

ISSUE 36 • SEP/OCT 1984

Different Worlds

THE MAGAZINE FOR ADVENTURE ROLE-PLAYERS

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Special
MAGIC
Issue

Special
RuneQuest
Module
Inside!



Different Views

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letters and
comments to:

Different Views
PO Box 6302
Albany CA 94706

DRAGONEWT STEW

Enough is enough. Fair publication for all. Sure, in the past issues of *DW* you featured whole issues on dwarfs (*DW 24*) and now you are getting requests for special elf issues (*DW 33*). But how about our little (or in some cases, big) scaly friends, the dragonewts? Okay, now you are going to tell me to refer to some long issue of *Wyrm's Footnotes* for information on dragonewts. In case you hadn't noticed, that was a long time ago and I am sure many people missed it. So how about some articles on dragonewts (customs, battle tactics, weapons)? In anticipation for the new *RuneQuest* edition, an article or so would be just great.

Thanks from all the eggs at Dragon's Eye.

(J. Sweet, Los Angeles CA)

BEHIND ENEMY MINES

After reading the review for *Behind Enemy Lines (DW 35)*, I had to respond.

1. I got the distinct impression that the reviewer just may be on the FASA payroll.
2. The advertisement and title for *BEL* is grossly misleading. It claims to be a WW II role-playing game, yet only covers the period from D-Day 6 June 1944 to VE day, and only the Western front. This is a most narrow view of WW II!
3. As just a matter of opinion, I found *BEL* to be chart happy. There are better ways to resolve problems than just using charts. Unfortunately, *BEL* does not take advantage of these other solutions.
4. When compared to other role-playing games, I found *BEL* to be overly complex, thus discouraging me.
5. The weapons listing and descriptions are inaccurate to the extreme.
6. Overall, I found *BEL* to be practically useless, even as reference material for similar role-playing games.
7. I feel I was suckered into buying a game that, not only will I never play, but I cannot even use as reference material.

How your review can state "This will allow every one to enjoy the versatility of game system..." I will never understand. The game systems are far from being versatile.

I have tried to recover at least part of my investment in *BEL*. None of the local gamers will touch it at any price. Also, I took it to a convention in March of this year, and, again, no takers at any price.

My qualifications for knocking *BEL* lie in the area of military expertise. I am a retired USMC officer. I have taught weapons and other general military subjects. Small unit tactics is just one of the many subjects I was required to be conversant with.

I was sorely disappointed with *BEL*, I do not understand how any gamer could make such a glowing review of it. If Mr. Beste is so uninformed about the second World War that he thinks this is a great game, I suggest he do some historical research. WW II was a great deal more than just Normandy to Berlin. Also, the Field Manuals for the various weapons, vehicles, etc., used in WW II have been de-classified for a long, long time. Many are available free, from the various military services that used them. Ben W. Lane, Capt. USMC, retired
Fresno CA

GAME SMEARS

About your editorial in *DW 34*, I find your game reviews very helpful, which is, after all the purpose of reviews. As long as the reviewer is unbiased, the review is likely to be valid (beware of reviewers who never find anything wrong). Since products are usually targeted for players of a certain game or genre, reviews should naturally be directed toward that audience. If the product would be suitable for other than the target audience and it depends more on personalities and events than game mechanics (such as *Traveller's 76 Patrons*), that certainly should be mentioned in the review, but to down-rate an item because it fails to satisfy the "general gamer" (whatever that is) is absurd.

There is only one additional area that I would like your reviews to cover. When a product is a revised, expanded, simplified, etc., version of a game (as with recent *D&D* and *Traveller* releases), it would be helpful to be told which version is best for various gamers.

Diane Grier, Port Angeles WA

ESOTERICA?

Let me say how much I enjoy *Different Worlds* magazine. Its

emphasis on useful (as opposed to esoteric) articles, and its non-partisan stance in regards to which company's role-playing games are covered, seems like a breath of fresh air when contrasted with the relatively narrow scope offered by such magazines as the *Dragon* or *White Dwarf*. Aside from GDW's *Journal*, *Different Worlds* is the only role-playing magazine I make a point of collecting.

Malcolm J. MacDonald
London, Ontario, Canada

GO AHEAD, MAKE MY DAY

A few brief comments on *Different Worlds 34*. Starting at the beginning, it looks like you got some good letters this time. While I'm not really a comics fan, and I don't play superhero games, I appreciated the fact that your special was on an independent comic. "Prophets & Role-Playing" was an excellent article. I don't have adventures about to become kings, but they can still get caught up in the events portrayed. "Critical Hits & Fumbles" hardly seemed necessary—*AD&D* players ought to be able to adapt this themselves from a game like *RuneQuest*. The "Philosophy & Attitudes" (does every article have to be in the "A&B" form?) was a good one. I'd like to see articles like this done for other games. Like *Call Of Cthulhu*, for

instance—it's difficult for me to run an investigator since I always feel like I the player know more than the investigator should about things. A lot of game reviews this time, but nothing especially stood out. I think John's miniature reviews are getting better. I really like Ernest Hogan's clone cartoon. "Sword Of Hollywood" is getting a bit more gaming-related, but I still think the film column can be dropped. I have a great piece of gossip for Gigi, but the source says I die if it ever appears in print. Sigh.

David Dunham, San Antonio TX

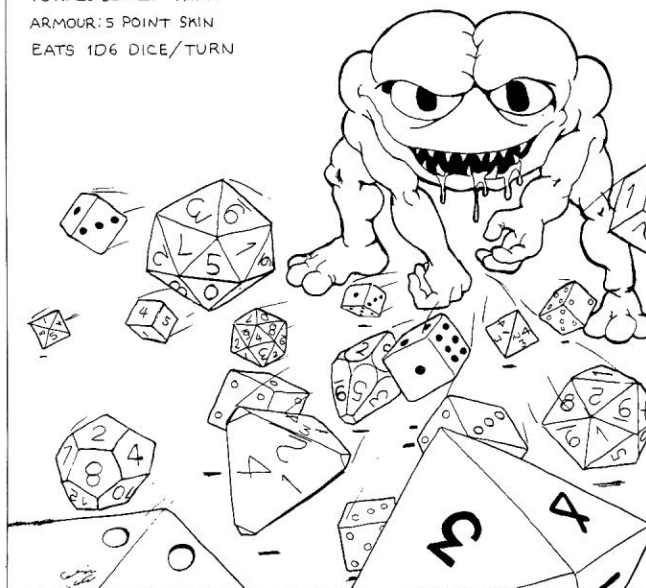
COMIC BOOK CONNOISSEUR?

Congratulations! Issue 34 was great! Being both a comic book connoisseur and an avid gamer, I especially enjoyed your DNAgents superhero feature. I can only ask for more of the same. As for the special issue format, I hope you plan to keep it! I for one think it's great! I was leery about it at first because I feared whole issues would be dedicated to just one type of game. I was wrong and I'm glad I was! I was pleasantly surprised to find that not only were the main superhero games covered, but also *AD&D*, *Star Trek*, and *Call Of Cthulhu*. All of this was useful!—I play all these games! □

Spencer Perry, Worcester MA

DICEATER

STR:18 CON:16 SIZ:1
POW:20 DEX:23 H.P.:9
ARMOUR:5 POINT SKIN
EATS 106 DICE/TURN



TheGamer

Editor's
Views

GIGI D'ARN PROFILE

Extracted from Chaosium files

SEX: female

AGE: 30

BIRTH: April Fool's Day, 1954,
mid-western U.S.A.

MARITAL STATUS: twice
divorced, two children

RESIDENCE: southern California

OCCUPATION: counseling
children with adjustment
problems, part-time reporter for a
suburban newspaper

HEIGHT: 5' 2"

WEIGHT: 120 lbs

RELIGION: mildly Protestant

POLITICS: strongly Liberal

OTHER BELIEFS: ERA, evolu-
tion, yoga, fate, a Supreme Being,
witchcraft

EDUCATION: CSLA, UCLA,
Michigan, degrees in American Lit
and Psych

INTELLIGENCE: above average
INCOME: \$15-\$19,000

ACTIVITIES: writing in general
(including a bi-monthly column
for *Different Worlds* magazine),
Society for Creative Anachro-
nism, painting miniatures, read-
ing, dating, gambling, gossiping,
shopping, partying, streetwalking,
eating dessert, acting, singing,
cooking, role-playing and gaming
in general, listening to music,
traveling, flying

OTHER DESCRIPTIONS: witty,
healthy, lazy, tolerant, curious,
capable, self-reliant, well-inform-
ed, chatty, likes children

LANGUAGES: English, Russian,
French

GOALS: knowledge, serenity

TV PREFERENCES: adventure,
specials, movies, soaps, talk
shows, news

BOOK PREFERENCES: science
fiction, mysteries, nonfiction,
humor, novels, texts

DATING HABITS: movies,
dinner, museums, pubs, weekend
trips, concerts, plays, TV, each
other's home

DATE PREFERENCES: passion,
virtue, manners, kindness,
patience, intelligence, sense of
humor, sophistication, varied,
physical, casual, sensible,
undemanding, considerate, young
and old, world-wide

DATING FREQUENCY: 5-6
times a week

PAST RELATIONSHIPS: mean-
ingful, disappointing, stormy,
Platonic, uninhibited, superficial,
intense, no pattern

SEXUAL HABITS: anything goes

MARITAL VIEWS: not for the
time being but would consider if
the right person comes along

SOCIAL PREFERENCES: artists,
average-folks, intellectuals,
professionals, cultured

MUSIC PREFERENCES: country
& western, show tunes, popular,
classics, rock, folk

TIME-OF-DAY PREFERENCE:
morning

ATTRACTIVENESS: usually

UPBRINGING: middle class by
both natural parents; has one
older sister and one younger
brother

*See also her "My Life & Role-
Playing" article in DW 31, "Life
as a Non-Player Character."*

Happy gaming,

Tadashi Ehara

NEXT ISSUE:

Special Campaign Issue
featuring ElfQuest

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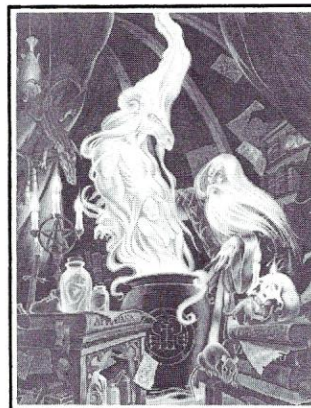
SEP/OCT 1984

Contents

Issue 36
Sep/Oct 1984

Special MAGIC Issue

cover illo by
Steve Purcell



Page

Magic & Social Structure by David Dunham 10
A Magic-Based Society

Kabbalistic Magic by Simcha Kuritzky 16
Mystical Interpretations of the Jewish Holy Books



Special
RuneQuest 3
Module

"Where's Ogmar?"

By Alan LaVergne

Module between page 24 and 25

A Christian Looks At Role-Playing Page
by W. Glenn Kirkconnell. 6
Are We Pagans?

Ringworld Errata 15

Origins Scrapbook photos by John T. Sapienza, Jr. . . . 24

Doing It With Class by Paul Montgomery Crabaugh . . . 36
Four Professions For Call Of Cthulhu

REGULAR FEATURES

2 Different Views	38 Index
3 The Gamer	40 Books & Gaming
4 Sword Of Hollywood	42 What's New
9 Game Cons	44 Film Reviews
14 Art Feature	46 A Letter from Gigi
26 Game Reviews	

CARTOONISTS

Alexis Gilliland 9, 38, 40, 46	Ray Nelson 9
Ernest Hogan 34	Colin Upton 2, 7, 46

Errata
Illustration credit on page
14 of last issue should have
gone to Mike Romesburg,
not Brad Foster.

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Staff: Tadashi Ehara editor. Lynn Willis, Greg Stafford, Steve Perrin, Sandy Petersen, John T. Sapienza, Jr., associate editors. Charlie Krank, Sherman Kahn, Gigi D'Arn contributing editors.

Sword Of Hollywood

It has been said,
The pen is mightier than the sword.
How about celluloid?

By Larry DiTillio

Howcha-Magowcha Hollywood fans! Boy, is this a summer! Conan, Trek, Indy Jones, Ghostbusters, and Gremlins! What a season! And more to come, Am I the guy that said the fantasy trend was over? Stupid me! anyone, silver-screen lovers, let's take a peek at some upcoming activity in our favorite form of entertainment (whatever that is).

THE NEVER-ENDING STORY:

No it's not this column. It's the title of a West German fantasy film, slated for this summer. Its overseas origins may not get it quite as wide a distribution as a Universal blockbuster, but if it appears near you, give it a look. It's the story of a boy named Bastian who passes into the world of Fantasia which is threatened by the dire advancing force known as "Nothing"!!! Fantasia is a world created by dreams. As dreams and hopes fade from humankind, and despair rears its ugly snout, Fantasia crumbles. Naturally Bastian becomes the eventual savior (not quite in the way you might expect), but the trip there is full of rockbiters—a luck dragon, a turtle creature big as an island, gates guarded by stone sphinxes which shoot beams from their eyes—and a sound story to tie it all together. Its got models, animation techniques, a fabulous director (Wolfgang Petersen who directed *Das Boot*, the ultimate submarine movie!) and a budget of a cool \$27 million. Hollywood sez fantasy pictures don't sell like science-fiction and horror pix, so come on fantasy buffs, lay down your bucks and support your love.

DISASTER ON BOND/LEGEND SET:

Pinewood Studios which contains the "007" Lot, (claimed to be Europe's largest motion picture sound stage) saw a disaster take place as a fire consumed the stage. The picture currently shooting there was the big budget Ridley Scott fantasy epic *Legend*. Specifically, the stage contained a massive tree bog set, an actual indoor forest complete with giant trees, birds, foxes, rabbits, etc. No word on how the blaze started, but the cost of it will be a million-and-a-half dollars. Not to mention eight years of film history. *Superman* and all the Bond films were shot there. As was *Dragonslayer* and *Krull*. The good news was that no one was hurt. Some two

hundred people had vacated the lot for lunch only moments before a series of explosions destroyed the stage. Hmm. Sounds like S.P.E.C.T.R.E. to me. The lot was to be vacated in July by the *Legend* set to make way for the new Bond epic *From a View to a Kill*. Happily, production won't be delayed on either film. Nor will production on what has got to be my favorite title yet *Morons from Outer Space*. No Ye Ol' Sword is not kidding. That picture is shooting at present in the Pinewood Studios. Watch for it, if you dare.

CAR WARS? BATTLECARS?

TRIVIAL PURSUIT?: NBC has a popular series called *Knight Rider* about this yogurt-faced guy and this super-duper computerized car. Well, the good folks over at that show decided that "Kitt the Car" was featured so heavily that it needed its own villain. So they are adding "Evil Car," another super-duper type car with its own evil voice (dubbed by multi-talented voice man Paul Frees, watch your cartoon credits, boys). I think Ye Ol' Sword will pass, but I guess it is news.

OZ GOING STRONG: Disney is going to contribute its mighty efforts to fantasy with their \$25 million epic *Oz*. Disney must have faith because the director Walter Murch is making his debut with this film. The production has now wrapped up after 18 weeks of shooting in London, including a monster array of special effects and mechanical creatures. Murch is a "graduate" of Lucasfilm and received some spiritual aid from his friend George Lucas. *Oz* will now go through its various post-production phases and if we all cross our fingers and say "Rune-Quest," maybe we can see it by Christmas.

SPEAKING OF GEORGE

LUCAS: Mr. Star Wars is said to be expanding into the tiny tube with two animated series, one based on the Ewoks and the other on the Droids. The *Ewok* show will follow a live-action movie starring the Ewoks, also for TV. I'm told. Hmm. Is this rumor true? George, lemme know willya.

REAL SPACE: Paramount Network Television is preparing a 13-hour project called simply *Space* which deals with the space program. I mention this as kind of another of my Ye Ol' Sword unpaid political announcements.

While Star Trekking and Space Operaing and Star Warring and Travelling, keep in mind that space, real space, is one of the hopes of the future. Fandom is alive with folks like Bjo Trimble who send out stuff to keep our space program alive and ask your support. Not too much to ask, eh? You might check into *Space* when it premieres just to keep it in your mind that if we want it, we've got to go after it. End of announcement.

TWO QUICKIES BECAUSE

THEY'RE STILL TALKING:

Steven Spielberg is slated to make *Peter Pan*, while Irwin Allen is going to tackle *Alice In Wonderland*. When? When the deals are made and the actors all gathered, etc., etc. This is one of those two-year items fans. Remember you heard it here.

SOME ANIMATION TIDBITS:

Ruby-Spears is indeed working on *Dragon's Lair*, turning the Don Bluth video game into a series. It's now in production, my guess would be either fall or January. Marvel's *Dungeons & Dragons* will crank out another six new episodes. D.I.C. Productions has a show called *Thor*. I don't believe it has anything to do with Marvel's comic hero. Hanna-Barbera has *Superfriends: The Legendary SuperPowers*, a bounce-off from DC's new maxi-series. Hanna-Barbera also has *GoBots*, the Tonka toy robots, for all you Japanese robot fans. By the way, robots is expected to be the next hot toy and since TV animation is now following toys, you'll probably be seeing all the animated robots you can handle next year. My own crazy crew at Filmation is working on new *He-Man* shows (65 in all) and gearing up for a new fantasy series. I can't tell you the whole tale now because you know, they're still talking. But if someone was to smile and say "Shera," I wouldn't be averse to chatting.

COMIC BOOKS TO FILM: At a Writers Guild night on which I served on a panel on "Alternative Markets" (to TV and film, I spoke on games and animation), I had pleasure of meeting Bruce Jones and April Campbell, erstwhile husband-and-wife writer-editor team. Bruce and April do a myriad of comics, but their pride and joy is *Somerset Holmes*, an offbeat Hitchcockian mystery comic involving a gorgeous young

lady with amnesia that people keep trying to kill. The comic is very much like watching a good mystery film and guess what, it may be one! Yes, Bruce and April have got interest from Hollywood in producing *Somerset Holmes*. This is not a first certainly, Superman came from comics to film, so did Captain Marvel, Batman, and the Phantom. However, they're all superheroes or crimefighters. So, this is a first. April told me that *Somerset Holmes* will categorically end in six issues. Why? Because the story is over she said. Yack. I love that book. Guess, I'll have to wait for the movie when it's all over. By the way, pick up a copy. It's some good, adult reading. Oops, was that a plug? No, just a suggestion.

FAN CHATTER: Well, no letters this time around. That's it for fan chatter. . . No wait, the letter did not come to me, but the man deserves a mention for his mention. I speak of Ben Fenwick who in *DW 34* "Different Views" supported my small stand on anti-role-players who want role-playing games banned for various "moral" reasons. Ben cited his own experiences with this problem, talking about threats, hazing, and even assaults on members of a science-fiction club which included role-playing games among its doings. This was at a college, not in back alleys. Ben's example shows what happens when we ignore these things. And like you Ben, I don't know how to deal with it either. Everybody has the right to state their opinion. . . I guess we might even have the right to holler threats and abuse—those can be laughed at, after all. It's the assaults, the pressure that hurt. Deeply. And gosh, we can't understand what drives such folks to do such things. Fortunately we can do what you did. Speak up, tell everyone. Hey, invite those college dudes the next DunDraCon. I have a few compatriots in the role-playing field who could reason with them in any tongue they'd care to speak. Anyhow thanks for the experience and support, Ben. Now how about more fan letters?!!

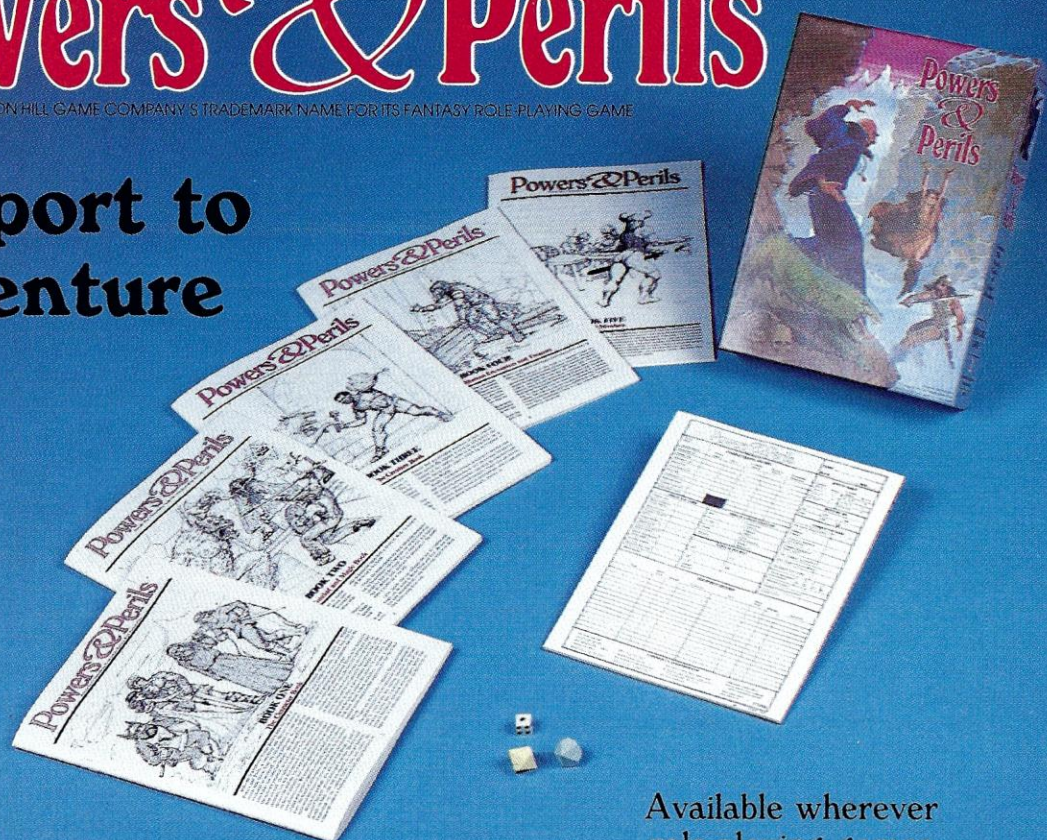
IS THE DOCTOR IN?: Doctor Phibes that is. And yes he is. For all you Phibes fans, I bring you great news. Dr. Phibes III approacheth. It's titled *Phibes*

continued page 38

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The wind howled through the grey crevasses of the Ravine of the Three Brothers. My liege, Asteria Finvarian, had been following the track that led into the mountains for the last three days, her Sidh sense telling us that the chase was nearing the end.

We trudged through the snow, the cold stabbing my chest with every breath. We spoke little, for up ahead we could now hear our enemy stomping through the snow. The trail curved around a high tower of rock jutting from the right.

"We've cornered him. It's a dead-end," Asteria said softly. I pulled the longsword out. A cornered animal would do anything. Fear would be possible if it didn't lay frozen within me.

We followed the path and there before faced the wizard, waiting for us. The final battle had begun.

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Commentary

A Christian Looks At Role-Playing

Are We Pagans?

