse*. The world suffered terrible cataclysms, and nine-tenths of all creatures died. And thus ended the First Age.

Thereafter, the Dragons were never again seen in flesh and blood. Nowadays, philosophers claim that the world is dreamed by the Dragons. But are these dreamers in fact the same as the rulers of the mythic First Age? What is known, is that these were tremendous beings. And the dreamers who dream us (since we know from the practice of magic that the world is dreamed) are likewise tremendous beings. From there to conclude that the Dreamers and the Dragons of the First Age are one and the same requires a single logical step, a step which has been taken by most philosophers.

the second age

So it was that eventually the Dragons went back to sleep. But, in fact, they never again directly inhabited their own dreams—or if they did, it was in forms impossible to discern, perfectly incognito. Likewise, while the common base was dreamed by all, numerous dreams began to be

differentiated and separated. Snorks, saurians, feracats, turntooths and other monstrosities were dreamed separately in dreams having no common border. As if defying its brothers, and yet all the while still contributing to the common work, each Dragon secretly cherished the treasure of its own personal dream. Why would they thus dream at cross-purposes? Perhaps they had not gotten over the discovery of magic by the gnomes, and each blamed the others for it.

For the Second Age was above all else the Age of Magic. In this time the gnomes withdrew to the deeps beneath the mountains and magic passed into the hands of humans. Humans used it and abused it, and believing themselves the masters of the world. Sprawling cities grew, kingdoms rose, roads and bridges were built: all the signs of a flourishing civilization. But humans did not live in mutual harmony. Not satisfied with killing each other in endless wars, each sought supremacy through magic. In truth, the extent of their magical powers was enormous, beyond the measure of even of the Third Ages most talented High Dreamers. It is said that by the end of the Second Age one in ten humans was a magician.

And the inevitable happened. Abuse of too-powerful and often uncontrolled magic consequently led to rifts in the fabric of the Dreaming. The Dragons, invoked and pestered by mobs of magicians, began to blunder. Each lost track of what it was dreaming and not dreaming, what belonged in the common Dreaming and what belonged in its secret garden. The dreams became entangled, torn, and

scrambled. Creatures from one dream invaded another, while entire portions of the map disappeared who knows how or where—maybe nowhere. And magicians made matters worse, using the phenomenon to banish their enemies, leading to a crescendo of upheavals and raging cataclysms. The Dragons had lost control of their dream turned chaos. To free themselves of this nightmare, they awoke again.

the third age

We are now at the beginning of the Third Age. The world is in turmoil, its civilizations collapsed, there are few survivors, and hordes of unknown creatures have invaded from the rifts. The Dragons have returned to their slumber and taken up their dreaming as best they can. But the Dreaming is far from being healed, and rifts remain. Perhaps a thousand years have passed and the Third Age is still in its infancy. What will it be like? What will it be called? Will the Dragons awaken again? Only time will tell. The world has become immense and uncharted. Between a few pockets of more or less autonomous civilization lie vast wildernesses filled with ruins and mystery. In this post-apocalyptic setting, the world awaits rediscovery.

In fact, in the Great Awakening not all the Dragons opened their eyes at the same moment, some just waking up as others were falling back asleep. There is some continuity therefore from Age to Age in spite of the upheavals and ruins. This is why, in the collective memory of humanoids, the 'Other Age' is still remembered.

JOURNEYERS

When no one knows what lies over the next hill, perhaps a nightmare monstrosity patiently waiting its appointed hour; when no one knows where that track leads to that none has taken in living memory—perhaps to a rift, a barely visible 'violet cloud' which will send you forever into another, unknown world—one has a tendency to stay home.

There is nevertheless a custom usually followed by most sedentary peoples: to attempt the *Journey*, at least once in one's life. The Journey might be as simple as going someplace where one has never been before. For some, the Journey might involve going to the village beyond the next one, then hurrying back with a few memories that will grow with embellishment over the years as they are told and retold on winter evenings around the fire. For others, more ambitious, the Journey might take them as far as the

nearest city. And for a few others, the Journey just continues... The Journey is no light matter: the farther one goes, the smaller the chances of coming back. For how can you predict what you will find in this torn world where virtually anything is possible?

Imagine that the Second Age is like an enormous room filled with shelves upon which hundreds of jigsaw puzzle boxes have been stacked. The Awakening would be like an earthquake dashing all the boxes and their contents to the floor, bursting their lids and scrambling the pieces. Now imagine that the Third Age begins with all the mixed up pieces scooped up and shoveled at random back into the boxes. All the pieces are haphazardly mixed in with pieces from other, incongruous puzzles. If you then imagine trying to recreate a coherent image based on the jumbled contents of one of the puzzle boxes, you'll have a notion

of the oddities, contradictions and implausibilities which await a Journeyer on her road.

But the world is so vast, so young and yet so old, and legends by the thousands are so profoundly resonant, that the siren call of the Journey is hard to ignore. And it is one of the customs of the times. Journey fever, the need to go off, somewhere, takes hold of most in their twenties.