By W. Glenn Kirkconnell

I would like to begin by stating unequivocally that the views I offer for your consideration are simply my own. "Concerning role-playing games, I have no command of the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy." (1 Cor. 7:25, more or less.) I am not expounding immutable and universal Scripture, nor am I giving the doctrine of the Presbyterian Church. But, as one trained in philosophy and theology, and currently a second year student at Princeton Theological Seminary, I think I may have something useful to say on this subject; "And I think that I too have the Spirit of God." (1 Cor. 7:40)

In *Different Worlds* 27, the letter from Gigi D'Arn featured a request by a certain John Huber for Christian responses to role-playing games. This brought a response from Paul Cardwell, Jr., that "... any use of the Bible on this matter is irresponsible as role-playing games did not exist at the time when the Bible was written." (DW 30) To this statement I must object. Carried to its logical conclusion, such a view of Scripture would make the Bible irrelevant to any aspect of modern life which did not exist two thousand years ago. This is as much to claim that the Scriptures are useless to modern men and women—a view which is, to be sure, common enough in today's society, but hardly acceptable to any devout Christian, Jew, Muslim, or even Hindu or Buddhist with regard to their own Scriptures.

On the other hand, it seems to be the grossest form of eisegesis and fanaticism to claim that even St. Paul and St. Peter had sufficient foresight and prophetic skill to record for use their personal views and inspired advice on the nuclear freeze issue, the responsibilities of those who store (or simply dump) hazardous nuclear and chemical wastes, the evils of drunk driving, or even so important and socially signifi-

cant an issue as role-playing games. So this is the challenge that faces us as Christians in the modern world; how are we to seek the guidance God offers us in His scriptures, without ourselves finding more meaning and guidance there than He Himself put there in the first place?

One way in which we can do this is to carefully consider possible analogies to our modern problems in the issues mentioned in Scripture. For example, when the Bible speaks on the evils of drunkenness (Prov. 23:29-35; Matt. 24:48-51, and so on), we can safely draw the analogy from wine to more modern drugs, such as grass, coke, or heroin. Some analogies, such as the one I am about to undertake, are not so indisputable; but with the guidance of the Holy Spirit we can hope to gain instruction and avoid error even where no such obvious parallel exists.

I do, of course, realize that the majority of you may have no practical use for this little essay in theology. I hope that all of you will find it interesting and informative to see how a Christian tries to deal with his hobby, regardless of your own religion or lack thereof.

There are, as I see it, two potential objections by Christians to role-playing games (in particular to *Dungeons & Dragons*, which is the only one the majority of Americans know by name); (1) it involves witchcraft, demons, devils, and other Satanic elements; and (2) that such games are obsessive, and anything that obsessive and distracting from the Real World can't be good. In regard to (1), it is true that the mythological framework of almost every fantasy role-playing game is decidedly pagan. But if playing *D&D* can make you a pagan or a Satanist, will playing *Monopoly* make you rich? But I hear the objection, "Being rich is a matter of objective reality, and is not at all changed by thought or imagination. Paganism, by contrast, is a matter of the will, and may well be altered by playing such games." A good objection, but not quite accurate. Paganism or Satanism, or any religion good or evil, is a matter of desire and belief. I believe that there are demonic forces, and that Satan exists; but I have no desire to serve or worship him. Furthermore, we can read (James 2:19) "You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder." Satan's belief in God does not make him a Christian, because he has no desire or willingness to worship the Christ. Also, I play several games; I have read works by Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Tolkien, Leiber, and many other writers who speak of worlds with gods other

than the Father. But no matter how enchanting I find these stories, and no matter how much I enjoy these games, I am not moved to worship either Athena or Humakt. Why not? Because they don't exist. I don't believe in them. In short, if playing *D&D* makes one a Satanist, then the devil is a faithful believer and I am king of England.

As to (2), this deserves closer attention. Role-playing games can be obsessive. Most of the players I know have gone through a phase of at least a month, and usually longer, were all they thought, did, or talked about was their favorite role-playing game. Players often spend much of their time in conversations which sound absolutely insane to outsiders. I remember how distressed my father was to overhear that I had been directly or indirectly involved in the violent deaths of 23 police and innocent bystanders in a three day period. He was much relieved, but somewhat confused, to learn that this had taken place not in Sarasota but in a distant, nameless spaceport.

Much of the reason for this phenomenon is that games are fun. People can become obsessed with any game, from *RuneQuest* to football to cards. The person afflicted with football mania is, however, obsessed with something most people know of, and know something about. He does not, therefore, seem as odd as the compulsive *D&D*er.

A major difference between role-playing and other sorts of games is the immense amount of imagination required and elicited by role-playing. Imagination and fantasy are breaks with "reality." Role-playing games involve not only the passive suspension of reality required to enjoy a movie, but also a more active immersion of the player's imagination and personality. This escapist value is an important part of the pleasure of role-playing.

Here is something which Scripture does address. Role-playing games are something which is fun (so fun they can become obsessive) and escapist. A reasonably close analogy can be drawn between role-playing games and wine, as it is discussed in the Scriptures. Alcohol has been a source of pleasure, escape, and obsession for centuries. It has been the crux of much happy socializing (cf. Plato's *Symposium*, which literally translated is *Drinking together*), and of much human misery and vice. The Bible reflects this dual role of wine in human history. In Proverbs we read, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler; and whoever is led astray by it is not wise." (Prov. 20:1; Prov. 21:17, 23:21-35, and 31:4-5 are also germane here.) In the New Testament we find, "But take

heed to yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day (the Parousia) come upon you suddenly like a snare." (Luke 21:34) "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit." (Ephesians 5:18; see also Matt. 24:45-51, 1 Cor. 5:11, 1 Peter 4:3, 5:8)

On the other hand, consider Prov. 31:6-7, "Give strong drink to him who is perishing, and wine to those in bitter distress; let them drink and forget their poverty, and remember their misery no more." Or Ecclesiastes, "Go, eat your bread with enjoyment, and drink your wine with a merry heart; for God has already approved what you do." (Ecc. 9:7; among others) "For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine; and you say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of man has come eating and drinking; and you say, 'Behold, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'" (Luke 7:33-34) "No longer drink only water; but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments." (1 Tim. 5:23; see also John 2:1-12) So it would seem that what we are warned against is not wine in and of itself, but drunkenness; that is, the abuse of wine, both habitual and even occasional. In the same way, I believe the Bible can give we Christian gamers permission to indulge in a little escapism

and fantasy, while providing a strict warning against allowing our gaming to become a distraction from our more important duties even occasionally. The same principles apply. (The reason, I believe, that the Church has tended to emphasize the ascetic side of this dichotomy [temperance] is that it is often necessary to warn people against enjoying themselves too much, but rarely necessary to warn them against not trying to have enough fun.)

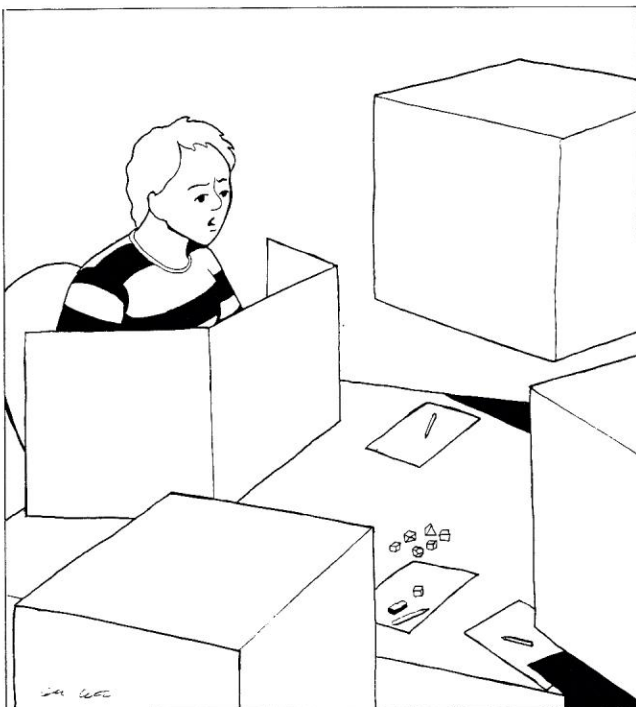
I want to emphasize that I am not trying to persuade you to drink. I am only looking at the principles which seem to be analogous between role-playing games and wine, as it is discussed in the Scriptures. The principle I am aiming at is that there does seem to be a place possible in the Christian life for escapism. Since role-playing games have been linked, and are linked today, to far fewer known deaths, health hazards, addiction, and misery than alcohol, I would suggest that such games might even deserve a small amount of encouragement, or at least grudging acceptance. One of my players in my college campaign once exclaimed to a non-player, "D&D is even better than drugs!" It gave him and several others something to do on a Friday night that involved neither intoxication or fornication. Instead they spent the evening using their brains and imaginations in friendly cooperation with their fellow human beings.

To those of my fellow Christians who are still seriously disturbed at my references to drinking, the same principles can be seen in a parallel argument, this time using sex. The Bible is full of warnings against the abuse of sex (Prov. 5:1-20, 31:3, Romans 1:26-32, 1 Cor. 6:12-20), and even encourages total celibacy (Matt. 19:10-12; 1 Cor. 7). But everyone knows that Christians do indeed have sex; where do you think Sunday schools come from? So see Ecc. 3:5; Ecc. 9:9; Genesis 1:18-25; 1 Cor. 7:38. I leave the reader with the task of seeing how Scripture sanctions sex, while condemning abuses, just as I have tried to argue it does with wine.

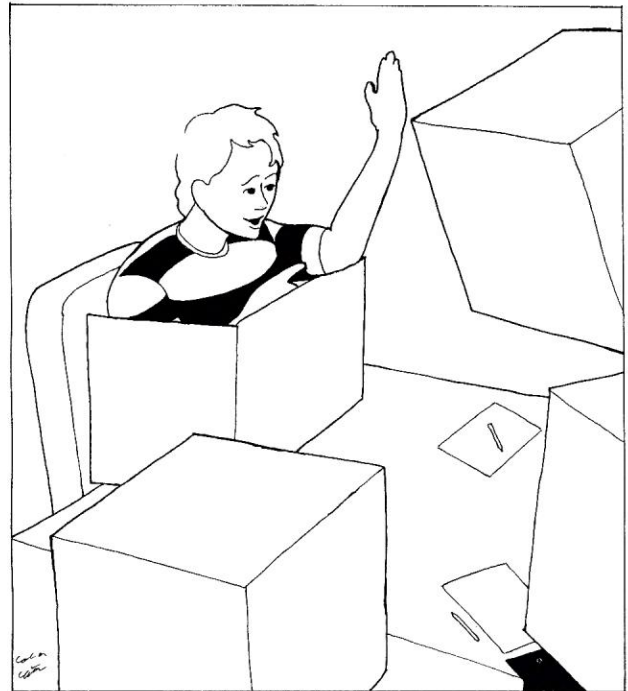
I realize this is not a particularly great piece of exegesis or theology. It is what I happen to believe, and since so many of us at Princeton Seminary play role-playing games, I suspect that many others have thoughts somewhat along these same lines. To any serious theologians, as well as anyone who might be tempted to track me down and stone me for heresy, I would refer you to Soren Kierkegaard's *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, specifically the section titled "An Edifying Divertissement." I also refer you to Romans 14, and beg your tolerance and forgiveness.

Bibliography

The Holy Bible; Revised Standard and New English versions. □



"SINCE YOU COME FROM ANOTHER DIMENSION YOU MAYBE UNFAMILIAR WITH SOME OF THE GAME CONCEPTS..."



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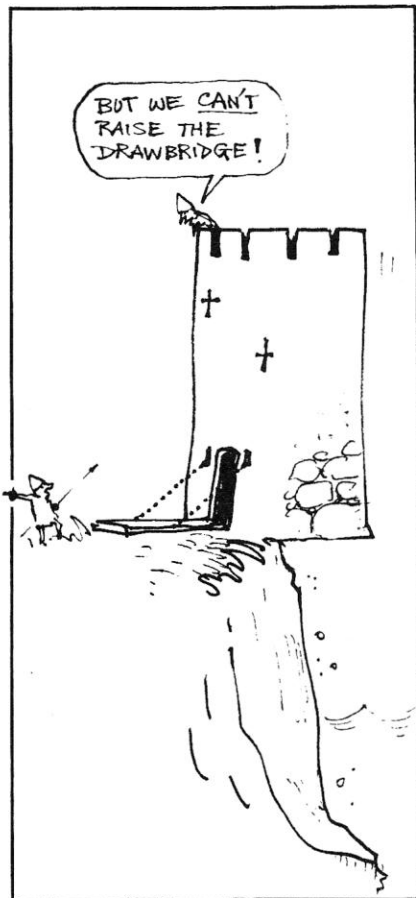
If you wish to see your convention listed in this column, provide us with the name of the event, dates, location, who to contact for more information, number of attendees expected, and the number of attendees you had last year. There is no charge for this service, but please, game cons only.

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Magic & Social Structure

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Magic plays an important part in most fantasy role-playing games, and deservedly so, because most of the great works of fantasy have included magic. Unfortunately, the magic in most campaigns doesn't really fit. It's added on top of an already functioning politico-economic structure, although it would most often disrupt (if not destroy) that structure. The problem is that everything except the magic is adapted from our real world, where technology, religion, economics, culture, warfare, and society in general have evolved without magic. What will happen when they have to deal with magic?

Clarke's Law says that any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic. I don't want to use this definition, however, because in fantasy role-playing games, magic and technology are different. Magic is supernatural, while technology looks for observable explanations. Magic and technology are really two different ways of looking at the world. Magic is subjective, science objective [David Carroll, *The Magic Makers*]. A Techno (one who believes in technology) uses the scientific method; a non-Techno does not. In other words, a Techno reasons incrementally, "from particulars to the lesser axioms, thence to the intermediate . . . and lastly, to the most general" [Sir Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum*, Book 1]. A non-Techno jumps from particulars to general rules, without

using scientific induction or experiment.

Magic is the result of non-Techno thought. Consider the laws of magic: "The Principle of Sympathy—like produces like," "The Principle of Contagion—once together, always together," "The Doctrine of Signatures—the attributes without mirror the powers within" [Lyndon Hardy, *Master of the Five Magics*]. These rules are generalizations without adequate scientific foundation. This lack of scientific foundation is why magic is an art rather than a science, why spells don't always work (which is gamed by means of saving throws or klutz factors).

Magic does work most of the time, though. How can this be? In our world, Techno thought has discredited magic (consider that the rise of science

was concurrent with the decline of belief in magic). Technology works because our world has straightforward cause-effect relationships. In a fantasy role-playing world, magic works because it is non-causal. This means that, while spell effect E usually follows spell casting C, there is no apparent cause-effect relationship between C and E. What is the connection between mumbling some syllables and gesticulating wildly, and a Rain of Mud? No one knows, and nobody is likely to find out. Because magic is non-causal, anyone who tries to understand magic using scientific methods is doomed to failure. The laws of magic aren't true scientific laws—they don't help us to predict what will happen in a new situation; they merely help describe what happens. For example, the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* Jump spell uses a grasshopper's leg as a material component. This is in agreement with the Principle of Sympathy. But the Principle can't tell us if the magician who only has kangaroo fur will be able to Jump. She can if there's enough similarity, but the Principle only comments on generalities, and doesn't get down to specifics, such as just how similar things must be (in this case, the fur and the magician's leap). Scientific laws are usually expressed in terms of measurable quantities, perhaps a quotient of similarity.



An important implication of the non-causality of magic is that magic has to be non-experimental. You could play around on a trail-and-error basis, but you couldn't perform "an operation carried out in order to determine an unknown effect or law" [Webster's *7th New Collegiate Dictionary*], because there's no direct relationship between the experiment and its result. For this reason, trail-and-error would be very dangerous. Changing one syllable of a spell may drastically alter the effects [see for example Jack Vance's *The Eyes of the Overworld*]. Without a way to predict this, the experimenter would be in grave danger with each new combination he tried out. Consider that in game systems like *DragonQuest* even a known spell can fatally backfire on the caster, and you will see the perils of spell research.

Most spells will probably be discovered through serendipity (finding valuable things unsought for). For example, in SPI's *Sorcerer*, the first wizard sang nonsense syllables in a magic-rich area, and conjured up an army, much to his surprise. Luckily for both him and future wizards, he was able to figure out what he did, and, more importantly, remember how to do it again. Note that this is completely different from the invention of a technological gadget like the crossbow. The crossbow is a logical development of the hand bow, which uses mechanical means for drawing and holding the bowstring. It builds in stepwise fashion on an earlier technological development, and in fact couldn't exist without it. How different from the Conjure Army spell, which was created when no spells at all were known.

Spell books become very important, since only by using the tried and true formulae of other magicians would you have a chance to safely cast useful spells.

Because their foundations are so different, it's hard for both magic and technology to flourish. In our world, technology worked while magic didn't, so magic became displaced. In a fantasy role-playing world, magic and technology both work (it's hard to picture a world without at least some causality), but magic is usually a whole lot easier. Why bother with the rigors of science, when it's easier to jump to conclusions? Why perfect devices to do what a simple spell can do with less time and effort? Certainly technology will still exist—there are some things that magic can't do or is impractical for (though they might be mundane things like brewing beer), but the incentive to develop the technology will be stifled by an alternate way of doing things, and the required reason-

ing would be slow to develop if causality were not universal.

Magic often doesn't get along well with religion, either. The *Bible* prohibits the use of magic [for example, see Deuteronomy 18]. This was probably due to the fuzzy distinction between religion and magic in those times. The average person probably had a hard time telling a genuine prophet from a mere soothsayer—they used different methods, but were after similar results. The prophets attacked superstition and mere symbolism, "the reduction of the divine to 'nature,'" making sure their religion remained free from such harmful influences [John L. McKenzie, *The Two Edged Sword*].

Most fantasy role-playing campaigns assume that magic and religion exist peacefully, side-by-side. This is possible, but there are several reasons why it might not be. Magic and religion both deal with the supernatural. Magic usually involves the supernatural in general, while religion deals with a more 'personalized' supernatural: powers are given to individual beings. This distinction doesn't apply to demonology, where magic deals with individual supernatural beings. So does religion, and this conflict led religion, usually content with general attacks on magic, to get specific, in the form of exorcisms and the like.

The overlap of abilities in demonology might lead one to believe that there is no real difference between magic and religion. In *AD&D*, there are even more overlaps—magicians and priests get to use many of the same spells. A cynic could easily claim that clerics aren't priests at all, but magicians preying on the public's credulity. If so many clerical miracles can be duplicated by magical spells, why not all of them? Clerics are simply the only people who know how to use the spells. Since spell research is difficult, clerics are likely to keep this monopoly. How can the clerics possibly disprove this claim? Any miracle he performs will be answered by the skeptic, "that's just a spell." No wonder religion doesn't appreciate the existence of magic!

Most fantasy role-playing worlds seem to be basically medieval societies with magic tacked on, without regard to the consequences. If magicians were at all common, there would indeed be consequences. In the following discussion, I will assume that magicians and priests of 7th level are at least available, if not common. In most campaigns I've seen, this is the case. Spells mentioned are from *AD&D*, unless otherwise indicated.

Quite a few spells are useful to the

less ambitious magician who merely wants to make an easy living, or who wants to make a little money between adventures. The spell *Mending* will allow some income. The existence of this spell, and sufficient magicians who know it, will cut down on the business of honest tradesmen, and probably eliminate the tinker as a profession. On the plus side, those who normally do their own repair work could have more spare time (fishermen wouldn't have to be constantly mending their nets). Candle and lantern makers will be thrown out of work by the *Continual Light* spell. Each family would have at least one rock with the spell cast on it, and a box to hide the rock in if they don't want light. The magicians may not be able to make any money on this one, though, because the clerics have the same spell, and might reward the faithful with a magic lantern. In any case, the market will eventually become saturated, as the lights can be handed down from generation to generation. The magicians who know *Sleep* has several business opportunities. She can help a healer—*Sleep* will put people out of their pain for a while, without harmful side effects. She can also work in a tavern, *Sleeping troublemakers* just before fights break out. A large city may keep her on retainer, just in case of riot. Nothing stops a mob better than two or three *Sleep* spells. Of course, *Sleep* doesn't work on people over 4th level, but most people aren't (in *AD&D*, only adventurers advance in level). If a magician tired of adventuring and wanted to start his own business, *Charm Person* will guarantee him loyal and cooperative workers. No problems with strikes!

While there will always be artists, art will be different. Consider the dramas a talented *Illusionist* could stage, or the music a magician could perform with the *Audible Glamer* spell. A druid or magician could make fantastic marble sculptures with *Stone Shape*.

Warfare has to be conducted on an entirely different basis if magic is available. The soldier on a horse has a decided advantage over the footsoldier (recall the supremacy of the medieval knight). There are really only two effective defenses: a forest of points, and missiles. Both imply fairly dense formations. A phalanx of spears or pikes relies on shock value; to face it means you won't be able to avoid all those points. Archers are also best used in concentration, so they can launch their shafts at a common target; at least one arrow will hit. If they were dispersed, it would be hard to coordinate their attacks, considering the poor communications found on

battlefields before the radio. Magic might also help get around this (for example, the Message spell), but your best chance of stopping cavalry is a close formation [C.W.C. Oman, *The Art of War in the Middle Ages*]. The problem is that there are many spells which can wipe out a good portion of your army if you keep the men close together. A Fireball spell has a 20 ft (6 m) radius, and will almost always kill any soldier in its blast radius unless he's above first level (even then, there is a good chance he'll be killed, and the results will still be devastating). It will also have drastic morale effects. But, when you spread out your soldiers so none are closer than 40 ft (12 m) to each other, cavalry can ride right through. You'll also find it hard to attack when spread out like that, so you'll have to tighten your formation at some point, at which time the army will again be vulnerable to those nasty area spells like Fear and Sleep. Another solution is to get high level soldiers, who have better saving throws and more hit points, but that's easier said than done (for one thing, *AD&D* doesn't provide for gamemaster-soldiers gaining experience). Most higher level individuals are adventurers, who choose their own risks, and get rich hauling wealth out of underground tunnels. They're not going to want to join the army (will rulers need conscription?). Your troops will just have to gain levels by winning some battles, but they're going to find that hard to do before they gain some levels.

Higher level magicians can use weather control to help their side of a conflict. They could summon fog to conceal troop movements, or rain to make a river uncrossable or turn a battlefield to mud.

Magic can provide the military with much better intelligence gathering than medieval armies usually had. A flying magician can make aerial observations, locating enemy troops far better than anyone on the ground could. Magic also greatly aids espionage. Without even having to risk herself, the magician can use Clairvoyance and Clairaudience to do her spying.

Magic can also aid in military (or political) propaganda. The *Chivalry & Sorcery* spell Project Self lets a magician deliver a message in an enemy camp, perhaps calling for surrender, or offering rewards for deserters.

Castles are a standard feature of fantasy role-playing worlds. Should they be? They're designed for defense. "A Norman keep . . . had an almost endless capacity for passive resistance. Even a weak garrison could hold out as long as its provisions lasted," [Oman]; almost forever with a cleric inside who

could Create Food and Water. Unfortunately, castles are extremely transparent to magic. What's to prevent a 7th level magician from entering at night and killing the owner (and most of the garrison), or at least opening the gate so the besieging army can do the dirty work? Not sentries—the magician turns Invisible and can't be spotted. Not the walls—outer walls can be avoided with a Fly spell, while covered walls won't stop a Dimension Door. The Magic Mouth spells which may have been set up to guard the lord of the castle can't distinguish our invisible mage. He Knocks on the lord's door, and blows him up with a Lightning Bolt. If he also wanted to take out the garrison, he's probably already cast Sleep in the barracks, and slit their throats. Now all he has to do is leave the way he came.

Perhaps the Guards & Wards spell can help, but that requires a 12th level magician. If that much higher level a magician is needed to defend, the advantage is certainly with the attacker; consider what he could do if his level were equal to the defender's.

Since there is no effective way to defend a fortress against *AD&D* magicians, castles will tend to be built more for comfort than for defense. There will still be walls to keep out the attackers until the defending magicians can drive them off, but nobody will waste too much effort building walls that any 7th level magician can get through. Of course, those who want fortresses will probably manage to find some sort of magical defense, but this will require new spells or rules.

Crime and punishment will have a different complexion. The average person will have a difficult time getting away with crimes. It won't be any harder to kill someone, but a murder conviction would be easy to get if the Speak With Dead clerical spell were used. Many other crimes can be solved by the detective who can Speak With Plants (or, if higher level clerics are available, Stone Tell). Note that somebody can be framed by a magician using Ventriloquism but pretending to cast Speak With Plants. But justice will be served when the case comes to trial, since the judge will have a Detect Lie cast on himself.

Several forms of punishment become available with magic. Some of these are rather cruel, like putting a Ring of Regeneration on the guilty party and letting a knife-wielding mob at him. Without the artifact, various Cure spells can be used to keep the prisoner alive, though the punishment will have to be more carefully applied to prevent accidental death. Someone convicted of more than capital crime

could be punished for all of them, if he were Resurrected after all but the last execution (though this also requires a higher-level cleric). For less serious crimes, magic can help inflict mental anguish. For example, the prisoner would be brought to a public platform, then Commanded to strip or confess. The *RuneQuest* spell Befuddle can also be used in public. All sorts of verbal abuse would be heaped on the confused criminal, who would be unable to defend herself. Afterwards, she will probably know that she had been made a fool of. Her charisma level would be lowered when dealing with anyone who had watched the spectacle. To both punish the criminal and give him plenty of time for introspection, Blindness can be used, to be removed when he reforms.

It should be apparent that magic has to be integrated into the campaign, not just added. Let's look at literature for some solutions to the problem.

Katherine Kurtz's magic-using Deryni are rare, persecuted, and not all that powerful (there are no devastating area spells like Fireball). Therefore, technology and society don't need to be too different from medieval Wales. The common folk mistrust the Deryni, and the Church uneasily tolerates them, so magic can't get too far out of hand. People would rather go to a physician than a healer (though one character is especially effective as both). Most of the magic is personal in nature, rather than affecting large areas, so warfare is relatively historical.

Randall Garrett's "Lord Darcy" stories are excellent examples of how magic can fit into a world. Magic is subject to rules that can be expressed numerically, but it isn't a science, because only those with Talent can use the laws of magic. While anybody can perform a scientific experiment, magical experiments cannot be repeated by just anyone. One of the characters has a doctorate in magic, but has no Talent, so he can't practice it. Garrett limits magic by limiting the number of people with appreciable Talent, and by distinguishing between beneficial White magic, and harmful Black magic. Black magic is destructive, but it's not terribly effective, and is harmful to the user in the long run. Furthermore, all magicians must be licensed by the Church, and anybody caught practicing Black magic will be stripped of her Talent. Even with such limited magic, society is affected. Although the stories are set in the 20th century, the level of technology seems to be at least 100 years behind our own. The teleson (equivalent to the telephone) exists, but there are no lines across the English Channel, no one can explain



how it works, and making a call is more expensive than traveling. Even though magic can be deadly to the user, there is magical research; scientific research is never mentioned. Magic affects crime, too—only in a city, where there are privacy spells, can anyone hope to avoid getting caught by clairvoyants. In the country, the local magician can find out who committed any crime.

In many sword & sorcery stories, magic artifacts or devices (“widgets”) are more important than spell casters. Magicians are rare, and very interested in obtaining and using widgets to enhance their powers. Stories of this nature don’t have to worry about magic’s effects, since they are easily localized to the widget-user, and don’t pervade society. J.R.R. Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* could be considered an example of this approach to magic, since wizards were rare, and magic widgets (like swords which glowed in the presence of orcs, or “seeing stones”) were far more important to most people, since they might never see a wizard.

In good literature which deals with magic, magic and society do fit together, either because magic isn’t powerful or common enough to change our picture of medieval society, or because the society was adapted to the magic. Both of these options are available to the fantasy role-playing gamemaster.

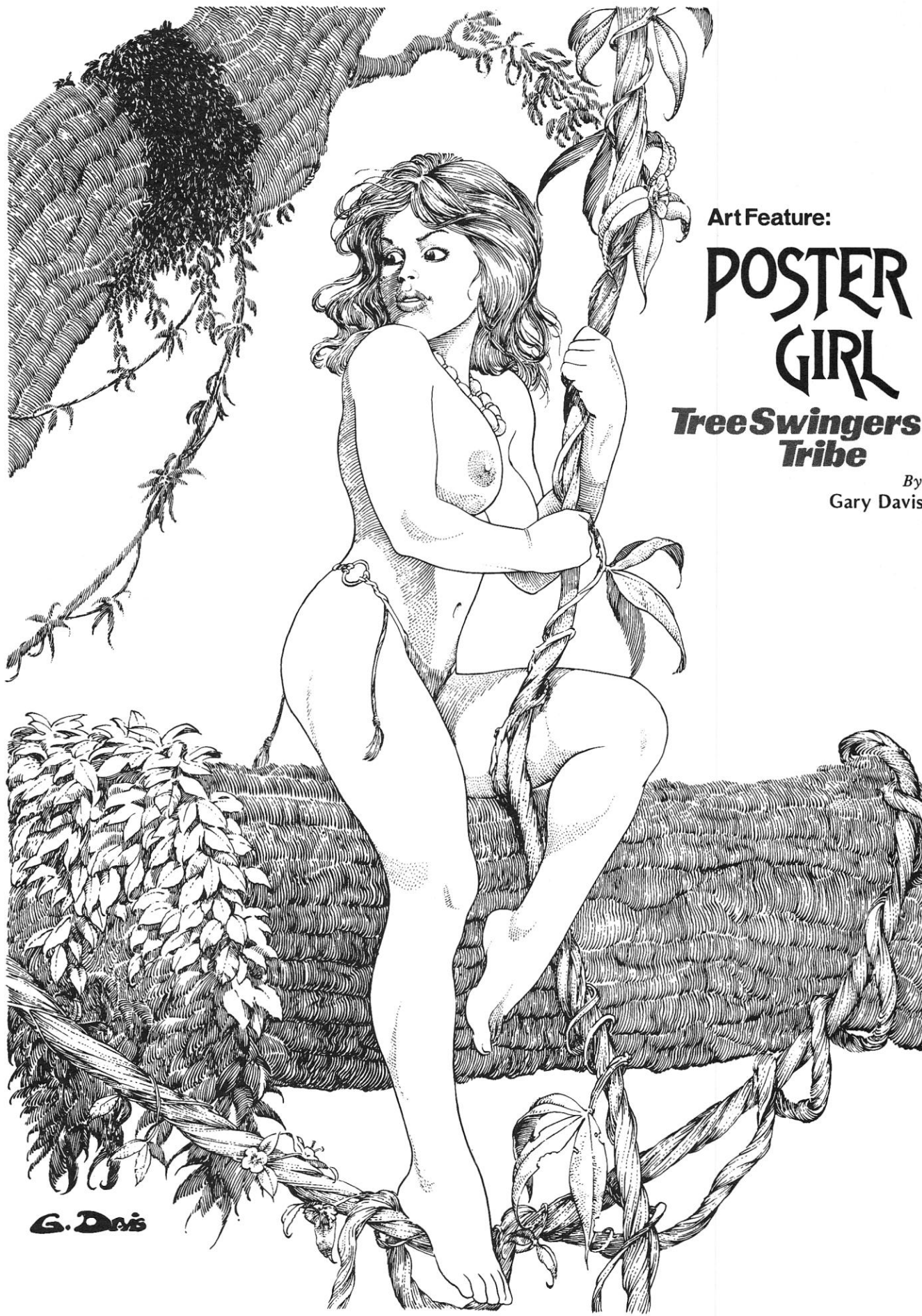
Toning down magic doesn’t have to involve changing your game rules. You can impose societal or religious limitations, which would reduce the number of people who will become magicians in such a society, and bring displeasure on people who do use magic. Certainly anyone who uses magic to kill someone must be using black magic, and must be dealt with severely. Using spells also available to priests can get you into trouble as well. Many deities won’t be terribly happy that you’re using the same spells they only dole out to their most faithful worshippers. What makes you so special, that you won’t take the proper route to magic and work your way up within the religion?

If you’re willing to modify your magic system, you can limit magic in more ways. Certain spells—those which are permanent or affect large areas—tend to be very disruptive of everyday life, and should be deleted from the spell lists or rewritten. You can also replace the standard spells with ones which have more limited application. Magic Missiles can be fired at just about anything, but a spell which raises blood temperature by 5 degrees C (a serious fever for a human) would make cold-blooded creatures (like dragons) more active. Jack Vance’s “Dying Earth” stories are full of examples of exotic spells which are only useful in specific situations.

Spells can be made dangerous, difficult, or costly to use. Backfire has already been mentioned. If spells often didn’t work, or took hours or days to prepare, they wouldn’t cause too many changes to society. Spells can also use up costly or rare substances. Just becoming a magician may require a sacrifice (such as a vow of celibacy, or a secret which must be kept).

You can also get magic and society to fit by changing society. This will probably be harder—we’re generally familiar with the way historical societies worked, and take it for granted—but can be more rewarding, since your world can then be something you created, rather than copied from history. You’ll need to establish those areas where magic will supplant historical practices. Consider the place of magicians in society. Will they be feared because they deal with the unexplainable, or will what they do be considered less than “honest work”? Professional societies (magicians’ guilds) might exist to protect their members, artificially limiting the number of magicians who can legally practice magic.

There is no reason why magic and medieval society can’t exist together. Making them work with each other does require some effort on your part, however. Spend this time, and you will be rewarded with a more logically consistent campaign. □



Art Feature:

POSTER GIRL

**Tree Swingers
Tribe**

By
Gary Davis

Ringworld Errata

As of June 26, 1984

EXPLORER SHEET:

The number 30 is missing in the Hit Point Tally on the back of all the explorer sheets; write in "30" on the margin of the explorer sheet. A corrected and photocopyable back sheet is included in the *Ringworld Companion*.

EXPLORER BOOK:

(1) Page 5, column 2; page 10, column 2; other locations—include only the first 24 points of EDUs when calculating knowledge-skill root maximums.

(2) Page 16, column 1, Archaic Melee Weapons—the human fist has a 1D3 attack; the human kick has a 1D6 attack; remember to use the explorer's damage modifier.

(3) Page 26, column 3, Zero Atmospheric Pressure—the explorers should exhale in vacuum to minimize pressure damage; adequate air is left in the lungs after exhalation: not exhaling does 1D6+2 points of damage as per the first paragraph.

(4) Page 38, column 2—the picture is of a wrillabee; see *wrillabee* in the creatures book, page 42.

(5) Page 58, columns 2 and 3—the picture is of a dak-dak; see *dak-dak* in the creatures book, page 37.

TECHNOLOGY BOOK:

(1) Page 24, column 3—the repetition of the marinex maximum acceleration entry is a paste-up error; disregard.

CREATURES BOOK:

(1) Kzin and Puppeteer characteristics in the creatures book are superceded by the slightly different values found on pages 47 and 51, respectively, of the explorer book.

(2) Page 9—the INT characteristic for Outsiders should read "2D6+12," not 2D6+6.

(3) Animal hit locations given are used for both ranged and melee weapons.

(4) The reference "Standard Hominid Hit Location Table" refers to the Human Hit Location Tables in the explorer book.

(5) Page 46, column 1, Slaver Sunflowers—an individual sunflower has 1 hit point.

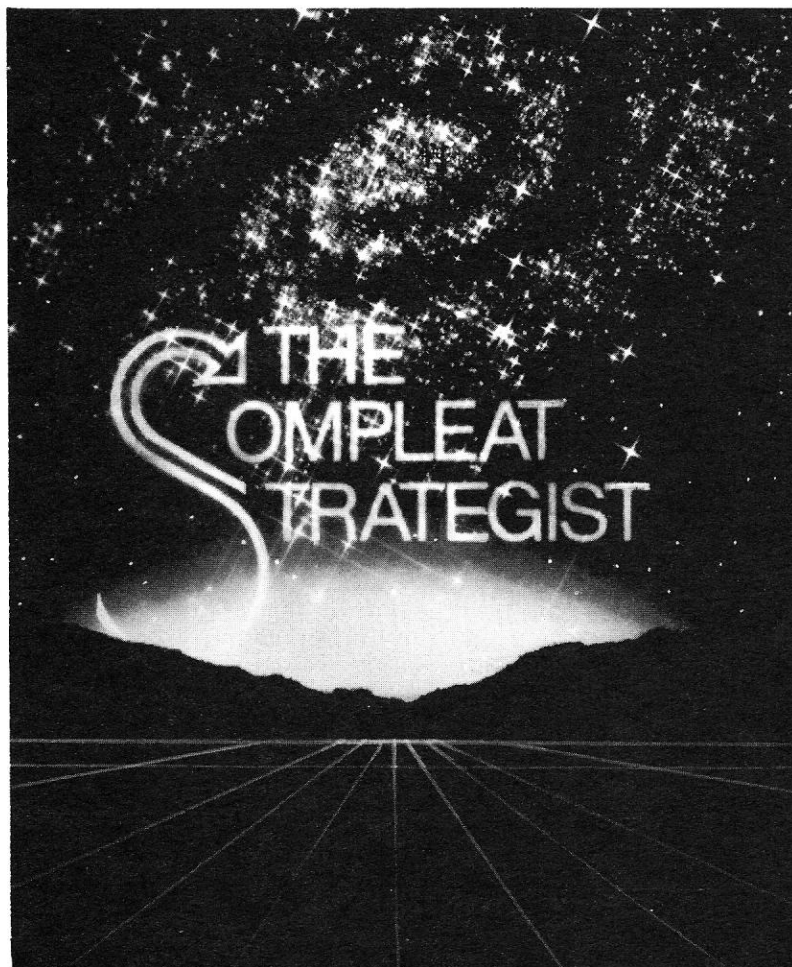
GAMEMASTER BOOK:

(1) Page 46, column 2—the "prism" in the tower laser is actually a mirror (which may be quite dirty, not having been fired in several Ring years).

(2) Inside Back Cover—the material there is continued from page 2 of the gamemaster book.

AUTOPILOT PRINTOUT:

Surface gravity induced by spin should read 0.992—not 9.92. The gamemaster's Ringworld printout is correct. □



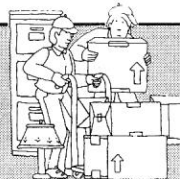
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Special MAGIC Feature

KABBALISTIC MAGIC

On How to Use the Mystical Interpretations of the Jewish Holy Books in Adventure Role-Playing Games

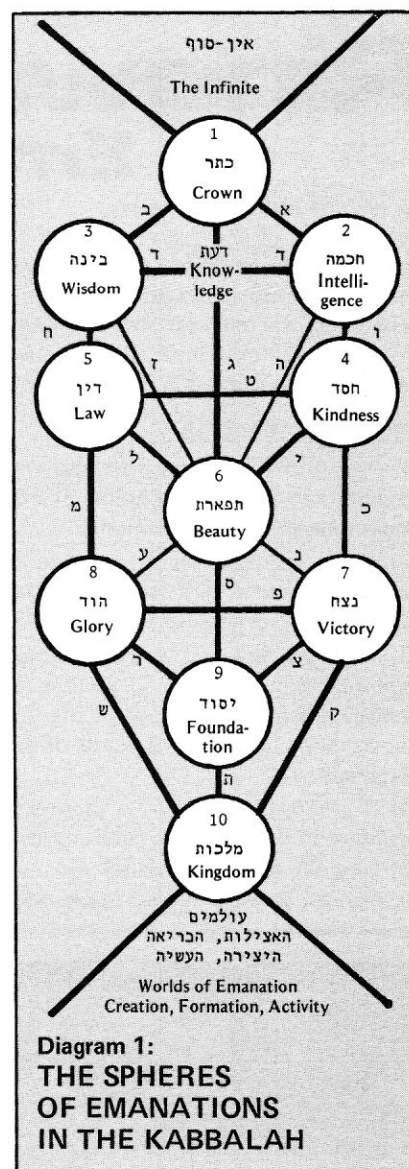
By Simcha Kuritzky

Central to any fantasy role-playing game is the concept of magic. Magic influences battles, sustains or destroys nations, and adds a special quality to game playing that differentiates it from the mundane world. Of course, the idea of magic is far older than the fantasy role-playing game; it dates back to when Man first attempted to explain the workings of the universe. Thus, a fertile source for ideas concerning magic is Man's own past, and among the various philosophies which have not been thoroughly explored for fantasy role-playing games is the Jewish *Kabbalah*.

The *Kabbalah* is a group of works which present mystical interpretations of the Jewish holy books, known as *Tanakh*, which consist of the *Torah* (5 books of Moses), *Novim* (Prophets), and *Ketuvim* (Writings). The literal meaning of the term *Kabbalah* refers to the act of transmitting secret knowledge, and as with all forms of mysticism, *Kabbalah* explores the secret or hidden meanings of the universe. However, because these aspects of the universe are so complicated and difficult to understand, the authors of Kabbalistic works rely heavily on symbols and analogies to make their point. One way of distinguishing the symbolic from the literal is by knowing which ideas are acceptable and which are taboo. For example, one book describes God's physical proportions in great detail; however, an important belief in Judaism is that God is completely incorporeal, and thus these measurements are really symbols for God's power. Other basic tenets of Judaism are that God is indivisible, eternal and has alone complete authority over the universe; there are no intermediaries between God and Man; and God is the creator of the universe and all men.

As mentioned earlier, mystics of all cultures attempt to explain how the universe works and why. Unlike rationalists who explore the physical aspects of the universe, the mystics try to understand the spiritual aspects. The Kabbalistic view of the universe is much different from that held by most Western scientists. First of all, the "true" universe consists of the *En Sof* (literally the infinite or the incomprehensible), which is the spiritual universe. The spiritual universe is inseparable from God, and has no beginning and no end (unlike the physical universe). God has many characteristics, but they can be logically separated into ten groupings. When these characteristics are all present in a particular "region," that region is perfect. However, God has several times removed certain characteristics from a point in the *En Sof* (the act is called *tzimtzum*, contraction) thus creating a point of imperfection wherein a physical universe can exist.

Our current universe is not believed to be the first, but it may be the longest-lived. It was created by removing Law from a point and filling the "vacuum" with Kindness. This was necessary for it was God's desire to give Man free will or the power to decide good or evil, and this would not be possible if Divine Law permeated



the universe. The act of creation itself was accomplished through ten emanations (*esher sephirot* in Hebrew), as shown in Diagram 1. First, *Keter* (Crown) was emanated as a projection of the *En Sof* into the physical universe. From this sphere of emanation came *Khokhmah* (Intelligence), called the father sphere, and *Binah* (Wisdom), the mother sphere. The remaining seven spheres come from Wisdom, and represent each of the seven days of Creation. The six "active" spheres are: 1) *Khesed* (Kindness) also known as *Gedulah* (Greatness), 2) *Din* (Law) or *Gevurah* (Power) or *Pakhad* (Fear), 3) *Tiferet* (Beauty) or *Rokhmim* (Mercy), 4) *Netzach* (Victory or Endurance), 5) *Hod* (Glory or Majesty), and 6) *Yesod* (Foundation) or *Tzaddik* (Righteousness). The last sphere, which represents the physical universe, is *Malkhut* (Kingdom), also called *Knesset Yisrael* (Community of Israel) or *Shekhinah* (God's female aspect). The variety of names for the same emanations reflect

the multitude of ways one can interpret God's characteristics.

It should be noted that these spheres are inseparable. They merge, divide, reflect and act as catalysts for one another, and have different amounts of influence at any particular time or place. Some mystics have gone into great detail to explain the various influences the emanations have on each other. From a fantasy role-playing game standpoint, these spheres of emanation are the root of magic. Knowing the relative influence of the spheres can tell one the future, and exercising any control over the spheres will influence future events.

The spheres themselves are often grouped in various ways, such as by triangles or columns. To view the tree of emanations (in Hebrew *Etz Khayim*) as triangles, imagine the top nine spheres as one triangle pointing up over two triangles pointing down. For this interpretation, neither Crown nor Kingdom are used, as they represent the spiritual and the physical universes, respectively. The top triangle consists of Intelligence, Wisdom and *Da'at* (Knowledge, or a combination of Intelligence and Wisdom). Knowledge is the external or more physical aspect of Crown, and is often placed directly between Intelligence and Wisdom and beneath Crown. These top three spheres are more intertwined and interdependent than any other combination of spheres. Sometimes Crown is referred to as "the knowledge," Intelligence as "that which knows," and Wisdom as "the thing known." Thus it is not surprising that the first triad is known as the Intellectual triad, or the brain of the tree of emanations.

The second triangle consists of Kindness, Law and Beauty, and is called the moral triad. As mentioned earlier, the current physical universe is believed to have been created by an act of both Law and Kindness. These two characteristics are viewed as the archetypes of the duality of good versus evil, where Kindness is good and (unrestrained) Law is evil, but many of the mystics who developed this principle further borrowed heavily from the Zoroastrians, and thus their ideas tend to be inconsistent with the other philosophies of Judaism. This triad also defines the three columns of the tree of emanations, these being the right side (Intelligence, Kindness and Victory) which signifies mercy, the left side (Wisdom, Law and Glory) which signifies judgment, and the center (Crown, Beauty, Foundation and Kingdom) which mediates.

The third triangle is known as the natural triad. It contains Victory,

Glory and Foundation. This triad is seen as baser or more physical than the others due to its proximity to Kingdom, which represents the physical universe.

The ten emanations are seen as the means by which the universe was created and is maintained. They are occasionally represented as a wheel with Beauty in the center, or as ten concentric circles which either begin or end with Crown. There are also ten "intangible" spheres, a shadow of the tree of emanations, which consists of 1) *Rom* (Height), 2) *Mizrah* (East), 3) *Tzofun* (North), 4) *Tove* (Good), 5) *Ra* (Evil), 6) *Reysheet* (First), 7) *Durem* (South), 8) *Mariw* (West), 9) *Akhrut* (Last), and 10) *Takhat* (Depth). The relationships of the spheres of emanation, particularly in their tree structure, is constantly referenced or alluded to in mystical works, as we shall see.