Player characters are by definition Journeyers. Regardless of the particular background that a player might devise for a character, whether an urbanite or a rube, and regardless of their initial motivations for undertaking the Journey, one day they left. They have known the road and trackless wilderness, nights spent sleeping on the ground, campfires under the eaves of a forest or an inn found by providence. Regardless of their prior peregrinations, they have at least once had the experience of passing through a rift in the Dreaming. As a result, they are not in their world of origin and they know that their chances of ever seeing home again are infinitesimally slight. Forever uprooted, they have become authentic Journeyers (with a capital J): characters for whom the Journey has become an end in itself. To take in the world in its infinity (since it is not even confined to the miserable ball of a planet), to marvel at its diversity, to rediscover the path of one's own forgotten dreams and to find oneself in the end ever stronger, ever greater: this is the lifeblood of these characters who love their freedom above all else.

villages & cities

Most villages are relatively recent, founded by Journeyers at the end of their road. For everything has an end, including the call of the Journey. Most of these former Journeyers swell the ranks of existing settlements; others, having found a favorable site, may found their own villages. Certainly lands and space are not lacking in the Third Age. Thus in many villages will be found a Journeyers' House: a kind of inn where, when the custom is observed, itinerant Journeyers are lodged and fed for free. It's a common way of helping those who are still on the road, and of showing that even if the Journey is no longer in the legs of some, it remains in their hearts.

The current generation gives way to the next, who in turn have children who, when their time comes, may decide to undertake the Journey. Most times, they come back after a day or two. But all it takes is for ten or twelve young people (a village's entire generation) to get up one day and go and not return for the village to suddenly age. If a snork winter follows, or some other calamity, then it's the end...

Behind their great walls, the cities are much older and most go back to the Second Age; this is why there are so few. But having escaped from total destruction does not mean they have been unscathed by the cataclysm. In fact, all cities are significantly warped in one way or another. It's as if the upheavals of the Great Awakening were like a great Dragon Breath, a collective one at that. Whether it's a weird superstition, garbled legends, or absurd cults, each city is characterized by some folly or other.

high dreamers

Just as the Journey is a nearly universal tradition, so too are High Dreamers, or magicians, more or less reviled everywhere. People 'remember', in a sense, that world of long ago was not like it is today. In the old days, life was easier, cities were bigger and more beautiful, there were real roads over which commerce could more easily be carried out, and there weren't snorks and all these nightmare creatures. And the wheat grew better, and the wine tasted better, and there were real seasons, not like now, and young people respected their elders, and so on ... And whose fault is it? High Dreamers! They're the ones who changed everything, who ruined everything, all because they wanted to be greater than the Dragons! So says popular wisdom. And in truth, in many places High Dreamers are ill regarded. In some cities, anyone even suspected (or accused) of practicing this crime are immediately put to death. Of course, there are still High Dreamers, but they are usually quiet about it.

journeyer

In the Second Age, each humanoid species existed in a separate dream. The only humanoids who cohabited in the same dream were gnomes and humans. The gnomes all spoke a single language, regardless of the geographical distance between their subterranean cities. Among humans, on the other hand, in the twenty or thirty millennia of their successive civilizations, the same thing happened as in our real world: each culture had its own language. Towards the end of the Second Age, however, one empire completely dominated all other realms in the human dream, an empire which vague legends refer to as the Great Empire. Over the centuries, the varied tongues spoken there eventually melded into a single language, with local variations in accent and vocabulary, but nevertheless a single, common tongue. The same legends affirm that it was in this same Great Empire that High Dreamers became more and more powerful, and it was due to their varied rivalries that the first rifts were created.

But where there are rifts there are victims. Numerous people, men and women, were thus banished from the Great Empire, exiled from what they had thought was the only world, only to find themselves lost in the infinity of the multidream. Thus were born the first true Journeyers and from their desperate desire to return home again was perhaps born the tradition of the Journey. Then the Dragons began to awaken, but in the chaos and cataclysms, the Journeyers did not cease Journeying, swarming and dispersing farther afield, hazarding other rifts, each new generation taking up where the previous one gave up.

Does the common tongue, or Journeyer, really trace its roots back to the common language of the Great Empire? This question is the preoccupation of philosophers and savants, and its answer lies perhaps in rare grimoires having survived the Great Awakening, in difficult texts written on faded parchments. But it is true that all Journeyers since then speak the same language, which is called the Journeyer's tongue, or just Journeyer.

Now, at the beginning of the Third Age, the dreams are unrecognizable: civilizations have disappeared, cities are in ruins, roads lead nowhere, immense forests and swamps have enlarged their domain, not to mention permanent rifts in the Dreaming. But since most villages or towns of any importance were founded by former Journeyers, Journeyer is naturally spoken there, even if in a local dialect. And this is true even in the most backwards corner of the labyrinthine multidream which the Dragons' dreams have become. The only requirement is that the dream has had some prior contact with Journeyers.