The physical universe itself is composed of four worlds, which are not planets, and correspond to the four stages of Creation. These stages are another aspect of the creation process and do not conflict with the six phases or "days" of Creation listed in the beginning of the *Torah*. The four worlds, and their related stages of creation, are: 1) *Olam HaAtzilut* (World of Emanation), which represents the archetypal ten emanations and the creation of primeval light; 2) *Olam HaBeriah* (World of Creation), which contains the Divine Throne and symbolizes the spiritual universe apart from God, and Man's divine "spark"; 3) *Olam HaYetzirah* (World of Formation), wherein reside the angels and men's souls, and symbolizes the concept within creation of individual existence (i.e., number, measure and form) as opposed to archetypes or ideas; and 4) *Olam HaAsiyah* (World of Activity) which is the material universe.

There are many theories concerning the relationship of these four worlds to the ten emanations. In one, the four worlds are all part of what we call the physical universe, and thus they reside below the emanations, which are more spiritual in nature. Another theory states that there is a set of ten emanations within each of the worlds, and while the names and positions of the emanations within each tree stays the same, their inter-relationships within each tree does not. Yet another view has each of the first three worlds associated with the three triangles mentioned earlier, with the fourth world identified with the emanation Kingdom.

Judaism was the first religion to conceive of time as linear: the physical universe has a beginning, a life-span,

and an end. Yet in the *Kabbalah* some cycles are mentioned. Of course there is the seasonal cycle, the most important seasons being Spring (the time of planting) and Autumn (the time of harvest). Spring is associated with Kindness, for it represents a re-birth of nature. It is also the time when the Jews celebrate *Pesakh* (Passover), which commemorates God's Kindness in intervening to free the Jewish slaves of Egypt more than 3500 years ago, even though they had not shown themselves worthy. Autumn, on the other hand, is associated with Law, for it is then that one reaps what one has sown, and the Jews observe *Rosh Hashonah* (Spiritual New Year) when God judges men and determines their fates for the coming year. It has been postulated that the world was conceived in the Autumn, and that this was when Law was removed from the supernal point which was to become the physical universe; and the world was created in the Spring, when Kindness moved in to fill the "vacuum."

Yet another theory postulates cycles occurring on a much grander scale. In this theory, one of God's days is 1000 of our years, His week is 7000 years, and His jubilee is 50,000 years. Each of the seven creative spheres (all but the Intellectual triad) dominates a week, and the interpretation of the *Torah* changes with each week. Thus the time of the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) was dominated by Kindness, but Moses' receiving of the *Torah* on Mt. Sinai marked the beginning of the week controlled by Law. This conveniently explains why the early Jews did not have to follow all of the various restrictions in the *Bible* (particularly the dietary laws), and expresses the hope that in the future these rules will be less harsh. After each of the spheres has had its week, the Messianic Age begins and all the souls are forgiven. There is then a millenia of reshaping, in which a new physical universe is created complete with a new set of souls and the process starts over. The number of cycles, while limited, is not known.

An important principle in Jewish mysticism is the power contained in letters, words, names and especially the *Torah*. While the Jews did not invent the alphabet, they were one of the first peoples to use it and even to this day tend to be obsessed with it. Each letter was originally a symbol for a word (similar to hieroglyphics), but soon became a symbol for the first sound in that word. In addition, the Semitic alphabets also serve as numerals. Thus was established the principle of secret meanings behind each letter.

The Kabbalistic view of the letters in the Hebrew alphabet is that they represent the 22 "gates" or "pathways" between the ten spheres of emanation. Thus letters can be used to "enter" or understand the emanations. Diagram 1 shows one interpretation of which letters correspond to which pathways. It should be noted that since there are only ten emanations, Knowledge should be ignored (alternatively, Crown could be ignored and Knowledge take its place).

The 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet are also linked to different parts of the universe, parts of Man, or other symbols. The Hebrew alphabet is often divided into three classes: the three mother letters, the seven double letters and the twelve single letters. The

mother letters each correspond to a different element (Earth was not considered an element by most Kabbalists), as well as the three triangles of the tree of emanations. The double letters each represent a different day of the week, facial orifice, direction, noble metal and heavenly body (only five planets were known then). Each single letter represents a different sign of the Zodiac, month, complex direction, ancient Israelite tribe and stone in the breast plate of the High Priest. These are all shown in Diagram 2.

One line of mysticism, called *Gematria*, interchanges letters based on order of numeric value. For example, the tetragrammaton is sometimes spelled with the letters which come directly after the true letters. Another

example is that since the name of the demon Ashmodai (Asmodeous in Latin) has a numeric value of 355, which the same as Pharaoh, it is believed that Ashmodai is a king of demons. Many similar associations between words or phrases have been found by Kabbalists. In addition, sometimes the values of the letters cycle around from 1 to 9 and then back to 1 again, or the value of the letters' names spelled out is used, or the values of the letters are squared and then compared to the value of a word whose letter values were not squared. Of course this form of mystical analysis requires fluency in Hebrew. Hebrew has a special advantage over many other alphabets in that frequency of use varies little from letter to letter.

Diagram 2:
THE HEBREW ALPHABET

Alphabet:

א E,A	aleph	ox head	1	י Y,I	yod	hand	10	ק Q	kuf	back of head	100
ב B,V	beys	house	2	כ K,Kh	kaf	palm	20	ר R	resh	head	200
ג G	gimel	camel	3	ל L	lamed	goad	30	ש Sh	shin	teeth	300
ד D	dalet	door	4	מ M	mem	water	40	ת Th	tof (cross)		400
ה H	heh	window	5	נ N	nun	fish	50	ך Kh,K	final kaf		500 or 20
ו V,O	vov	nail	6	ס S	samekh	support	60	ם M	final mem		600 or 40
ז Z	zayin	sword	7	ע A	ayin	eye	70	ן N	final nun		700 or 50
ח Kh	khes	fence	8	פ P,F	fey	mouth	80	ף F	final fey		800 or 80
ט T	tes	snake	9	צ Tz	tzadi	fisher	90	ץ Tz	final tzadi		900 or 90

Mother Letters:

element	soul	triad	body	new planet	emanation	temperature	universe
א air	ru'akh	moral	chest	Pluto	Intelligence	moderate	ether
מ water	nefesh	natural	belly	Neptune	Wisdom	cold	earth
ש fire	neshomah	intellectual	head	Uranus	Crown	hot	heaven

Double Letters:

day	direction	orafice	heavenly body	metal	foundation	emanation	person	heaven
ב Sunday	height (h)	R eye	Sun חמה	gold	wisdom	Beauty	Messiah	Araboth
ג Monday	depth (d)	L eye	Moon לבנה	silver	wealth	Kingdom	Joseph	Vilon
ד Tuesday	east (e)	R ear	Mars מאדים	iron	fertility	Victory	David	Zebhul
ה Wednesday	west (w)	L ear	Mercury כוכב	mercury	life	Foundation	Isaac	Rakia
ו Thursday	north (n)	R nostril	Jupiter צדק	tin	dominion	Law	Moses	Makhon
ז Friday	south (s)	L nostril	Venus נוגה	copper	peace	Glory	Jacob	Shekhakim
ח Sabbath	middle	mouth	Saturn שבת	lead	beauty	Kindness	Abraham	Ma'on

Single Letters:

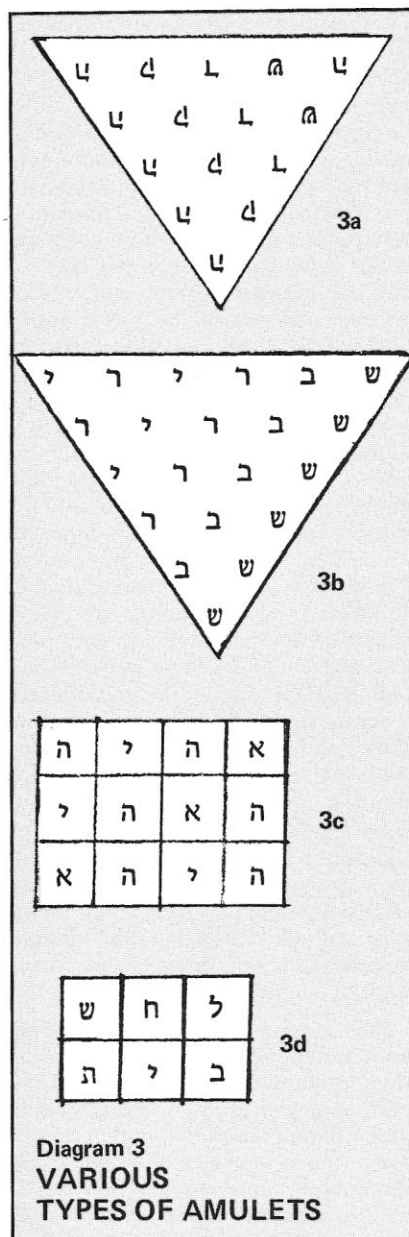
zodiac	month	direction	activity	body part	tribe	stone	stone's power
א Aries	טלה Nisan	ניטר	n.e. sight	R hand	Judah	carbuncle	strength
ב Taurus	שור Iyar	אניר	s.e. hearing	L hand	Issakhar	sapphire	constitution
ג Gemini	תאומים Sivan	סיון	h.e. smell	R foot	Zebulan	emerald	prosperity
ד Cancer	סרטן Tammuz	תמוז	d.e. speech	L foot	Reuben	ruby	fertility
ה Leo	אריה Av	אב	h.n. taste	R kidney	Simon	topaz	sensuality
ו Virgo	בתולה Elul	אלול	d.n. coition	L kidney	Gad	amethyst	will
ז Libra	מאזנים Tishri	תשרי	n.w. work	liver	Levi	smaragd	wisdom
ח Scorpio	עקרב Kheshvan	חשוון	s.w. movement	spleen	Joseph	onyx	charisma
ט Sagittarius	קשת Kislev	כסלו	h.w. wrath	gall	Benjamin	jasper	stops bleeding
י Capricorn	גדי Tevet	טבת	d.w. mirth	stomach	Dan	jacinth	overturns idols
יא Aquarius	דלי Shevat	שבט	h.s. meditation	colon	Asher	beryl	good digestion
יב Pisces	דגים Adar	אדר	d.s. sleep	bowels	Naphtali	agate	dexterity

The main use that *Gematria* is put to by Kabbalists is understanding the hidden meanings of the *Torah*. The *Torah* is perceived by Jews as Man's interpretation of God's blue-print for the universe. Because of Man's and his languages' inherent inability to grasp the complicated secrets of the universe, many details were hidden in the words transmitted to Moses at Mt. Sinai. Thus the words themselves, as well as the *ta'amim* (musical symbols), *nekudot* (vowels), *Tagim* (seriphs), and *Otyot* (letters), all contain hidden meanings. The anagram *Parades* (lit. orchard but translated into Latin as paradise) was used to describe this principle. Every phrase, word, letter or stroke has four meanings: *poshit* (simple), *remel* (hint), *drash* (concept) and *sod* (secret). The mystics were, of course, more interested in the latter meaning.

It is believed that the spiritual *Torah* (i.e., not translated into any human language) existed before the created universe. Some even state that the physical universe was created to give life to the *Torah*. As mentioned earlier, it has been postulated that the *Torah* changes every cosmic week. This change has been described as the re-assembling of the letters of the holy books, and thus their numeric values would remain unchanged.

Names are of particular importance in Judaism, especially those of the Deity. It is often held that the entire *Torah* is simply one long name of God. Most names, however, are much shorter, and thus often refer to only one aspect or view of God. Probably the best known name of God is the tetragrammaton, represented in English as *YHVH* (because the printing of certain holy names on anything which may be destroyed is considered blasphemous, all names given here are transliterated; refer to Diagram 2 to see how the letters appear in Hebrew). This name is often mistranslated as *Yahweh* or *Jehovah*. Neither of these translations are really Jewish, for *YHVH* is not pronounced in Hebrew (the word *HaShem*, meaning "the name," or in prayer *Adonai* is substituted instead). The tetragrammaton is often linked to the ten emanations as follows: the serif of the *yod* is Crown and its body is Intelligence; the first *heh* is Wisdom; the *vov*, which has the numeric value of six, stands for the next six spheres; and the second *heh* is Kingdom.

Another system used by Kabbalists links a different name of God to each sphere. Thus Crown is *EHYH*, pronounced *Ehyeh*, which refers to being, and Intelligence is linked to *YH* (*Yah*), a simple name for God. The name



spelled *YHVH* but pronounced *Elohim* is linked to Wisdom, and stands for the emanations. Kindness's name is *ELHI* (*Elohai*), literally "my God." The name *EL* is also associated with Kindness, and is often appended to the names of angels to signify their servitude to God. Another misunderstood name is *ELHIM* (*Elohim*), which is linked to Law. The name itself refers to God as the unifying force behind the universe's multiplicities, but it is often mistakenly interpreted as a symbol for multiplicities within God Himself. The tetragrammaton is placed in the middle of the tree of emanations with Beauty. Victory is symbolized by the name *YHVH TzBAOT* (*Tzeva'ot*) and its counterpart Glory by *ELHIM TzBAOT*; *Tzeva'ot* refers to the angels as a group or army. Both the names *EL KhY* (*El Khai*) "living God" and *ShDI* (*Shaddai*) "the all-powerful"

are associated with Foundation, and Kingdom's name is *ADONI* (*Adonai*), which means "my Lord."

The names just mentioned are recognized as God's names by all Jews. Several others, however, were introduced by Kabbalists and have meanings only to them. Four of these are known as the names of 45, 52, 63, and 72. All of these spell out the letters in the tetragrammaton in different ways, and the numbers refer to the total numeric value of the letters in each name. Another popular name consists of 42 letters and is often used in charms. Its pronunciation is uncertain.

A major area of Kabbalistic magic consists of amulets and seals. It is important to note that these terms are used differently by Jews than by others. The term amulet refers not to a container of a demon's soul but rather to an enchanted item bearing various names of God and of angels in an attempt to bring their desired characteristics into play. For example, an amulet for protection in child birth will often bear the names of the three angels who once captured the demon-Queen Lilith, who swore she would kill all human children. On the other hand, a seal of a particular angel or demon can be used to gain some (but not absolute) control over them. In the case of angels it is possible that they comply with the wishes of the seal-bearer out of respect for their knowledge, as evidenced by their writing of the seal, and not because the seal itself holds power.

Amulets can be designed in a variety of ways to appeal to the beings listed thereon. One of the simplest is the magic triangle. As shown in Diagrams 3a and b, these can be used to expand or contract the object's influence. The amulet in 3a contains the world *HaKodshah*, which means "the Holy One," and expands it. Notice how it begins at the top and starts with the first letter. The amulet shown in 3b has the name of the demon Shebriri shrinking down to its first letter. Sometimes an entire passage from the *Bible* is taken and each word is placed in a magic triangle. It is also possible to select a word whose meaning changes as one lops off or adds on letters. A famous example of this principle is one version of the golem story where the word *emet* (truth) was written on the golem's forehead, and in order to deactivate it the first letter was taken off so that it read *met* (corpse).

Another, more complicated construct is the magic square. In its most straightforward form, the magic square contains a name and switches the positions of the letters, as shown in 3c

with God's name *Ehyeh*. A more complicated version involves the use of different words and names so that no matter which direction one reads, there is a word or name. A small example is 3d, which contains the words *lakhash* (amulet) and *bayit* (house) across; and *leyv* (heart), *khai* (life) and *shos* (foundation) going down.

Popular among later mystics were amulets in the shape of a hexagram, also known as *mogen David* (shield of David). A few centuries ago this became the symbol for Judaism, replacing the more complicated *menorah*, or seven branched candelabra, which is now believed to be what King David really did have painted on his shield! The hexagram symbolized (1) protection from the six direction (north, south, east, west, up and down); (2) a man's body (head, two arms, two legs, and either soul or female aspect); and (3) Heaven. The latter association is somewhat complicated. The word for Heaven in Hebrew is *Shamayim*, while the Hebrew for fire and water are *esh* and *mayim*. Thus it is believed that Heaven is made of fire and water. The alchemical symbol for fire is a triangle, and water's symbol is an upside-down triangle, and if they are super-imposed on each other one has a hexagram. These amulets are commonly found with the names *Dovid Melekh* (King David), *Mogen Ben-Dovid* (shield of the son of David, i.e., the messiah), and *Yerushalem* (Jerusalem).

Other amulets are drawn in various shapes (especially hands or *menorahs*) and contain names, words or combinations of the letters of a particular biblical passage.

In the Middle Ages no distinction was made between devices of protection and holy items. In order to fulfill the commandment "... these words, which I command thee this day ... thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes, and thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thy house and upon thy gates" (Deut. VI, 6-9), Jews place boxes containing this passage on their door posts (called *mezuzah*) and in morning prayers place smaller boxes on their left arm and forehead (called *tefilin*). It was often believed during Medieval times that these devices warded off demons, and so Jews often wrote additional names and symbols upon the parchment containing the biblical passage. This belief was held by many Christians as well, for they called the *tefilin* phylacterys, Greek for amulet, and often tried to purchase these protection from Jews!

A variety of creatures are mentioned in mystical works. There is *adne hasadeh*, a man-life creature with an umbilical cord attached to the ground. These beings die when their umbilical cords are cut, and are probably a symbol for how Man's ultimate ancestor is the Earth (even today's scientists believe that life started from chemicals in the ground). Another strange creature is the barnacle goose, which grows on trees using its bill as a stem until it finally breaks off and flies away. The *shamir* is a tiny worm which splits even the hardest rocks, and the *takhash* is a type of unicorn which is spiritually clean (*kosher*). Among the largest animals are the *leviathan*, king of the fishes; *sis*, the largest of all birds (*rocs*); and the *behemoth* or *reem*, which are fantastically huge oxen. These oxen are so large that their hoofbeats cause earthquakes. The female of the species always gives birth to a male and female set of twins, and both parents die in the reproductive process, for if there ever were more than two *behemoth* at the same time, the other species would be placed in jeopardy. Other animal myths developed along the same lines or were adopted from other cultures. *Se'irim* or satyrs are goat demons, basilisks and cockatrices can kill all but weasels with a touch or a glance, the *rahab* or *tannim* is an evil dragon, and a werewolf is a sorcerer incognito.

Three groups of beings mentioned most often in Kabbalistic works are angels, demons, and souls. Belief in a soul is probably the oldest religious idea, dating back 10,000 years or more. Jews believe in three souls, each successively more spiritual. At the top of this hierarchy is the *neshomah* (lit. life or spirit), which is linked with the intellectual triad of the spheres of emanation. It is believed by some that these souls never leave Heaven, but move closer to God as their associated humans become more pious, and move away from God when the human breaks commandments. Next is the *ru'akh* (lit. air), related to the moral triad, and responsible for sentience. After the body dies, the *ru'akh* stays on Earth for between a week and a year, and then goes to Heaven. The lowest form of soul, which even the animals have, is *nefesh* (lit. breath), which stays on Earth and haunts the location of its body's death. It is connected with the natural triad of spheres.

At the time of Creation, only a limited number of souls were made. Their purpose is to reunify God's characteristics within the physical universe, and they do so by fulfilling the 613 *mitzvot* (commandments) of the *Bible*

(the souls of Gentiles are not required to fulfill some of the commandments which are unique to the Jewish religion). Those souls which do not succeed perform *gilgul* (transmigration) and reappear in a body of a human infant. If a soul has but one commandment left to fulfill, it may become an *ibur*, which means that it takes temporary possession of the body of one who is in a position to fulfill that commandment. On the other hand, a soul which is very wicked may be banished from God's presence altogether, and in order to become corporeal, take possession of another's body by force (generally while that person is ill) and is known as *dibbuk*. When this occurs, the victim must undergo an exorcism, and in order to prevent the evil soul's regaining of control, the victim's name is changed, since names are external reflections of one's soul.

It is believed that the original souls are complete, i.e., both male and female. These two sections split when they incarnate, but if the corresponding humans find and marry each other, they will have a perfect marriage. It should not be assumed, however, that a male soul always takes a male body and a female soul a female body. If the genders are mixed then some imbalances occur, and the body is usually barren or impotent. If, however, a man with a female soul weds a woman with a male soul, then procreation is possible. The institution of marriage itself is seen as an important part of the soul's work, for the union of two people and their souls is analogous to the unifying of God's characteristics as well as the unifying aspect of God (*Elohim*).

Death is usually interpreted as a natural and necessary part of life. There are, however, two forms of death with supernatural implications. One is known as the Kiss of Death, whereby God rewards those who are extremely wise (as in Moses) or those who are so pious that they have completed 613 commandments in an unusually short time (this explains the early demise of certain sages). Opposite to this form of death is *karet*, whereby one's soul is removed by the Angel of Death as punishment for grave sins.

Another form of unnatural death is that of sorcery, or biting off more knowledge than one can chew. It is difficult to say whether this form of death is bad or good, for the soul is liberated from the body by the knowledge which has just been learned, similar to the Kiss of Death except that it is enacted from below instead of above. On the other hand, the *Talmud* and other works forbid the teach-

ing of mystical works to any younger than a certain age, usually between 20 and 40, in order to prevent this form of demise.

Related to humans in a sinister way are the demons, called *sheydim* (violent ones), *mazikim* (destructive ones), and *ru'akhim* (spirits). It has been postulated that demons come either from the left-hand side of the tree of emanations, called *Sitra Akhar* (the other side), or from a perverted opposite of the tree of emanations, composed of impure *kelifot* (shells) instead of spheres. It is widely held that *Lilith* is the Queen of demons, and that she was created for Adam as his wife. However, it was found that two separately created individuals were incompatible, so she flew off (she has wings) and God created Eve from Adam's rib. Lilith never forgave Adam, however, and she seeks revenge by killing infants and women during and shortly after child birth. Lilith is associated with Kingdom in the tree of impurity.

The physical make-up and attitudes of demons differ greatly, though they are all mortal. Some are quite physical but also cold and can become invisible; these are said to be the offspring of Adam and Lilith, and they carry on the tradition by mating only with humans. Others are said to be formless spirits, made solely of fire and air, and feed on incense and flames. The latter are particularly useful to witches, for black magic can be learned from them.

Those demons who have wings are said to live in the upper atmosphere and "speak" with the Princes of the Zodiac, and therefore know in advance what will be.

The main king of demons is *Som*, also known as *Samael* (lit. blind to God), who is associated with the equivalent of the emanation Glory in the sinister tree of emanations. He is quite evil, often committing the sins of adultery and murder. However, it should be noted that not all demons or demon kings are evil. They, like Man, have both good and evil inclinations, called *yetzer tove* and *yetzer ra*, respectively. The best known example is *Ashmodai*, who studies *Torah* with God. While he is still rather mischievous, he has perfect foresight and is generally beneficial.

Different from both men and demons are the *m'lakhim* (angels). The term *m'lakh* literally means messenger, and the angels are the servants of God. Unlike demons and men, angels have no free will, tend to specialize in their functions, and can assume both spiritual and physical forms. It is believed by some mystics that the gods of the pagan religions were actually angels.

Angels can take on a variety of physical forms. The *Torah* often mentions angels who take the form of men, and Ezekiel describes *ofanim*, angels in the shape of wheels. In addition to these there are *serafim* with six wings, symbolized by fire or snakes and serve as

God's messengers; *cherubim* who are part human, lion and bull, and accompany God; and *khayot* (lit. living things) who surround God on His throne.

The four archangels, associated with the *khayot*, are *Michael* (lit. who is like unto God), *Raphael* (lit. God has healed), *Gabriel* (lit. strength in God), and *Oriel* (lit. light of God). Though interpretations vary, these four correspond to the different Greek elements, directions, colors, precious metals and worlds. Michael, made of snow, is the angel of south, gold, fire, World of Emanations, red and symbolized by the lion. Oriel is the angel of east, copper, air, World of Creation, yellow and symbolized by the eagle. He is also known as the angel of mercy, and is believed to have taken the form of a lion and accepted offerings made to God. Raphael is the angel associated with west, iron, earth, World of Formation, green, symbolized by the ox, and is the angel of healing. Last and in no way least is Gabriel, whose symbols are north, silver, water, World of Activity, blue and man. Gabriel is an avenging angel, made of fire and responsible for the destruction of Sodom and the taking of the souls of kings when their time has come.

Many angels serve as guards for spiritual places and the heavens, while others have specific tasks. The angel *Sandalfon* weaves a crown for God out of the prayers of the faithful. The

Diagram 4:
VARIOUS ANGELS BY GROUP

Rulers of the Angels:

Name	Subject's Name
Metatrone	מיטטרוון
Ratzel	רציאל
Tzafkiel	צפקיאל
Tzadikiel	צדיקאל
Somael	סמאל
Michael	מיכאל
Haniel	האניאל
Raphael	רפאל
Gabriel	גבריאל
Sandalfon	סנדלפון
Khayot HaKodesh	חיות הקודש
Ofanim	אופנים
Arelim	אראלים
Khashmalim	חשמלים
Seraphim	שרפים
M'lakhim	מלאכים
Tarshishim	תרשישים
Beni Elohim	בני אל*ים
Cherubim	כרבים
Ishim	אישים

Leaders of the Angels (According to the Essenes):

Name	Occupation
Oriel	אוריאל
Raphael	רפאל
Raguel	רגואל
Michael	מיכאל
Sariel	שריאל
Gabriel	גבריאל
Yeremiel	ירמיאל
	guards the abysses
	controls human spirits
	takes revenge
	watches over Israel
	(not specified)
	rules the Garden of Eden
	guards souls in the abysses

Angel of the Heavenly Bodies:

Name	Heavenly Body
Raphael	רפאל
Gabriel	גבריאל
Michael	מיכאל
Eniel	עניאל
Somael	סמאל
Tzadikiel	צדיקאל
Kaftziel	קפציאל
	Sun חמה
	Moon לבנה
	Mercury כוכב
	Venus נוגה
	Mars מאדים
	Jupiter צדק
	Saturn שבתאי

Angels of the Living Creatures:

Name	Creatures
Raphael	רפאל
Gabriel	גבריאל
Michael	מיכאל
Oriel	אוריאל
	ox: king of herbivores
	man: king of all animals
	lion: king of carnivores
	eagle: king of birds

Dark Angels:

Name	Occupation
Satan	שטן
Belial	בליעל
Gabriel	גבריאל
Kaftziel	קפציאל
Mashbir	משבר
Mashbit	משבת
Khemah	חמה
	prosecutor of Mankind
	angel of darkness
	angel of death for kings
	angel of death for youths
	angel of death for children
	angel of death for animals
	angel of death for men

Interpretations and spellings may vary widely.

infamous *Satan* (lit. adversary) points out the faults of Man to God, and encourages their punishment or extermination. The angel *Samael*, sometimes identified as the demon *Som*, is the main angel of death. The angel primarily responsible for the revealing of secret knowledge is called *Raziel* (lit. mysteries of God), and the heavenly scribe is *Metatrone* (lit. in Hebrew, keeper of the watch; in Greek, behind the throne).

There are also angels who guard over and personify the different nations. The Kabbalists believe that there are 70 nations, each descended from a particular son, grandson or great-grandson of Noah (the nations which existed previously were wiped out in the Great Flood). Whatever activities occur on Earth between nations are preceded by similar activities in Heaven between the respective guardian angels. Micheal is the guardian of the Jews, and often intervenes on their behalf. Satan, on the other hand, is the guardian angel of Rome, for the Roman Empire was the agent of the Diaspora (exile), which is widely held to have been imposed on the Jews as punishment for their infidelity to God.

One work divides the angels into two categories: the angels of God's name, lead by Totarkhiel, and the angels of God's countenance, lead by Suriyah. A listing of some of the angels and their specialties is shown in Diagram 4.

To the dimensions of height, width, length and time the Kabbalists have added the dimension of spirituality. In the positive spiritual direction are the seven heavens. Farthest from Earth is Araboth, which contains uncreated objects and is the permanent residence of men's souls. It is associated with the emanation Greatness (Kindness).

Maknon, the second heaven, contains the precipitants rain, snow, hail, fog and dew. Maknon is presided over by Moses the Law Giver and the emanation Law, and emits a lightning bolt into Ma'on, the third heaven, presided over by Father Abraham who alters the bolt into four "rays of foundation" corresponding to the four spheres of emanations along the central axis and are colored black, white, red and green. The third heaven is filled with harmonizing lights and sounds that sing praises to God, and is symbolized by the emanation Beauty. Above this is Zebhul, a spiritual Jerusalem corresponding to the emanation Victory which is the positive aspect of cosmic power. In this city is a tabernacle, personified by Metatrone, with Michael as high priest, surrounded by the souls of martyrs. There is also a heavenly tribunal of seven lights. The fifth heaven is called Shekhakim and is associated with Glory. It contains millstones which grind manna for the righteous and is presided over by Jacob and the twelve heads of the Israelite tribes. It is surrounded by a river of fire wherein reside the angels of destruction, and this river is held back by colorless light of monotheism, which is fueled by prayers from below and is projected out from Shekhakim as an archetypal alphabet of 22 colors. Next is Rakiya, the firmament. Symbolized by the emanation Foundation, this heaven supports the heavenly bodies, which are endowed with divine knowledge. The lowest heaven is called Vilon (lit. veil), which shields the heavens during the day and "rolls" down each night. It is associated with Kingdom, is the main source or prophetic visions, and is presided over by Joseph, the interpreter of dreams.

Below the Earth spiritually are seven abysses, known as Gehenna, Death's

Shadow, Death's Gate, Filth, Destructive Whirlpools, Place of Perdition and Sheol. Interpretations on these vary considerably; however, it is generally held that they are made up of *tohu* (impure earth), *bohu* (impure water), and darkness (the opposite of fire).

Associated with the heavens, and perhaps above them, are the seven *hekhalot* (palaces) in the *merkavah* (Divine Chariot). The seventh palace leads to the Throne of God, symbolized by sapphire and emerald. Here the souls of mystics travel outside of their bodies and rise up to the Veil of God. The veil is not physical, for God has no physical form; it is a symbol for the limitations of Man's comprehension of God.

These palaces are dangerous, and the mystics who travel them must carry with them the seals of the two angels designated for each gate to show to the eight angels who guard each of the seven entrance ways. Those that do not have the proper seals are said to be swept away in a fiery tornado. The sixth palace is particularly hazardous, for it is made of sparkling marble, and if the traveller mistakes it for water the angels chastise and punish him for his ignorance.

The goal of *Kabbalah* is to obtain a complete understanding of God, the universe and their inter-relationships. It strives to achieve this understanding through the use of symbols and analogies, particularly from the Jewish holy books. These symbols and ideas are useful to fantasy role-playing games and fantastic literature as a source of magical concepts. Rejuvenating old ideas through new uses has long been a means of keeping a genre alive, healthy and growing. The Jewish *Kabbalah* can and should be used to expand the horizons of the fantasy role-playing game and modern fantasy in general. □

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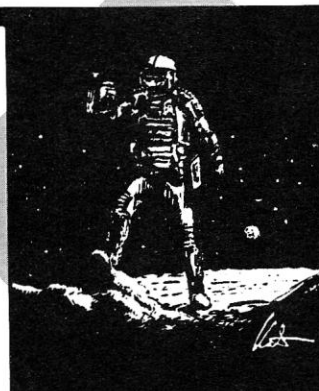
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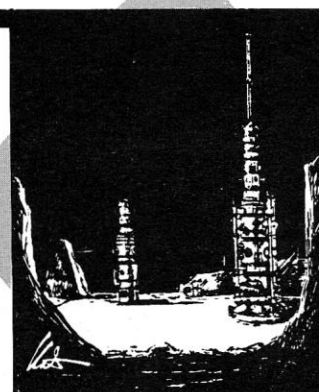


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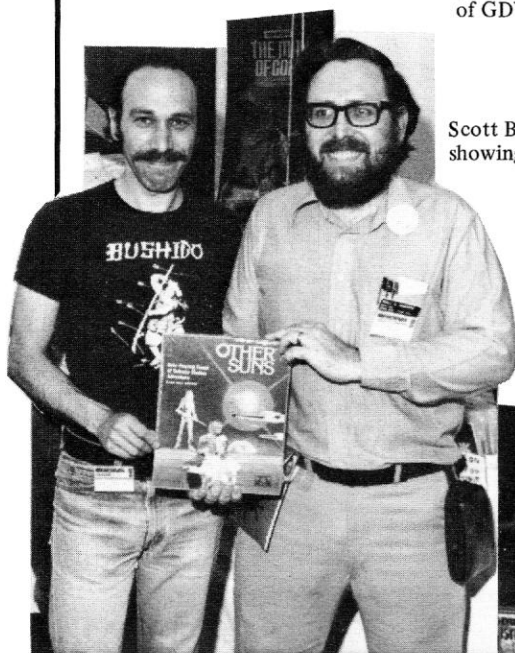
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Loren Wiseman (left), Marc Miller (center), and John Harshman (right) of GDW.



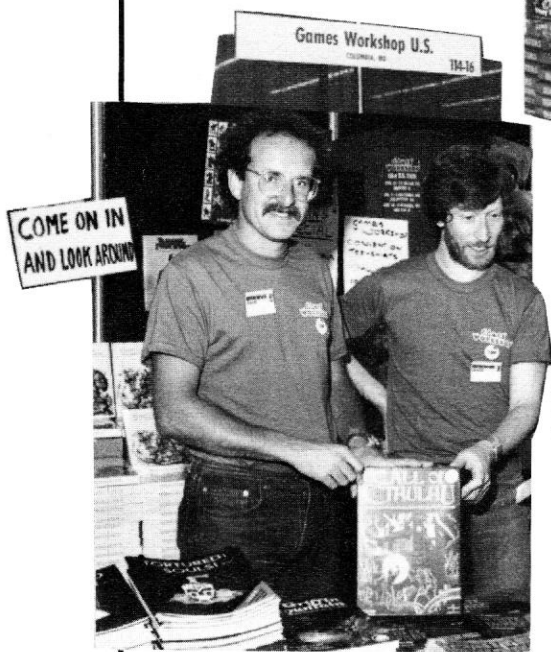
Scott Bizar (left) and Niall Shapero showing off FGU's *Other Suns*.



Ken Burrridge demonstrating Escape Ventures' *Element Masters*.



West End business meeting attended by Greg Costikyan (left) and Eric Goldberg.



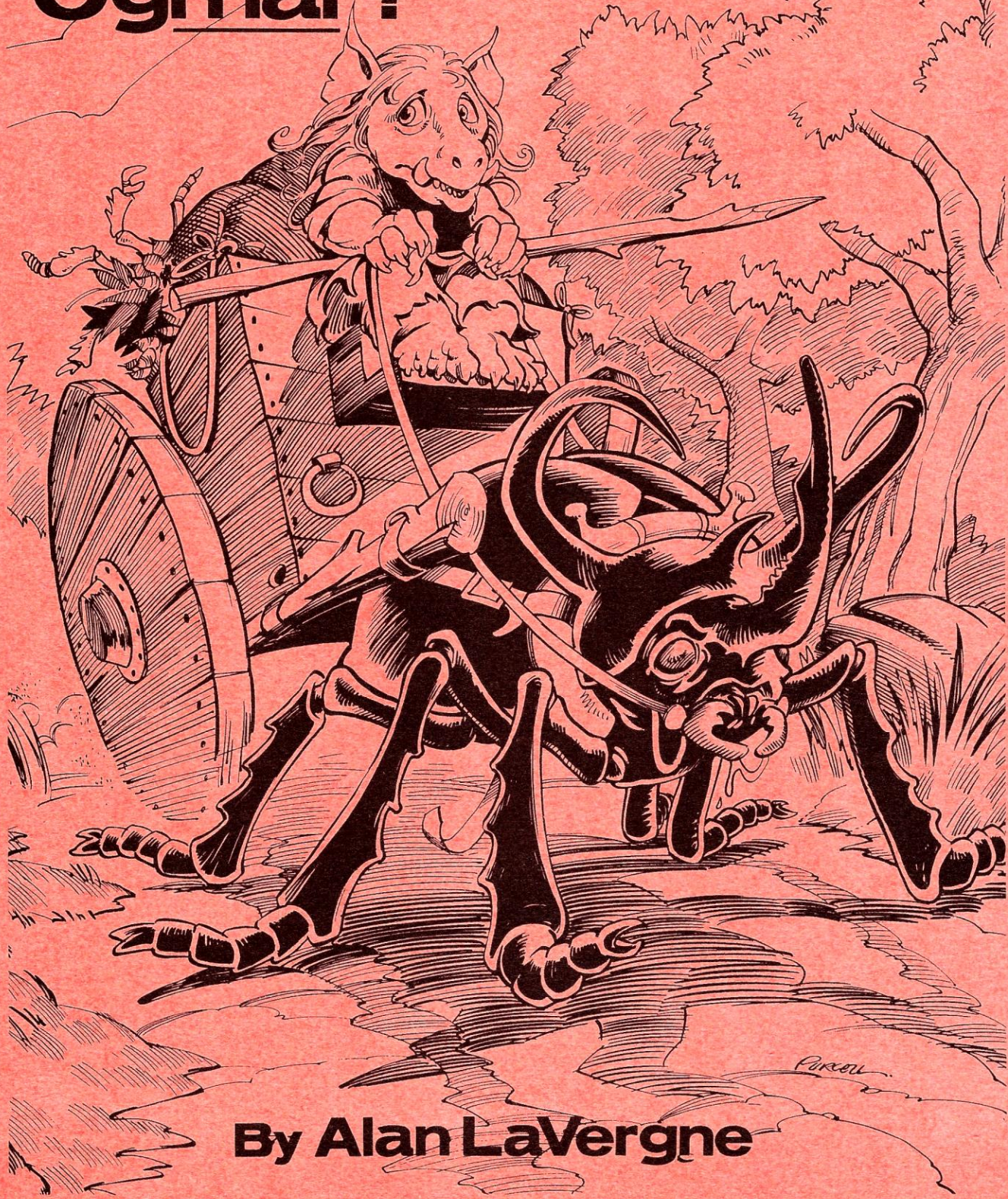
Ian Livingstone (left) and the British Steve Jackson showing a sample of Games Workshop's edition of *Call Of Cthulhu*.



Being There: Victory Games' Gerry Klug (center) flanked by his compatiots.

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A **RuneQuest** MODULE

Where's Ogmar?



By **Alan LaVergne**

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WHY HAVEN'T WE HEARD FROM OGMAR?

A Solo Scenario For a Troll Player-Character

Illustrated by
Steve Purcell

The Setting: You are a warrior in Srak Arhan, a troll village deep in Troll Woods. It is a fairly prosperous town as troll centers go, with about thirty huts built from stone, wood, and a relatively high class of debris and mud. Among the inhabitants are a powerful shaman and at least five warriors with fierce reputations.

At the moment, the town leaders are concerned. The weekly shipment of ham-beetle meat and turnips has not arrived. Ogmar has always been prompt, so foul play is considered a possibility. As an up-and-coming warrior of the tribe, you are being dispatched to determine the reason for the lateness of the shipment.

Ogmar lives with her husband and three trollkin in a clearing two days away. Two of the trollkin are slaves and the other is a free worker who usually brings the shipment, carried in a cart drawn by a giant beetle. Since Ogmar trusts the trollkin and treats him well, and since the trollkin has proved reliable in the past, there is little reason to suspect he has absconded.

The Player-Character: You can either generate your character using the stats given in the *RuneQuest 3 Creatures Book*, or you can use a troll player-character of your own, or you can select one of the character on the opposite page. As a responsible fighter being sent alone on a serious mission, this player-character should be somewhat better than the basic *RuneQuest* dark troll.

How to Use the Characters: First select weapons. BC is the basic chance of the weapon, listed in the Troll Base Chances for Weapons Table. Do not include the character's attack and parry bonuses; these are incorporated in the other term.

Next select the spells from the Srak Arhan Spell Table. Your character cannot know any spells not on this list. He or she may know fewer

than the maximum number of points of the variable spells, such as Bludgeon 2 or Heal 4.

Your character will speak Darktongue at Communication Bonus plus 30% plus (except for the great troll) 3D6 additional percentiles.

Now pick your character's gender, primary attitudes, personality traits, and appearance. Select a name full of k's and g's and any other gutturals you wish to invent.

Your character can wear cuirbouilli armor. To get metal will take money. To get money, you will have to be either a merchant prince or an adventurer.

Calculate current Fatigue points by subtracting total ENC from STR+CON.

After all these preparations, you are now ready to leave your village in the direction of Ogmar's ham beetle ranch. Go to 1.

TROLL BASE CHANCES FOR WEAPONS TABLE

	Weapon	Attack/Parry
Dark Troll	Mace	25/25
	Sling	25/-
	Maul	20/20
	Kite shield	-/25
	Thrown rock	25/-
Trollkin	Mace	25/25
	Sling	25/-
	Spear	20/20
	Target shield	-/25
	Thrown rock	25/-

All other weapons as per *RuneQuest 3 Combat Book*.

SRAK ARHAN SPELL TABLE

Countermagic 1	Protection 3	Demoralize (2)
Bludgeon 4	Bladesharp 2	Speedart (1)
Darkwall (2)	Heal 6	Repair (2)
Slow 2	Disruption (1)	Fanaticism 1
Detect Enemies (1)		



TROLL PLAYER- CHARACTERS



For Use With This Scenario

DARK TROLL 1

STR 14 Hit points = 15. Fatigue points = 28.
CON 14 Bonuses: Manipulation 7%, Agility -4%,
SIZ 16 Perception 9%, Stealth -10%, Knowledge
INT 15 5%, Communication 6%.
POW 14 1H weapon (BC+28%) att, (BC+2%) par.
DEX 10 2H weapon (BC+23%) att, (BC+12%) par.
APP 8 Shield (BC+18%) parry. Sling 39% att.
Damage bonus: +1D4.
Perception skills: Listen 45%, Darksense Search 38%,
Darksense Scan 38%, Track 22%.
Other skills: Add a total of 50 percentiles distributed
among Agility and Stealth skills (to the character's
BC). All others will be at BC.
Armor: 1 point skin + cuirboilli.
Spells: Heal 2 plus 5 more points from Spell Table.
Base strike rank: 1 (SIZ) + 3 (DEX) = 4.

This troll is small and weak for his race, but is smart
and healthy.

DARK TROLL 2

STR 18 Hit points: 15. Fatigue points: 30.
CON 12 Bonuses: Manipulation 11%, Agility -1%,
SIZ 18 Perception 4%, Stealth -6%, Knowledge
INT 12 2%, Communication 4%.
POW 13 1H weapon (BC+33%) att, (BC+5%) par.
DEX 15 2H weapon (BC+26%) att, (BC+15%) par.
APP 14 Shield (BC+19%) parry. Sling 43% att.
Damage bonus: +1D6.
Perception skills: Listen 29%, Darksense Search 31%,
Darksense Scan 30%, Track 9%.
Other skills: As in the case of Dark Troll 1.
Armor: 1 point skin + cuirboilli.
Spells: Heal 2 plus 5 more points from Spell Table.
Base strike rank: 1 (SIZ) + 3 (DEX) = 4.

This troll is strong and agile, but just a little slow.

SUPERIOR TROLLKIN 1

STR 13 Hit points: 14. Fatigue points: 30.
CON 17 Bonuses: Manipulation 6%, Agility 0%,
SIZ 12 Perception 10%, Stealth -8%, Knowledge
INT 14 4%, Communication 5%.
POW 17 1H weapon (BC+22%) att, (BC+4%) par.
DEX 11 2H weapon (BC+24%) att, (BC+15%) par.
APP 6 Shield (BC+29%) parry. Sling 29% att.
Damage bonus: +1D4.
Perception skills: Listen 49%, Darksense Search 38%,
Darksense Scan 39%, Track 24%.
Other skills: As for Dark Troll 1.
Armor: 1 point skin + cuirboilli.
Spells: Heal 3 plus 3 more points from Spell List.
Base strike rank: 2 (SIZ) + 3 (DEX) = 5.

This trollkin would be an exceptional member of his
race.

SUPERIOR TROLLKIN 2

STR 9 Hit points: 12. Fatigue points: 25.
CON 16 Bonuses: Manipulation 17%, Agility 10%,
SIZ 9 Perception 11%, Stealth 9%, Knowledge
INT 17 7%, Communication 7%.
POW 12 1H weapon (BC+18%) att, (BC+7%) par.
DEX 20 2H weapon (BC+20%) att, (BC+21%) par.
APP 10 Shield (BC+36%) parry. Sling 38% att.
Damage bonus: 0.
Perception skills: Listen 50%, Darksense Search 39%,
Darksense Scan 40%, Track 25%.
Other skills: As for Dark Troll 1.
Armor: 1 point skin + cuirboilli.
Spells: Heal 3 plus 3 more points from Spell Table.
Base strike rank: 3 (SIZ) + 1 (DEX) = 4.

This trollkin will almost certainly never be content
with the limited role allowable to his race in a troll
community.

GREAT TROLL

STR 22 Hit points: 20. Fatigue points: 37.
CON 15 Bonuses: Manipulation 4%, Agility -19%,
SIZ 25 Perception 1%, Stealth -17%, Knowledge
INT 8 -2%, Communication -4%.
POW 12 1H weapon (BC+15%) att, (BC+10%) par.
DEX 10 2H weapon (BC+25%) att, (BC+20%) par.
APP 3 Sling 20% att. Large shield 45% parry.
Damage bonus: +2D6.
Perception skills: Listen 27%, Darksense Search 27%,
Darksense Scan 26%, Track 6%.
Other skills: As for Dark Troll 1.
Spells: Heal 2 plus 3 more points from Spell Table.
Armor: 2 point skin + cuirboilli.
Base strike rank: 0 (SIZ) + 3 (DEX) = 3.

When this one hits, it hurts. Nevertheless, the slow wits
and low esteem in which great trolls are held by the
general troll community are drawbacks which counter-
balance the physical power of this character.