In the ancient cities which survived the cataclysms of the Awakening, things are more complicated. Their inhabitants may have adopted the Journeyers tongue, or, in places where local customs are stronger, continue to speak their own language. It is certainly possible even in those places for people to be bilingual, knowing enough Journeyer to communicate with outlanders. But locals might also, among themselves, speak their own language.

Naturally each adventure will dictate who speaks what, and to what degree Journeyer is understood. Communication problems can exist, requiring an interpreter, but the DK must also not make these insurmountable, or risk bringing the game to a halt. Among humanoids, only gnomes as a rule speak Journeyer fluently. Ogres and snorks can get by, but not without barbarisms and syntactical simplifications ("If him give

purse to me, me be friend to him"). Cyans surely understand it but speak it rarely, generally only to proffer their sinister threat ("Your *sight* pleases me, pale man!"). Other species (saurians, feracats, fauns, etc.) don't speak it and understand it only rarely, except where specifically mentioned in the scenario.

seasons

The twelve names of the hours of the day are also part of Journeyer. This is why they are universally adopted, at least wherever Journeyer is spoken. These same names likewise designate the twelve main constellations of the night sky, which seem to be common to all dreams, and which give their names to the twelve months of the year.

The months of *Rêve: the Dream Ouroboros* are lunar months of 28 days each, each week of 7 days representing a quarter of the lunar cycle. The year is thus 336 days long. The moon is always in its first quarter on the 7th of the month, full on the 14th, in its last quarter on the 21st, and new on the 28th.

The year begins on the first day of spring—what our astronomers call the vernal equinox. The month of the Vessel is thus the first month of spring, followed by the months of the Siren and Falcon. Summer begins on the first day of the month of the Crown, and includes the months of the Dragon and Swords. Autumn begins on the first day of the month of the Lyre, and continues through the months of the Serpent and Flying Fish. The first day of the month of the Spider marks the beginning of winter, and that month is followed by the two other winter months of the Reed and Sleeping Castle. Note that these twelve months approximate our terrestrial signs of the zodiac:

Spring		
Vessel		Aries
Siren		Taurus
Falcon		Gemini
Summer		
Crown		Cancer
Dragon		Leo
Swords		Virgo
Autumn		
Lyre		Libra
Serpent		Scorpio
Flying Fish		Sagittarius
Winter		
Spider		Capricorn
Reed		Aquarius
Sleeping Castle		Pisces

Our actual seasons are due to the variable length of days and nights. In *Rêve*, days and nights are always 6 hours long. Should one conclude thereby that summer daylight hours are longer than winter, that they are longer than 120 minutes, and vice-versa? Logically, that should be true. But on a game mechanic level, things would become horribly complicated. So we may as well be fantastic to the end. There is no reason that our dream worlds need be planets: they might be flat, or cubes, or have no form whatsoever. Secondly, if it's hotter in summer than in winter, it might simply be because the Dragons dream that the sun is hotter, even if they forget to vary the length of days. If it's colder in winter, the inverse reason might be applied. And if it so happens that it snows, it must be that the Dragons have determined, in the infinite wisdom of their dream, that a winter without snow would not be taken very seriously by anyone.

the age of journeyers

After the Age of Dragons and the Age of Magic, the Third Age will probably go down as the Age of Journeyers. One may note, in fact, that the fundamental reason for the end of an Age (the cause of the Great Awakening) seems to be an unquestionable fact of the following Age. As if, like it or not, the Dragons became accustomed to the new element added to their oneiric activity. Thus the First Age was without magic, and its appearance in the hands of the dreamed creatures provoked nightmare and the Awakening. But magic thereafter was present, and is present to this day, without thereby provoking another Great Awakening.

The same phenomenon exists with respect to the rifts which caused the end of the Second Age. In that Age and

the preceding one, each among a multitude of dreams was distinct, and no passage existed from one to another. The appearance of those passages, those rifts, and the chaos that followed them, provoked the Awakening. And so in the Third Age, the current one, same thing as with magic: the rifts are still there, dreams are not isolated, permutations and passages between them are possible, and this does not suffice to awaken the Dragons who have just gone back to sleep. Like magic, the rifts have become a fact of the dream, a new dimension added to the oneiric activity of the Dragons.

And this explains why the custom of the Journey has such a deep meaning for most beings. It is not just a fad nor mere curiosity which pushes so many to explore ruins, but the unconscious urgings of the future meaning of an entire age. If the fundamental characteristic of the Second Age was this new and stunning thing called magic, and if that entire Age was preoccupied with developing it, then the characteristic of the Third Age is the rifts in the fabric of the Dreaming, and the consciousness which will develop over the years that the dream is a multidream and that the rifts, the passages, serve to enlarge the world and push back its boundaries. At the beginning of the era, this fact is considered a curse, because uncertainty reigns. But once the unknown has been explored, once the passages have been catalogued and mapped, once true transoneiric routes have been established, the world will take on a new dimension, and change comparable to that brought by magic in the last Age will take hold. This monstrous task has yet to be accomplished; we are witnessing the baby steps of the early pioneers. But this is where all the currents of this age are running: the Age of the Dream Journeyers.