Start with 1 below

1 The first evening of your journey is uneventful. You are walking through a familiar forest, beneath a protective canopy of trees which makes it comfortably dim even during daylight hours. By shutting out much of the light, the trees also suppress the growth of underbrush, so you make good time. About midnight, the trail takes you into a line of low, rocky hills. The downslope on the far side travels through dense thickets of vines and brush. You are beginning to get hungry, and although you brought some food, you were also prepared to hunt for your supper; thus, when you see a ham beetle scuttle away into the bushes, you follow with weapon in hand, hoping for a little fresh meat. After about 30 meters, with you in hot pursuit, the beetle breaks from cover and tries to fly away. The beetle flies at 50%. Roll it on D100. If it flies successfully, you get one slingshot at it. If it did not fly this round, you get one weapon hit at it while it tries to fly again next round. The beetle has 5 hit points, one hit location, and a 2-point shell. If it flew successfully and you didn't knock it down with a slingstone or thrown rock, it gets away.

Whether you get your meal or not, you discover that your chase has led you along an unfamiliar cliffside. One cleft in the hill is filled with a small but dense stand of trees. And in among the trees, well concealed, is a compact, rugged stone building. It is roughly rectangular, what you can see of it, with a smaller enclosed room projecting from the middle front. There is a door in the side of this room facing you. There are no windows visible to you.

Try your scan. If you succeed, go to 5. If you fail, go to 2.

2 Are you going to advance into the tress and approach the door? If so, go to 8. Are you going to cast Detect Enemies? If so, go to 26. If you are returning to the trail, go to 3.

3 The rest of the night passes without incident. As the sun is rising, you are back in friendly forest again. It is time to find someplace to rest. Are you going to remain hidden during the day? Try your Hide. If you succeed, go to 4. If you fail, go to 6.

4 You awaken as the sun is falling behind the hills. Chewing a hunk of head cheese and a liverwurst-and-honey sandwich, you set out on the trail for Ogmar's beetle ranch. A couple of hours after midnight, you observe that the forest is thinning out, and know by this that you are approaching your destination; you have been at Ogmar's once before. In fact, the main building should be just past that little copse there. Try your Scan. If you succeed, go to 11. If you fail, go to 7.

5 Beside the "gatehouse," you see two standing skeletons. They are roughly average humanoid size, and are holding maces and shields. Their bones are protected by cuirboilli armor. The heads turn in your direction. If you are going to cast a spell at one of them (decide which: the larger one with the heavy mace or the smaller one with the light mace), go to 8. Otherwise, go to 2.

6 During the day, while you are asleep, a python takes an interest in you. How soundly are you sleeping? Attempt a CONx5% roll. If you fail the roll, you were sleeping lightly, and wake up the round just before the python casts its coils around you. Otherwise, you slept peacefully through its approach and will not wake up until it makes its first attempt to loop you.

THE PYTHON

STR 28 Hit points: 16.
CON 11 Armor: 3-point skin.
SIZ 21 Loop attack, SR 9, 50%; sleeping target 70%.
POW 3D6 (Roll POW when and if you cast a spell at it.)
DEX 10

The loop attack cannot be parried, but you can try to Dodge it. If the attack is successful, you are enveloped. You cannot escape except by a STR vs. STR roll against the python on the Resistance Table. Starting on the first round, you take 3D6 damage/round. Chest armor absorbs this damage.

Hit location	Tail	01-06	3/6
	Body	07-14	3/8
	Head	15-20	3/6

If you kill the python and chop it open, you will find a jewel wedged in its digestive tract. If you Evaluate it correctly, you will receive 700 p for it, when and if you return to your village. If you failed to Evaluate it correctly, you will get 100 p for it.

In any case, if you survive, go to 4.

? What Ever Happened To Ogmar ? ? ?

7 You don't see anything out of the ordinary, but you also don't hear any of the usual sounds of troll habitation. Perhaps something is amiss. Try to Listen more closely. If you succeed, go to 10. If you fail, go to 12.

8 You are attacked by two skeletons.

DARK TROLL SKELETON

STR 20 Armor: 3 pts everywhere.
SIZ 16 One hit pt per location.
DEX 10 Magic points: 2.
Heavy mace (D10+D6), 10 hp, SR 6, 50%/50%.
Medium shield, 12 ap, 50%.

SUPERIOR TROLLKIN SKELETON

STR 14 Armor: 3 pts everywhere.
SIZ 11 One hit pt per location.
DEX 17 Magic points: 1.
Light mace (D8+D4), 6 hp, SR 6, 85%/85%.
Medium shield, 12 ap, 85%.

If you were throwing a spell at one of the skeletons, the other attacks you; they both do if capable of it.

If you were unaware of the skeletons and just advancing toward the stone building, you get sufficient warning to parry and cast a defensive spell this round, but no offensive spell.

If you were aware of the skeletons, you may do whatever you wish, but as soon as you take any offensive action, they will both attack you if capable of it.

Remember that skeletons do not take damage from impaling weapons except on a critical hit.

If you defeat the skeletons, go to 13. If they defeat you, go back to the beginning and generate a new character.



9
You circle the village, looking for tracks. You find plenty of footprints, but it is difficult to determine which are leaving the clearing. Try your Track. If you succeed, go to 14. If you fail, go to 15. If you Fumble, you took the wrong direction, got lost, and spent so much time trying to reorient yourself that there is nothing left to do but to return to Srak Arham: go to 25.

10
You hear a clacking sound, very dry, almost metallic. The sound is getting closer. Whirling to face the source of the sound, you see a young giant mantis, about to strike at you. In this first round, you can parry once (or Dodge) and cast an unfocused spell, but not attack, either with magic or physically. Go to 12.

11
In the high brush, you see a young giant mantis approaching you, evidently with hostile intent. You have time for one missile shot, unless you can successfully cast Slow at it. That would give you one more sling shot before it closed. Otherwise, the first round proceeds normally, with both you and the mantis attacking at normal strike ranks. Go to 12.

12
A giant praying mantis is attacking you. Fortunately, it is a young one. Adult giant mantises are giraffe size, but this one is about the size of a great troll, although spindly-looking. It is reaching for you with its foreclaws.

If you were unaware of it, neither hearing it nor seeing it coming, it gets +20% on its attacks in the first round, and you cannot parry or Dodge. If you heard it coming, you can parry once or Dodge, and try to cast an unfocused spell. If you saw it coming, you have more options, as described in 11.

GIANT PRAYING MANTIS

STR 24 Hit Points; 15.
CON 10 Armor: 4-point chitin.
SIZ 20 Foreclaw (D8+2D6), SR 6,
POW 3D6 25%.
DEX 15 Bite (D6), SR 6, 75%.

The mantis attacks with both foreclaws at SR 6. If a foreclaw hits its target, roll the mantis's STR (24) against

your SIZ. If it succeeds, it lifts you to its mouth, and will bite at you in subsequent rounds. You cannot Dodge the Bite attack. The bite will destroy armor, chewing through it to get at your flesh. The mantis begins to chew on a randomly determined location, feeding there until the location is destroyed, then moving on to a second location. Armor protects only until it is chewed through.

Lopping off one leg will not functionally incapacitate the mantis, but cutting off two will immobilize it. A hit in the leg does at most 3 pts to its total hit points.

Roll its POW if you cast a spell at it.

Hit Location	R hind leg	01	4/3
	L hind leg	02	4/3
	Abdomen	03-05	4/6
	Right wing	06	4/4
	Left wing	07	4/4
	R fore leg	08	4/3
	L fore leg	09	4/3
	Thorax	10-12	4/6
	Right claw	13-15	4/5
	Left claw	16-18	4/5
	Head	19-20	4/5

Continued next page

13
If you are going to enter the building, go to 17. If you are going to return to the trail, go to 3.

14
The tracks are quite fresh. You realize you are going to overtake your quarry before daybreak. Go to 16.

15
Because of the time it took you to find the right set of tracks, it will be morning before you can overtake your quarry. Go to 16.

16
Following the tracks, you move rapidly along a trail leading toward the edge of Troll Woods. Just in time you see the camp. If you quickly found the tracks back at Ogmar's clearing, it is still a couple hours till dawn. Otherwise, it is a little after daybreak.

In the clearing are two elves, a large cart pulled by Ogmar's tame giant beetle, and a large burlap sack on the ground. One of the elves is standing guard. The other is either sleeping (if it is still night), or eating (if it is morning). The elves have spears and bows. They are wearing cuirboilli armor. If you think they are too tough for you, you may return to your village of Srak Arhan, bearing the news and the infor-

mation about the culprits, in which case, go to 25. If you aren't going home yet, and wish to move closer to the camp to look it over, try your Search. If you succeed, go to 19. If you fail, go to 18.

17
As you enter the door, you are attacked by Fearshock. No amount of Countermagic will block the attack. Roll its effective MP of 18 against your CON on the Resistance Table. If the roll is a critical or special success, you will be killed or disabled by the attack, and sacrificed, your spirit bound into this building as a ghost. Return to the beginning and choose a new character. If the roll is a normal success, you flee back to the trail; go to 3. If the roll is a failure, you are unaffected by the Fearshock and may either return to the trail (go to 3) or continue on into the building (go to 24).

18
You trip and fall over a concealed wire. Crashing to the ground, you make a whole lot of noise. If you leap immediately to your feet and flee without looking back, you will escape and be able to return to Srak Arhan; go to 25. If you are not running away, go to 21.

19
You spot a tripwire concealed in the brush. Feeling smug about your ability to spot their traps, you creep closer to the elves' camp. Try your Sneak. If you succeed, go to 22. If you fail, go to 20. If you fumble, go to 21.

20
The elf on guard Listens at 40%. Did he hear you? If so, go to 21. If the other elf is awake, she Listens at 60%, but she only has a half chance, because she isn't paying close attention. If she succeeds at Listen (at 30%), go to 21. If neither elf heard you, go to 22.

21
You have been making noise. If it is night, the guard elf casts Light in your direction, and you stand out like coal in the snow. It's time to fight. Go to 23.

22
The elves don't know you're coming. Unless it is a missile attack, or unless you cast a spell at one of them first, your first round attack is from surprise and you get a 20% add the first round. Go to 23.



12 (continued from previous page)

If the mantis wins, it eats you. Go back to the beginning and start another character.

If you kill or disable the mantis, you continue on into the compound. There a dismay scene greets you. Ogmar's fine mud hut is smashed and destroyed. The ham beetle pens have been pulled down. Ogmar's famous turnip bed looks like it was looted by a hundred gophers: not a single plant remains and the ground is all piled and scattered. There is a large heap of dirt in the center of the clearing. With sinking heart, you dig into it, and find the bodies of three trollkin, Ogmar's husband Quirq, many ham beetles, and three dismembered giant mantises. Only Ogmar is missing. You now understand why the young mantis attacked you. Probably the offspring of Ogmar's riding mantises, it has not been fed for at least a day.

The bodies have been pierced many times, as if by arrows or spears. They

appear to have been dead for about one day. Doing some hasty rites over the victims, you find that Quirq tastes pretty good. When you get back to Srak Arhan, you will be able to summon the shaman to conduct the proper rituals for the dead.

You continue to search through the rubble of the village. It looks to you as if Ogmar's hut collapsed, trapping the inhabitants within, which were then slaughtered without much chance to resist. Down in the rubble, you find the shattered remains of a glazed pottery medallion, well known in the community for its beautiful enameling. It was a Darkwall matrix, but alas, its magical power vanished when it was broken.

You look more closely at the pieces of the medallion. Try your Search. If you succeed, you notice that the scratches suggest the medallion was broken by a sharp pointed object being thrust into the center of it. There is, however, no blood on the medallion, indicating that perhaps the medallion was broken after the battle

was over. Who would intentionally break a spell-casting matrix?

Try your Search again. This time success means you found the shreds of a small scroll. Digging deeper into the rubble, you find larger scraps. When you have time, you will be able to piece the collected scraps together. They will prove to form an essay in Darktongue on the subject of Insect Care. Insect Care is a Knowledge skill with a basic chance of 0%. If you ever read the scroll, it will improve your level in the skill by 20%. In order to sell the scroll, you will have to copy it, which means you must read it first. The scroll is worth 1000 p as an item of treasure. Of course, if you didn't succeed at Search, you didn't find it.

Now you have two choices. You may return to Srak Arhan with the bad news, to bring others to perform the funeral rites. If this is what you want to do, go to 25. Otherwise, you may circle the clearing, looking for tracks to tell you where the perpetrators of this crime have gone. If that is what you are trying, go to 9.

23

CYMRYG

Elf male, initiate of Elf Mother.

STR 9 Hit points: 10.

CON 12 Fatigue points: 13.

SIZ 8 Armor: 3-pt cuirboilli,

INT 14 ENC 4.

POW 16 Skills: Scan 41%, Listen

DEX 10 40%, Dodge 28%.

APP 16

2H shortspear (D8+1), 10 ap, SR 8, 50%/50%, ENC 2.

Bow (D8+1), 6 ap, SR 3/9, 55%, ENC (including arrows) 2.

Spells: Light, Speedart, Heal 3, Protection 2, Repair 2, Detect Enemies, Food Song.

Cymryg had one use of Summon Small Gnome, which he used to undermine Ogmar's hut, making it possible for him and Shanda to defeat the trolls. The gnome also helped to harvest the turnips.

If attacked at night, Cymryg first tries to cast Light, then Protection. Cymryg will be happy to exchange missile fire, casting Speedarts. If Shanda is sleeping, he will yell in order to wake her up.

SHANDA

Elf female, lay member of Elf Mother.

STR 11 Hit points: 11.

CON 11 Fatigue points: 13.

SIZ 11 Armor: 3-pt cuirboilli,

INT 11 ENC 4.

POW 11 Spells: Speedart, Blade-

DEX 16 sharp 1, Food Song, Heal

APP 7 2.

Selfbow (D6+1), 5 ap, SR 2/7, 35%, ENC (including arrows) 2.

2H short spear, 10 ap, SR 5, 30%/35%, ENC 2.

Skills: Search 50%, Listen 60%, Dodge 33%.

If Shanda is awake when you attack (i.e., if it is daytime) and your attack is not from surprise (i.e., one of them heard you), the first thing Shanda does is to plunge her spear into the big sack lying on the ground. The tip comes out bloody.

If you are attacking at night and Cymryg didn't hear you, Shanda is asleep when you attack. She gets a 45% chance to wake up the first round, 56% chance to wake up the second round, and 67% chance every subsequent round. She will attack you the round after she wakes up. She is sleeping in her armor (and will have lost 7 more fatigue points because of it).

If you fell over the tripwire at night,

her wake-up chance begins immediately, with two rounds before you reach them to attack. If she succeeds in waking up in the very first round, she will stab the bag before engaging you.

When she begins fighting you, Cymryg will cast Protection on her, as long as he is still capable of it.

Cymryg & Shanda**Hit Location**

	Melee	Missile/Spell
Right leg	01-04	01-03 4/4
Left leg	05-08	04-06 4/4
Abdomen	09-11	07-10 4/4
Chest	12	11-15 3/5
Right arm	13-15	16-17 4/3
Left arm	16-18	18-19 4/3
Head	19-20	20 3/4

In the bag is, of course, Ogmar.

OGMAR

Troll female.

STR 11 Hit points: 12.

CON 10 Current hit points: 5.

SIZ 14 No armor.

INT 11 Current MP: 2.

POW 12 Unhealed damage: 4 pts

DEX 11 right leg, 3 pts in chest.

APP 17

Spells: Heal 4, Repair 2, Slow 1, Glamour 3.

Skills: Speak Trade 50%, Orate 30%, Insect (beetle) Breeding 90%, Speak Dark 80%, Fast Talk 61%.

By casting Glamour on herself, Ogmar managed to convince Cymryg to keep her alive, in return for a large ransom, over Shanda's vehement objections. If you win the battle and Cymryg is disabled but not dead, Ogmar will ask you to spare his life. She will kill Shanda herself, if she gets the chance.

However, if Shanda got a chance to push her spear into the bag, Ogmar is dead.

If you defeat the elves, you find the treasure that they looted from Ogmar's farm: 700 pennies, 4 gems, and 3 doses of potency 12 spider venom antidote. Try your Evaluate on the gems. They are worth 800, 85, 35, and 300 p respectively. You get 300, 65, 10, and 120 p, respectively if you fail your Evaluate roll; roll once for each gem.

If Ogmar is still alive, she will demand that you return all this treasure to her, except for one dose of spider antidote. If you agree, go to 29. Otherwise go to 27. Of course, if she is not alive, you get to keep it all; go to 28.

24

This place is a secret temple of a bloody troll death god (e.g., Zorak Zoran). The priest inside, supported by four burly warriors, tells you that you must become an initiate of the god if you wish to live. If you agree but later desert the cult, you will have to leave troll society. If you stay to be initiated, go to 30. If you refuse to be initiated, you are killed and your spirit is bound into the temple as a ghost.

THE END

25

The trolls of Srak Arhan are outraged by the news and are disappointed you did not kill those responsible, but you still receive 80 hours of weapons training for going out by yourself to investigate.

THE END

26

Five, apparently behind the building unless it is deeper than it looks. Return to 2 with the same options.

27

Well, Ogmar knows you did rescue her, so she will unhappily let you keep the treasure.

THE END

28

In addition to the treasure you get 80 hours of weapons training, plus all the elf salad you can eat.

THE END

29

For returning Ogmar safely and not extorting her treasure from her, you receive, through your shaman: 2 more points of spirit magic, selected from the list at the beginning; a suit of bronze chainmail; 120 hours of weapons training; 60 hours of Perception skills training; 5% Evaluate training. Not only that, Ogmar recovers from her grief at the loss of her family, she give you the 500 p gem as a reward. Finally, if you are a trollkin, you gain 2D4 percentiles in Fast Talk because of the big impression you made on your community, and the resulting boost in your confidence.

THE END

30

You receive 50 hours of weapons training, and are taught the spell Fanaticism by the temple's shaman-priest (unless you already know it). You will not get out in time to do anything about Ogmar, however.

THE END

□

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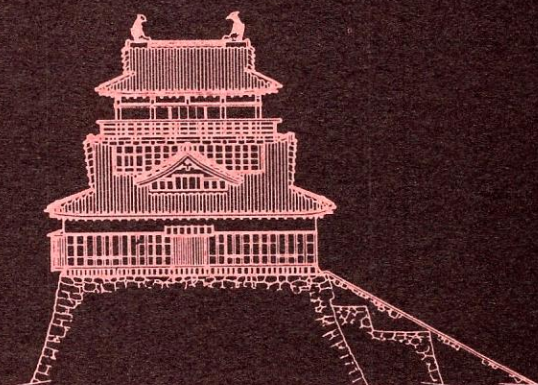
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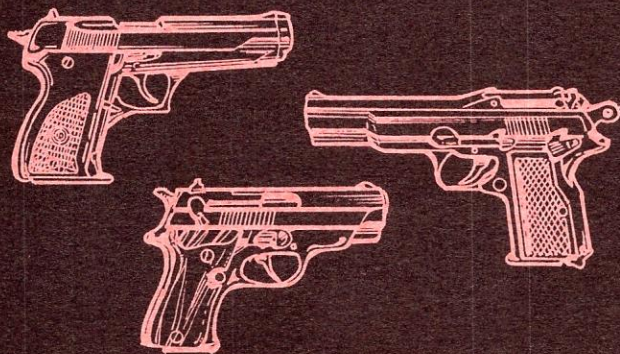
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Mike Stackpole (left), Steve Peterson (center), and Aaron Allston (right) happy about their collective effort, Hero Games' *Justice Inc.*

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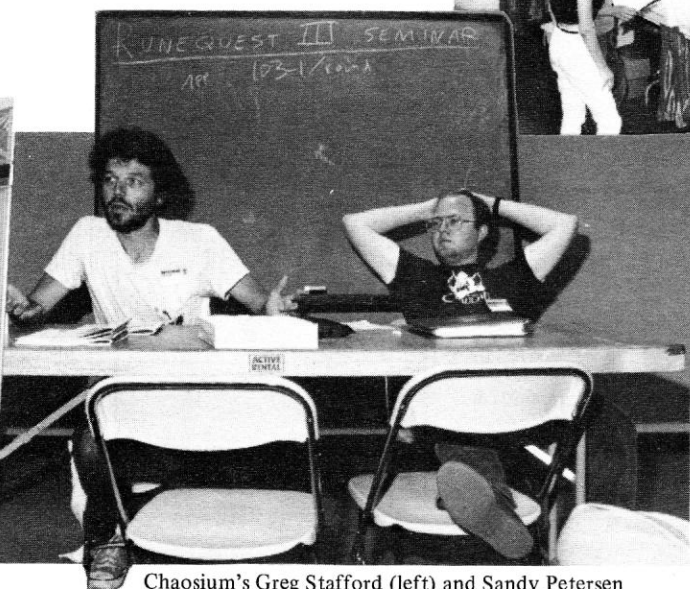


Dave Cook (left) and Kevin Blume announcing the impending publication of TSR's *Indiana Jones* role-playing game.



Steve Jackson's *Car Wars* van notches another victim.

"Where's Tadashi?"



Chaosium's Greg Stafford (left) and Sandy Petersen holding a *RuneQuest 3* seminar.



AutoVentures' display of their Project "Streetfighter."

Game Reviews

Chivalry & Sorcery/MS&PE/Lands Of Adventure/
The Traveller Adventure/Cthulhu Companion/Dark Assassin/
Witness for the Defense/Island of Dr. Destroyer/Chilling
Chambers/The Undersea Environment/Famine In Far-Go

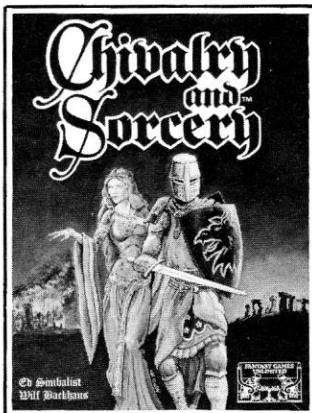
CHIVALRY AND SORCERY

By Ed Simbalist and Wilf
Backhaus (FGU, \$20)

Reviewed by Reid Hoffman

The second edition of *Chivalry And Sorcery* is in many respects a marvelous redemption of the first edition. The physical structure of its rules (perhaps encyclopedia would be more descriptive) has improved a thousandfold, although many inherent problems remain. Expanded into three staple-bound volumes, the second edition is harder than the glue-back first edition. The second edition also features such luxuries as a character sheet, legible print instead of the reduced four-page-in-one format of the first edition, accurate cross-referencing, and (gasp) an index. In these respects the second edition is far and beyond the first edition; one small step for fantasy role-playing games, one large step for FGU.

The second edition, however, is still rife with many of the intrinsic problems of the first edition. Principally, *C&S* is complex. The first volume contains general aspects of role-playing, and character development and advancement. The section on the general aspects (how to play your characters, how to gamemaster, developing your scenarios, creating a *C&S* world, running a game session) is becoming part of the standard issue in fantasy role-playing games. This part is decently written and presented. When one enters the character development puddle, however, the water begins to muddy. *C&S* has 9 characteristics: Dexterity, Constitution, Strength, Intelligence, Wisdom, Bardic Voice, Piety, Appearance, and Ferocity. The player has a range between 70 and 187, averaging 120. Character Prime Requisite points to divide among his characteristics. The player then consults his astrology chart to determine, by sign and luck in aspecting (good, poor, or neutral), which professions are good for him in terms of improved increased experience gain. There are some 17 general character classes with some, like mages, haeplings, elves, and dwarves, having a myriad of character class divisions beneath the General class. Following this is a section on being a monster player-character, from such original choices as Kobolds, Goblins, and varied Orcs to an



assortment of Trolls and Giants, Vampires and Were-critters. To enliven this, there are four pages of social background tables which even after running a *C&S* campaign I was not fully able to decipher. Briefly, a word that does not apply to *C&S*, the pages continue to include size tables, explanations of all the characteristics and their functions, psychological options like phobias, eye color, complexion, eyesight, hair color, special traits, and character attitudes.

C&S's experience system, also contained in the first volume, works on the theory of levels. It closely resembles the *Dungeons & Dragons* experience system with one major exception. First, the character rises in general levels of experience, like *D&D*, which improves his body level (hit points) and personal fighting factor or personal magic factor (capability in those respective areas). Then the character expends experience points (gone forever) to raise his ability in specific skill areas. The skill list is realistic and expansive: armor wearing, counting past the ten fingers on your hands, languages, a broad list of thief and general skills, various fighting skills, and (for magicians of any sort) assorted magical skills. The presentation of these skills is not clear, though it can eventually after some sweat be understood, and would benefit tremendously from a series of examples with one character like Cormac in *RuneQuest*.

The second volume presents the feudal world as interpreted by *C&S*. The information on knights, clerics, and tournaments, along with the enormous list of consumer goods for your happy-go-lucky adventurer, is the most valuable material contributed to

the fantasy role-playing world by *C&S*. The social system and siege rules are too complex in some areas, lacking in others, and generally poorly explained. Individual combat in the last few pages depicts two alternate systems which are really not different from each other. The "fast" combat system uses a D20 and bases all its percentiles of hitting on that, while the "advanced" combat system exactly mirrors the "fast" one except it uses D100 and 5% integrals. Effectively, *C&S* attempted to combine *D&D*'s combat with *RuneQuest*'s when it would have been far simpler and easier to comprehend had they only used one. Again a character example engaging in a complete combat would help immensely. As the combat system stands, a reader has to wade through all the muck of body bashing, criticals, regular bashing, blows (number of actions in a combat round), the great blow, ferocity, berserker rage, and more. Then, as a sort of apology, comes a good lengthy list of weapons which can enliven interest in some areas of play.

The third volume contains 46 pages teeming with different classes of magicians, cabbalists, enchanters, sorcerers, warlocks, power word magicians, and so forth. These pages are lengthy and difficult to understand, but would be great for a languid and protracted world-spanning campaign. Once again, the grinding fact is

that an example of a character going through all the processes would make the rules much easier to comprehend. This sounds like a cure-all and would also probably add some pages *in toto* to the manuscript, but it is an enormous time-saver and aid to understanding *C&S*. The next 33 pages are about natural and super-natural monsters and are neither exciting nor original, although as it stands, it is well done and complete. The selection on Trolls and the Norse is the best but the other monsters lack culture.

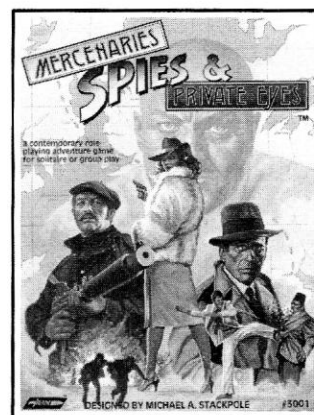
By this point *C&S* is obviously cumbersome reading. *C&S* would be a superb *Lord of the Rings* campaign, extremely prolonged and drawn out. It plays slowly, and is rarely well explained, and would be helped greatly by a character example spread throughout the whole volume. Though, like all games, most of *C&S*'s problems could be solved by a creative gamemaster, the effort would border on the Herculean. The material is expansive, though some areas such as monsters could use some supplements to keep the game interesting. For a player interested in quick and easy play, simple rules, and not the *C&S* type of campaign, avoid *C&S* like the Black Plague. For a player looking for material to enliven his fantasy-feudal campaign with culture and breadth of information, or willing to give a lot of effort to a campaign, *C&S* is quite good. □

MERCENARIES, SPIES & PRIVATE EYES

By Michael A. Stackpole
(Blade, \$10)

Reviewed by William A. Barton

With most of the different angles one can take for a swords & sorcery fantasy or a starships & aliens science-fiction role-playing game played out, a lot of publishers are turning to other subjects as the basis for role-playing games. Among those subjects are espionage, modern combat, and detection. One of the best of last year's entries—one which manages to cover all three of these subjects—is *Mercenaries, Spies & Private Eyes*, created by veteran game designer Mike Stackpole and published by Blade, the role-playing game arm of Flying Buffalo.



As its title suggests, *MS&PE* does indeed set out to cover in role-playing game terms all three related, but separate, topics—mercenary actions, spying, and the art of detection. And while it may not completely reach the

depth of such specialized games as FGU's *Merc* in its area, it quite adequately—and playably—accomplishes its task. And accomplishes it at least as well as, if not better than, some other recent entries in the espionage role-playing game field, including Hero Games' *Espionage* and Victory Games' vaunted *James Bond 007*.

MS&PE is one of those games that is based on an existing system, in this case FBI's *Tunnels & Trolls*. It uses the same basic character attributes—strength, luck, intelligence, dexterity, constitution, and charisma, adding speed—all rolled up on the standard 3D6. The values of a character's luck, dexterity, and intelligence either add to (if higher than 12) or subtract from (if lower than 9) his combat adds, or the extra damage he does in hand-to-hand combat, and his luck does the same for missile adds for missile combat (mostly guns in this game as opposed to *T&T*'s arrows).

However, to this basic character generation, *MS&PE* adds a wide range of skills available to a character depending on his IQ level and, with some, the levels of other attributes. Skills range from IQ 4 skills such as Archery, Brawling, Bladed Weapons, and Firearms (the latter two subdivided into several further categories) all the way up to IQ 16's Poison and Cryptology—with a wide variety in between, including advanced educational degrees in a chosen field. There are also several "open" skills—available at any IQ—which include certain Psychic skills, a well-crafted Martial Arts skill and the possibility of a non-American character having a title. There are more than one hundred separate skills available to the *MS&PE* character, enough to allow the portrayal of character types as diverse as Simon Templar or Dirty Harry—quite a nice and versatile grab bag from which to choose. Two of the most interesting of the skills offered are the catch-all skills of Occupation Skill and Special Interest, two of the open skills. These allow for the addition of skills not specifically covered by the game's ample list. The first of these covers any skill that one might pick up while employed in a certain profession or craft—O.S. Reporter being a good example (although a reporter would also wish to pick up Journalism as a college degree, too), O.S. Auto Mechanic another. The Special Interest skill is to allow for those odd bits of information that make a character a living, breathing entity rather than a cardboard stereotype—knowledge derived from hobbies,

personal studies, etc. Sherlock Holmes' encyclopedic knowledge of tobacco ashes is an example of such a Special Interest skill. These catch-all skills are especially useful in rounding out the background of a character, and can come handy at the oddest times, much like the Trivia skill in FASA's *Star Trek* role-playing game.

Characters may purchase a number of skills in initial generation equal to their IQ points (though some skills require more than 1 point). Most skills have levels, and if the player is willing to spend extra points, these skills may be purchased above first level in character generation. After this, new skills may only be learned if a character's IQ is raised, though most leveled skills may be raised through earned experience (more on this later). Some special skills—Psychic skills and titles—may only be purchased in initial generation and cannot be picked up later at all. Skill levels may be used to increase characters' chances of succeeding at certain saving throws when the skill seems applicable. Several skills may be combined for this purpose if all apply.

Which brings us to *MS&PE*'s saving throws. If you are familiar with *T&T*, you'll be familiar with these already. For those who are not, the *MS&PE/T&T* saving throw system is elegantly simple and eminently workable for determining whether or not a character is successful at a particular task, be it hitting a target with a burst from an assault rifle or cracking a tough computer code. All saving rolls are made on 2D6. Saving rolls themselves have various levels—usually set by the game-master based on the difficulty of the task. For a first-level saving throw, a character must roll 20 on 2D6, adding whatever attribute would be the governing one (DEX if firing a weapon, LUC if checking to see if he missed stepping into a hole, etc.), plus any skill levels that would apply. Any time doubles are rolled, these are added in and the dice rolled again until doubles fail to come up. Second-level throws require a total roll plus attribute plus skill levels to add up to 30. A third-level saving throw requires a total of 35, and so on. There is also a "zero level saving throw" that requires only a roll of 5 or more on the two dice for extremely simple tasks that still might have a slight possibility of failure due to sheer chance (any level throw in which the dice fail to add up to 5 or more fails). In addition to the set level values, saving throws may be required against other figures—against damage done by bullets to

see if the character is knocked down by the force, against the difference in Speed between two Martial Artists to see who strikes first, etc. Overall, it's simple, playable, yet versatile enough to cover all situations that might arise in a game.

Combat in *MS&PE* is again based on the *T&T* system, but with refinements and additions for the modern scope of the game. Basic hand-to-hand combat is essentially the same as in *T&T*. Characters in melee with one another roll their damage and add their hand-to-hand combat adds. The one with the highest total score wins the combat and the other takes the difference between the rolls in damage. Armor (in this case flak jackets, etc.) and certain skills (Brawling, Street Fighting) will absorb damage. While not overly realistic, and probably the least satisfying aspect of the game's combat system, it does work. Especially since, as opposed to *T&T*'s lumping of all attacks by everyone on one side into a single attack, *MS&PE* encourages one-on-one melees.

Missile combat in the game is handled differently. While one melee combat round takes 30 seconds of game time, each missile combat round is only 15 seconds long, allowing two to a melee round. Up to three shots (or bursts from an automatic weapon) may be fired each missile combat round, with modifiers to hit for recoil—or an auto-fire gun may dump an entire clip. This makes a lot more sense than in games such as *Traveller* where only one shot or burst may be fired each 15 second combat round (slowest trigger fingers in captivity). The level of the saving throw to hit a target is determined partially by weapon type (there are two separate tables—one for pistols and one for rifle-length weapons) and the rest by cross-referencing range with the actions of both target and firer; the two numbers derived from the latter are added for the final to-hit number. Again, this is fairly simple, but it works. And while a bit abstract, it is more realistic than a lot of other systems, yet avoids the flow-chart requirements of some games that emphasizes extreme realism. The game's method for determining a hit when dumping a clip from an auto-weapon—the number of bullets let loose divided by 3 being subtracted from the number needed to hit—is one of the better ways I've seen utilized in any game to reflect the higher chance of hitting when more lead is flying.

Martial Arts combat is also

treated separately from regular hand-to-hand combat. Martial Arts combat takes place during the missile combat rounds and, unlike regular hand-to-hand, allows a Martial Artist to strike a target before the target can fire on him, if he makes his Speed saving throw. Martial Arts levels may also be applied to attacks with certain weapons if normally used by that particular style of martial art, and the damage done (1D6 per level) can be split up among more than one target. While somewhat abstracted, Martial Arts skill in *MS&PE* is actually much more effective and realistic than similar types of unarmed combat or so-called "martial arts" in a lot of other game systems, if only in its allowance of more than one attack per round for higher levels of the skill and its ability to kill with a blow—a reality with proper training, yet near impossible in most other games. If you are looking for a game in which you can really do something with martial arts, akin to some of the feats of Bruce Lee or TV's *The Master*, *MS&PE* is definitely the game to check out. (In a recent session of our local gaming group, one fifth-level Martial Artist actually managed to down a Blue Thunder-type helicopter—by taking out the pilot.)

One more thing that should be noted about combat in *MS&PE*—it's deadly. Most guns are capable of killing with one shot if the damage rolled is high enough and the character has no protective armor (a few do enough damage to kill most unprotected characters even on low rolls). Hand-to-hand combat will only kill if the player states his character is trying to beat his target to death, but guns will always kill—or at least do serious damage. There are still chances to survive excessive gunplay with proper modern medical treatment and, if all else fails, with a special "megadeath saving throw" on the character's luck, which will allow him to emerge from a hail of bullets unscathed. However, players used to games such as *Traveller* in which a character can take hit after hit and still live through a battle may have a rude awakening if they use similar tactics in *MS&PE*. A good way to teach reckless players the value of thinking through their moves before charging in guns blazing.

A final major area in which *MS&PE* follows its fantasy role-playing game ancestor is in character improvement through the use of Adventure Points (*T&T*'s experience points). Successful completion of an adventure earns a character a certain amount of these Adventure Points (APs),

which can be used to raise the character in levels—at 1000 points, the character becomes a second-level adventurer; at 3000 he becomes third level, and so on, the number of points necessary to raise a level increasing as the level does. With each new level attained, the character is awarded 2 points to be added to any one attribute (or 1 point to any two) he chooses. The obvious value of this is to make higher-level saving throws (and thus tasks) easier as a character progresses. Plus, with IQ increases, more skills may be learned. APs may also be awarded for making saving throws, missing saving throws (learning the hard way), taking extra risks, and for other factors at the gamemaster's discretion. Normally, I'm afraid, I'm not overly taken with games that use character-level increases, as this can often lead to high-level characters that are ridiculously powerful, especially when the level boasts artificially raise the amount of damage a character can take (as in *D&D*'s hit dice increases) or allow increases in skills, etc., never used in the adventure. I don't mind it so much in *MS&PE*, partly because of the high quality of the rest of the game system and partly because, if used properly, it can reflect physical and mental attributes honed by use. What saves it is that skills, when used successfully (or misused poorly enough to teach a lesson) can earn APs themselves, which allow the same skills to be raised in levels. Thus jumps in skill levels are tied to their use, not artificially to level increases of the character. This is a good (and completely acceptable to me) compromise between straight character-level-based games and those in which only skills increase through use.

MS&PE further updates the *T&T* system to the game's modern subject area with rules on car crashes and ramming. Like the rest of the rules, these are presented simply and are playable without being complex. Other modern areas of play dealt with in the game include the use of various explosives, modern poisons, character income, specific hit locations, and non-fantasy beasts. The animals list is a bit brief, but the samples provided are varied enough to allow a gamemaster to extrapolate other creatures from the stats of those included. The equipment lists, on the other hand, especially those of weapons, are almost exhaustive and more than adequate for almost any mercenary, espionage, or detective scenario one could devise (special spy gadgets such as 007 used in the movies are omitted, though

these wouldn't be hard for a gamemaster to design, given the simple, clean approach of the rules). The list of hand weapons and other items do include such semi-exotics as shurikens, boomsticks, chains, tasers, and shock rods. And the firearms are broken down into twelve different categories, from muzzle loaders to military machine guns, with ample examples of each (though the shotgun list is a bit skimpy, having only three examples—fewer than the muzzle loader list). There are a few curious omissions, particularly of guns that are illustrated in the book, such as the Ruger assault rifle (favorite of *TV's A-Team*). And, according to a local gun enthusiast I know, some of the ammo prices are too high, apparently off a decimal place. Overall, though, quite impressive.

There are other interesting sections in the *MS&PE* rulebook, including one on using live clues in a game and an oddity called "Tunnels & Thompsons" that integrates the fantasy worlds of *T&T*—underground labyrinths, vampires, and magic—with *MS&PE*, should a gamemaster be of a mind to run such a combination. (It seems that *MS&PE* grew from such a *T&T* session once upon a time.) The only omission here was the lack of guidelines on converting a *T&T* creature's Monster Rating to *MS&PE* CON points for damage purposes—relatively easy for someone familiar with both games. A section on law enforcement agencies gives "attributes" for such organizations and rates the FBI, CIA, KGB, Interpol, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in each area. It also provides guidelines for characters who are part of an official police organization.

The heart of *MS&PE*, however, at least for the gamemaster, is to be found in the areas outlining the creation and running of mercenary, spy, and mystery scenarios. The section on mercenary missions is relatively brief (two pages) and straightforward. After all, it doesn't take much instruction on how to run a mercenary scenario for anyone who has ever watched the dozens of war movies available on the late, late show. (For greater depth in this area, games such as *Merc* are recommended.) The guidelines on spy scenarios are somewhat longer and more detailed, though again relatively brief. You may find more on espionage adventures in *Top Secret*, *Espionage*, or the *Bond* game, but then, again, anyone who has followed the movie career of England's top secret agent, or was a *Man from U.N.C.L.E.*, *I Spy*, or *Avengers*

aficionado during *TV's* spy craze days, will have plenty of source material for such scenarios already in mind. Where *MS&PE* really shines is in the section on how to run mystery/detection scenarios, entitled "The Art of Detection."

Creating a good mystery scenario has to be one of the hardest tasks to face the average gamemaster. One whom I know, who has no trouble running straight combat scenarios, can't lay a detectable string of clues worth a hill of .357 Magnum slugs. Designer Stackpole takes a good eight pages of text outlining in as much detail as possible (without writing a textbook on the subject or losing the less-interested gamemaster entirely) how to set up and carry out a mystery scenario, with several good examples of the genre. (In fact, he could have done a better job only by actually including a complete mystery scenario right there and labeling each step along the way—hardly feasible in a rulebook.) This section alone is

almost worth the price of the entire game (which makes the rest of it a real steal), and should be required reading for any gamemaster of any game system who intends to introduce mystery elements in his scenarios.

Summing up, *Mercenaries, Spies & Private Eyes* is one of those rare gems—a system that is both playable and detailed enough to cover almost any situation likely to come up in play in its subject areas. Along with *FASA's Star Trek*, a game which shares its design concepts of elegant simplicity, *MS&PE* was one of the highlights of 1983's roster of role-playing games. It shows that a game doesn't have to be either overly simple and incomplete to be playable nor overly complex to be realistic and still cover everything conceivable about its subject. If you have any interest at all in the modern role-playing of mercs, spies, detectives, or soldiers of fortune, I highly recommend you invest in a copy of *Mercenaries, Spies & Private Eyes*. Go ahead—make your day! □

LANDS OF ADVENTURE

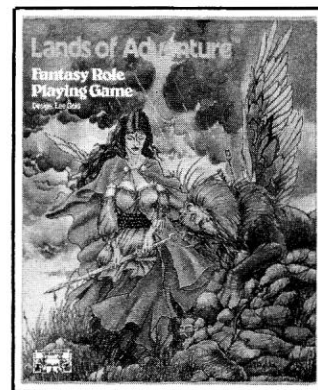
By Lee Gold (FGU, \$12)

Reviewed by Ian R. Beste

If you have recently visited a game store that sells FGU products, you have probably seen a box with a striking cover. It is a brilliant watercolor that evokes a sense of sadness and contemplation, mature drama that stuff of high fantasy is made of. This is the cover to *Lands Of Adventure*—no brawny bare-chested fighter, or overly-developed she-barbarian fighting some hackneyed monster. Artist Bill Willingham has outdone himself with this cover.

But, as the saying goes, you can't judge a book by its cover. *LOA* was written by Lee Gold, who has done an excellent service to role-players through the 'zine she edits, *Alarums & Excursions*. She also designed FGU's *Land of the Rising Sun*, a role-playing game set in samurai Japan. Ms. Gold has worked on *LOA* for several years, aided by suggestions from readers and contributors in *A&E*. Despite this solid background, *LOA* has some problems, and while no one of them ruin the game as a whole, several combine to make it much less of an enjoyable game than it could be. *LOA* attempts to be an unusual sort of role-playing game, and for that reason deserves critical attention.

Physically, the production values are good. The text is cleanly laid out, broken by the usual decorative illustrations. Examples are set apart from the



rules by italicized text within boxes, as in *RuneQuest*. Readability is good, and typos are rare, a wondrous accomplishment for any set of rules. There are two sample character sheets on the back cover of the rulebook; the one on the inside has a sample character filled in (the one used within the rules for examples, an adventurer named Hironde) and the one on the outside has rules section numbers in the appropriate places for quick reference (this was also done in *Rising Sun*). The rulebook is 32-pages long; the "Mythic Greece and Medieval England" culture pack is 28-pages long. The boxed set also includes a sample character sheet, two tiny and unreadable D20s, and two D6s.

The first thing I noticed in flipping through the rules was all the charts—lots of 'em, scattered throughout the rulebook. No pull-out pages of charts and tables in the middle of the rulebook to

reduce the time spent by the gamemaster turning pages. The rules are no credit to Ms. Gold's writing skills. They read like notes, with none of the narrative found in other FGU games such as *Aftermath!* or *Chivalry & Sorcery*. There, the narrative between the actual rules and tables often explained why a rule was written as it was, and served as a sort of "designer's notes" that wargamers have been accustomed to. Not in *LOA*—reading the rules is uncomfortable, with short choppy paragraphs, packed with capitalizations and cross-references. On the other hand, the intent of the rules are usually clear, and I ran across few ambiguities, one of which I will refer to below. The more interesting reading is in the culture pack, but more on that later.

Once into the system the quality of the game emerges. Characters are all generally human, with the culture pack giving specifics on other races. There are four characteristics rolled on 1D20: Craft, (Magical) Talent, Appearance, and Strength. These four plug into the formulae that generate the other seven characteristics: Dexterity, Voice (which also includes writing ability), Intelligence, Prudence, Agility, Constitution, and Charisma. Agility is based upon Appearance due to "gracefulness of movement," a silly rationale. The player also rolls for height and weight. There are modifications for non-human races. The player also chooses his character's Piety, a measure of the normal level of respect towards a given deity. Piety can change depending on the character's actions, as can Charisma. The player can also choose to specialize his or her character, trading off Craft, a measure of the ability to understand and create physical items, for Talent. In fact, in several other places in the rules these two characteristics are distinguished as opposites. This would explain the lack of rules for alchemists, the sort of person most likely to combine these two abilities.

The section on "Measuring Vitality" discusses three types of "hit points." The first type are Energy Points (EP) which are a measure of fatigue. They are expended through casting spells, fighting in combat, carrying heavy loads, and so on. They are lost quickly, but are regained quickly. Zero EP means total exhaustion. Body Points (BPs), the second type, represent accumulated bodily damage—how much of a character can be sliced away. Zero BP means a comatose character. The third type, Life Points (LPs) represent how close one is to death. LPs are hard to lose, and

hard to gain. Zero LP means death. The difference between BP and LP is subtle, but can be put roughly this way: a person who has been through a hard melee may be low in BPs but still full of LPs, while a gravely ill person may be nearly whole in terms of BPs but almost bereft of LPs. A player of mine who has worked in emergency medical services said that this system gave a good feel for "real-life" injuries.

The rules for skills are well-intentioned but poorly-executed. As in *RuneQuest*, player-characters do not progress via levels, but through improved skills, measured through percentage ratings (i.e., Tracking at 50%). Each gamemaster is supposed to write up the skills appropriate to their own campaign. Some general rules are given, many of them familiar to *RuneQuest* players. Skills are divided into ten categories: Knowledge, Magic, and Miracle-Invoking are classified as "Hard" and take longer to learn; Manipulation, Movement, and Persuasion are "Normal"; Communication and Observation are "Easy" and are the quickest to learn; and there are two sets of combat skills, Melee Weapons and Missile Weapons. Individual weapons are rated as to difficulty. Each skill category has a major and two minor factors that are used to calculate the player-character's basic rating, except for Magic and Miracle-Invoking which are calculated differently. There are rules for "maximum success" (i.e., criticals) and fumbles. Only player-designated "specialized" skills may be improved, thus preventing player-characters with twenty skills all at 100%. The number that may be chosen as specialized skills are limited within each skill category. As a result, there are a plethora of little tables and formulae in this part of the rulebook, frustrating attempts to quickly master the skills rules. For the Communication, Knowledge, Manipulation, Movement, Observation, and Persuasion skill categories, Ms. Gold presents a few standard skills, then gives a list of names of others as suggested other skills. Big help; use the *RuneQuest* skills list and expand from there.

The rules for combat are badly organized. They cannot be understood upon the first reading because the relevant rules are in seven different sections. In actual use, I had to draw up my own summary of combat rules. The rules individually are not complex, they just aren't drawn together too well. There are many little details in them such as silhouetted targets, holds, break-

ing holds, and bashing. The categorization of weapons into "easy," "normal," and "hard," with consequent advantages and disadvantages, is a good way to prevent all players from wielding powerful weapons. Weapon damage is "static," one damage point given out per half-pound of weapon, modified for efficiency if it is a missile weapon. This is ridiculous—a seven-pound broadsword gives the same damage to a man's chest as a seven-pound stick? Rolling for damage puts an extra edge of uncertainty into combat. An interesting rule allows the victim to decide whether he wants to take all of his damage in BP, or to take up to half in EP the rest in BP. This forces the players to really think about how they wish to fight—the berserker keeps on hacking, keeping his EP, and losing his BP, while the more prudent save their skins and expend EP. The effect of armor is to reduce the EP and increase the BP of the wearer. A parenthetical note says that this was "easier than multiplying each blow's damage by an Armor Factor and taking fractional BP damage." What's wrong with armor absorbing BP damage, an idea based on the *RuneQuest* system? Considering how many of the other combat rules are strongly reminiscent of *RuneQuest*, I'm surprised that this approach to armor was not used.

Interestingly, the weapons list lists three kinds of swords and five kinds of axes. Some fantasy role-players delight in producing numerous "sword" types—katanas, nodachis, tulwars, scimitars, claymores, *ad infinitum*—with some dubious claim to superiority produced for each. Historically, axes are a much older and frequently-encountered weapon, but fantasy role-playing gamers relegate them to Viking types and dwarfs. Ms. Gold classifies the flail and the morningstar as missile weapons, an intriguing design point that is not explained.

Magic rules are in three sections: "Magic Rating Category" (i.e., magic skills); "Determining a Spell's Power Level and Effect"; and "Spellcasting." The skill rating with any given spell is the player-character's Magic Rating minus five times the Power Level (PL) of the spell. The spell's PL is determined by its duration, intensity, range, and area affected. There are four spell categories, each with a corresponding characteristic that influences a spell's intensity: Charisma affects Compulsion spells, Intelligence affects Illusion spells, Prudence affects Enhancement spells, and Talent affects Energy spells. The greater the characteristic, the higher the

Intensity, and the higher the Intensity, the higher the PL. Thus, the higher the corresponding characteristic, the harder it is to cast the spell. Why? I would think that the higher the characteristic, the better attuned to that sort of spell the magic-user is, and therefore he would be able to better cast that spell. This rule, and the rule that says that if a spell does not succeed in being cast, it automatically backfires ("Backlash"), makes magic an unpredictable and dangerous thing to play around with. Players become hesitant to use the stronger spells. A list of standard spells is given, plus some standard spell combinations; the gamemaster is encouraged to add new ones or leave some out. As with the skill "descriptions," there are no real descriptions of the standard spells given, outside of the raw data of type, units, PL, volume (in feet—I think), intensity, and range in feet. There are some general descriptions under the headings for each of the four spell types, but these are a poor substitute.

Poor rules-editing occurs under "Spellcasting." The brief sequence of events includes "3. End casting; check for Success." There is no specific rule that tells how to "check for Success." Success in spell-casting is not getting a Backlash. Therefore to say "check for Success" is misleading. The rule should say "3. If there is no Backlash, the spell was Successfully Cast." That's how I played it. One of my players is sure that there is indeed a "Success" roll that got left out of the rules. Our disagreement stopped the game for some time, a clear warning to companies to edit their game rules.

The rules for Priests are clearer. Priests try to get their deities' attention so as to obtain a Miracle. Deities must be designed by the gamemaster who assigns to them Aspects—specialties, like Hunting or Smithing. There are also Daemons, who are Nature Spirits, and Demons, whom Ms. Gold defines as displaced, older deities who are enemies of the newer gods. There is a deity name generation table, a bit of fluff that should have been placed at the end of the main rules. Priests can get the attention of their deities via Ritual, slow but effective, Thought, fast but rarely effective, or Prayer, sort of fast, sort of effective. Group prayers, more money, and sacrifices may improve a Priest's chances. Once a deity is invoked, a Priest can ask for Inspiration, a hint, likely to be granted, or a miracle, more helpful, but much less likely to be granted. Miracles granted may be

gifts, forces of nature, spirits or transformations. Holy Items can be consecrated and are useful in protecting characters.

There are two short sections on Thaumaturgists, mages who serve a deity, and Diabolists, necromantic types who sacrifice Life Points in order to command demons. As I mentioned above, there are no rules for Alchemists. There are rules for poison, a stock-in-trade of most fantasy role-playing Alchemists, but there is no information about who makes it, or even how much it costs. I suppose such specific information would appear in culture packs.

The rest of the basic rules cover gamemaster-characters and monsters. The section on birds requires that the gamemaster know how a given bird flies in order to calculate its movement rate—is it a flapper, a glider, or a hoverer? This is a ridiculous amount of detail to impose upon a gamemaster. "Basic Humanoids" includes Dwarves/Goblins, Elves, Humans, Giants, Ogres/Trolls, SkinShifters/Weres, and Ghouls—quite a potpourri. A large chart of typical stats for the vari-

ous monsters is given, very useful considering the time required to create characters and critters. The dragons of *LOA* seem to me to be a bit wimpy; their Strength and Constitution should be increased by at least 25%. There are rules for ghosts, skeletons, vampires, and goblins, plus a handy section on gamemaster-character possessions. The encounter table on p. 31 is crummy; Ms. Gold admits it and says that gamemasters should make their own or use the ones in the culture packs. There is no listing of magical items, except for the slim information in the section on gamemaster-character possessions. The rulebook ends with an index that would be more useful if the index words and phrases more often matched rules section titles.

The culture pack included in the game is actually two separate packs, one on Mythical Greece and another on Medieval England. As I am not a specialist in either of these two periods, I cannot say for certain how well either was done. I did note that the suggested reading list for Mythic Greece, obviously set in pre-Homeric

Greece, included "plays by Sophocles and Aeschylus," many of which are definitely post-Homeric. Yet Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are not listed, not is the classic *Bulfinch's Mythology*. Ms. Gold has a preference for Robert Graves (author of *I, Claudius*) whose interpretation of the Greek myths is certainly not the definitive work on the subject. Medieval England gets a richer treatment; the author's association with *C&S* serves her well, though even here the reading list includes Kipling's *Puck of Pook's Hill* and Gordon Dickson's *The Dragon and the George*. There is a separate reading list for Arthurian England. Overall, both culture packs are full of interesting period information, but I kept getting the feeling that more straight historical chronology would be nice. Some of the special rules are great—you can have a Greek god for a parent, or get skilled with a "rope-cocked trebuchet." The scenarios given are more like scenario suggestions. I hope that whatever pack is done on Japan will be up to the high (if admittedly unplayable) standard of *Rising Sun*.

In summary, *Lands Of Adventure* has a good idea—a game system with some specifics left up to individual gamemasters—that suffers from poor editing and some strange rules. None of these obstacles are beyond repair, and the attractive aspects to this game, that it is close enough to *RuneQuest* to serve as an expansion and that it is well-suited to an inventive gamemaster, makes it worth saving. If you are willing, as the gamemaster, to put in the hours necessary to write up the skills, devise the spells, design the deities, fill in the background, design a few unique monsters, and write yourself a combat rules summary sheet, then get *Lands Of Adventure*. The work will be worth it. If you are a "rules-basher," borrowing from any and all sources to put together the perfect system, you shouldn't miss *LOA*. This may seem odd after all the negative things I've said so far, but these criticisms were made because they stood out from an otherwise professional, solid effort of design and rules-writing. □

THE TRAVELLER ADVENTURE

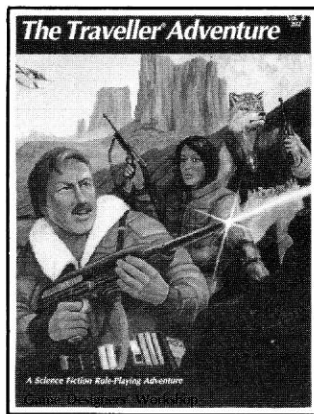
By Frank Chadwick, et al
(GDW, \$12)

Reviewed by Tony Watson

The Traveller Adventure is an impressive new playaid from GDW for use with their science-fiction role-playing system. Like the series of adventure books GDW has published, it is intended to provide the gamemaster with a preplanned adventure for use in his campaign. Unlike these previous offerings, this is an adventure of considerable scope, linking together a number of main episodes that advance the plot, along with side adventures and red herrings. The term "epic" is certainly too strong, but *The Traveller Adventure* is perhaps the most ambitious playaid of its type for any role-playing system.

This adventure bears some resemblance to the hardcover version of the *Traveller* rules. *Adventure* was originally going to be hardcover, but for some reason GDW chose to issue it paperback. Now, I have never been much of a fan of these larger format GDW products, having an affinity for the digest size that most *Traveller* books come in, but I can see the necessity; *Adventure* runs over 154 pages and is full of information.

Adventure is a number of separate episodes linked together to form a campaign of sorts. In



fact, the book contains 12 major episodes, along with several smaller scenarios that can be used at the gamemaster's option and a considerable amount of supporting background material.

The story is set in the Aramis subsector of the Spinward Marches. Both the Marches and the subsector are mapped; a historical essay accompanies the map of the Marches and a short gazetteer appears with the Aramis subsector map. The player-characters are the crew of the 400 ton, subsidized merchant, the *March Harrier*. Deckplans and a complete explanation of interior details of the starship are provided.

The action begins on Aramis in its underground capital city. The characters come to the aid of a Vargr attempting to recover a stolen brooch, an item that will

prove of increasing importance and mystery as the story develops. Their flight from Aramis will take them to the Palantir asteroid belt and eventually to the world of Pysadi. Pysadi is dominated by a theocracy, described in some detail, and the homeworld of the anolas, creatures that will have a fair amount of impact on the characters.

After Pysadi, the *March Harrier* journeys around the subsector traveling to Zila and getting involved in an effort to break the wine trade monopoly of the megacorporation Tukera Lines, an event that leads to a kidnapping and a rescue. They will gain friends in high places and subsequently find themselves in the middle of a trade war between two of the giant transport and trade companies operating in the subsector.

Vargrs are important as gamemaster-characters within the story. A group of Vargrs eventually prove to be an important factor working against the adventurers. The book supports this facet of the adventure by supplying six and a half pages of material describing Vargr culture, common starships (with some nifty illustrations), and a complete set of Vargr character generation tables. The Vargr are not particularly alien; the generation tables are not much different than those used for humaniti characters and their motivations are readily under-

standable. Still, having an alien as an integral part of the party is a nice touch.

In addition to the Vargr, several other sapient races appear in the book. None are given the detailed treated afforded the Vargrs, but all are interesting.

The gamemaster who already is running an established campaign may balk at getting involved in such a long and complex adventure. Despite the related nature of most of the scenarios, several of them, with a little tinkering, can be made to stand alone. Similarly, the gamemaster may choose to unravel the multiple threads of the plot line and concentrate on just one aspect for a shorter, less convoluted series of adventures. The designers have also included several patron encounters, set up like those in *76 Patrons* and short scenario outlines, like Amber Zones, to fill out the campaign and these stand on their own.

To aid the administration of the adventure, a gamemaster's synopsis and a list of capsule biographies for principal gamemaster-characters has been provided. The gamemaster can look at the section entitled "Administering the Adventure" for tips on how to smoothly manage the task of running the adventure.

The Traveller Adventure is really a nice piece of work. The campaign described has all the elements of a good adventure

story and would serve for several months' worth of game playing for even the most dedicated group. It is full of scenario ideas and information for the game-master who wishes to use it as

more of a sourcebook. Given the price, it is only a little more than a pair of GDW's regular adventure books, it is a bargain considering that it is well designed and interesting. □

CTHULHU COMPANION

Edited by Yurek Chodak and Sandy Petersen (Chaosium, \$8)

Reviewed by Steve Marsh

Aberrant to zymotic. Sounds depressing and obscure, well it is as depressing and obscure as a work about the Great Cthulhu should be while remaining something that about half the *Call Of Cthulhu* keepers should seriously consider purchasing.

Cthulhu Companion is 64 pages long and contains 15 articles. The introduction is quite short and is followed by a variety of rule changes and clarifications including a "fairer" way to generate beginning characters and a semantic change that should make some parts of the rules easier to use without changing play.

The first article is "The Cthulhu Mythos in Mesoamerican Religion." In five pages it adopts the pantheons of the Mesoamerican groups to the Cthulhu Mythos. While it is a crisp piece of work it lacks a bibliography and needs an accompanying scenario. It also could have used a correlation between Outer Gods and the Mesoamericans as well as between the well known Great Old Ones. Several of the longstanding conflicts would fit well into that pattern and are strained otherwise.

"Further Notes on the Necronomicon" is three pages of scholarly fluff. While it provides interesting flavor for a keeper to drop into a campaign, its value for the money depends much on the type of game being run.

"Sourcebook Additions" covers two new skills (photography and lock picking) with their extrapolations. It also describes three prisons and does so well. The basic descriptive texts of the prisons are useful for campaigns other than *Call Of Cthulhu* and are almost essential given the willingness of many investigators to resort to armed violence. The final addition is a "Lovecraftian Timeline." While short, it is relatively solid and useful to any keeper wishing to integrate the books into the adventures.

"Rulesbook Additions" includes expanded phobias and insanities. These are well described, the phobias in terms that a keeper or

an investigator can use to control play and the insanities are clear. A suggestion to actually describe what the investigator sees in terms of the fantasies should have been included.

"Additional Deities, Races and Monsters" are also given. In most brands of supplements this would have been the largest portion and would have included all of the monsters and such from previous scenario packs. Instead, all of these are new. However, there are only six pages of descriptions and over half of the described entities would quickly destroy any group of investigators.

Two pages of excerpts from Mythos prayers and commentaries follow. While nice, they are all available from the Mythos books in print as paperbacks.

The last portion (over half the book) consists of scenarios and

some errata (Lovecraftian poems and a list of the modifiers he used to describe the Mythos that ranges from aberrant to zymotic).

The scenarios vary quite a bit. The first one, "Paper Chase," is quixotic and well done. I wish that I had thought of it and it does credit to the designer.

"The Mystery of Lock Feinn" is eight pages long and a good example of a well thought out Cthulhu Mythos horror adventure. In it the investigators can save a portion of the world from greater discovery or (much more likely) die in screaming horror. While all the clues are provided, foolishness is as fatal here as it is in any war zone. My only objection to the scenario is the inclusion of a "save or die" spell where there is no resistance or saving, just dying.

"The Rescue" is a nice opportunity to remind investigators of thing they should have done. It is also a scripted adventure that will run the course of the script in spite of anything the investigators do unless they totally miss the boat. This is one of the few scenarios of this type that I have seen where this does not provide either a weakness (as the investigators invariably step outside the script) or a reduction of roles (as the investigators become second fiddles). It also includes rules for a substrain of lycanthropy.

"The Secret of Castronegro" is the longest (fourteen pages) of the scenarios and the one most likely to require raw violence. It shows traces of Sandy Petersen (especially in Puddock, the toad-like demon familiar, and in the new magic items). I liked much of it, but am still dissatisfied that we

could not find a non-raw violence solution in spite of several attempts.

The book finishes with the afore mentioned poetry (available from Arkham House and such) and word list. An elder sign illustration covers the last page.

I liked the *Cthulhu Companion*. For a keeper who uses a great deal of background and whose investigators live for giblets of lore, it is easily worth the price. For a keeper who uses preset scenarios (I rarely do but will use some of these) it isn't bad deal excepting for the hack-and-slash elements of the last scenario. Pricewise a keeper might be better off purchasing one of the scenario packs available for *Call Of Cthulhu* if not inclined to use the material in the *Companion*—except such are by far too rare.

Had the flash type material been incorporated into something else (the prayers and such could have been tied into a short interlocking scenario) it would have been a much better buy. Had the Mesoamerican material been tied with some wild animals, some descriptions of natives and climate, and a scenario with branching suggestions, it would have been worth the price of the book instead of a questionable part of it. Finally, if the last scenario had included an additional solution, it would have been much stronger.

However, on the net, it is a good buy for the money. It meets Chaosium's demanding physical product standards. Every article can be easily understood. Everything does have a use even if requiring a bit of work. Its only failure is that it is merely a good solid work instead of the brilliance I was expecting. □

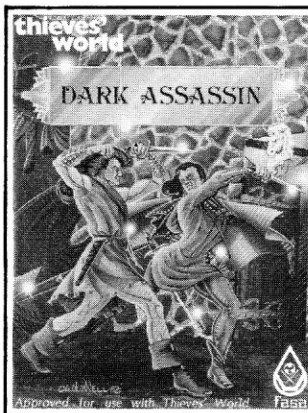
DARK ASSASSIN

By Dave Tennes (FASA, \$7.50)

Reviewed by Paul Ryan O'Connor

Dark Assassin is FASA's third adventure for Chaosium's *Thieves' World* adventure pack. *Dark Assassin* is a 48-page adventure that embroils the players in the midst of an ancient blood feud between two Rankan royal families.

Dark Assassin is by far the smoothest of the three adventure packages FASA has so far released for *Thieves' World*. While the supernatural element is heavy here, this adventure does a good job of maintaining the atmosphere of the original anthologies. Two characters from the anthologies—Enas Yorl and Meloit the scribe—make appearances. *Dark Assassin* is very nearly everything



a *Thieves' World* adventure should be.

Dark Assassin uses the same generic approach to gamemaster-character attributes seen in FASA's first two *Thieves' World* efforts. The product is prefaced

by an essay on gaming Sanctuary that should provide some hints to gamemasters uncomfortable with city situations.

The book is laid-out reasonably well. The brown ink used throughout is as annoying as ever. The artwork is generally quite poor, and some of the character illustrations are genuinely embarrassing. The maps are clear, save for the omission of a scale on the maps of the Governor's Palace.

Dark Assassin begins in the grand tradition of most *Thieves' World* adventures. The player-characters find themselves in the Vulgar Unicorn, short on silver and with a long bill to pay. The characters are approached by a patron, who needs some muscle to help collect a debt owed him by a magician. Being hungry, the characters will naturally accept, and the adventure is on its way.

Things get complicated when the characters arrive at the mage's residence. It seems that the mage was busy summoning a demon from another plane when he was interrupted by the characters. A brief confrontation follows, finishing with the mage and the demon fleeing the scene. An examination of the wizard's abode, and a certain amount of checking around town, reveals that the demon was summoned to assassinate a minor Rankan noble that is due to visit Sanctuary.

It was at this point that I encountered the most glaring error in *Dark Assassin*. The author pretty much takes it for granted that the characters will wish to thwart the assassination attempt. The adventure ends before it has begun if the characters don't get themselves involved at this point. It has been my experience that most *Thieves' World* characters wouldn't throw a rope to a

drowning Rankan, much less track down a demon for one. A firm lure of reward money or other means of personal profit needs to be inserted at this point to insure the scenario's survival. This is really a minor problem, and one easily dealt with if the gamemaster can see it coming.

The majority of the adventure is spent interpreting the clues and equipment found in the wizard's lab. While figuring that the demon was summoned to kill someone isn't very difficult, learning how to use the strange gear the wizard left lying around is a different kettle of fish. The gear, if used correctly, provides the means by which the demon can be tracked, confronted, and bound. If the characters don't take proper advantage of this opportunity, their eventual fight with the demon won't last long.

When all is ready, the characters must go after the demon itself.

This can involve tracking through the sewers of Sanctuary, or simply following the supposed target of the assassination and waiting for the demon to show up. This part of the adventure is pretty straightforward, and the characters aren't likely to explore much of Sanctuary along the way. The author provides some useful clues for getting the characters back on track if they stray overmuch from the path of the scenario.

Dark Assassin's contribution to the *Thieves' World* adventure pack are details about the Governor's Palace. Despite its imposing size, the palace grounds received very little attention in the *Thieves' World* adventure pack, leaving a big blank spot in the middle of Sanctuary for any gamemaster that didn't want to detail the place for himself. *Dark Assassin* provides general maps of the area and touches upon some

details of palace routine. There are still many blank spots left for the gamemaster to fill in, but the information provided is sufficient to run the scenario.

Dark Assassin avoids the redundancy to FASA's previous *Thieves' World* efforts, giving the customer a good quantity of information for the dollar. Unfortunately, not much of this adventure has application (aside from the detail of the palace grounds). The purpose of *Dark Assassin*, however, isn't to provide information about Sanctuary, but to detail an interesting adventure for *Thieves' World* players. In this task, *Dark Assassin* succeeds comfortably.

Dark Assassin is recommended reading for anyone wishing an enjoyable adventure set in Sanctuary. Hopefully, FASA's further adventures will follow the example set by *Dark Assassin*. □

WITNESS FOR THE DEFENSE

By Guy W. McLimore, Jr.
(FASA, \$6)

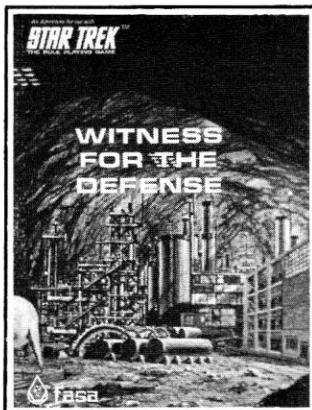
Reviewed by Barron Barnett

This adventure scenario is for the *Star Trek* role-playing game. The book has 40 pages of information including 16 graphic art displays with maps and technical read outs. There are six main game-master character sheets ready to go for use as he sees fit. These types of gamemaster aids really pay off in the long run as the game play goes much smoother.

The start of the adventure, as pointed out by the "Adventure Requirements" section, states that this scenario is tailored for the *Enterprise* crew. However, if desired, you should be able to run this game scenario easily with any group of serious players with only a little imagination on the part of the gamemaster.

The only flaw in this marvelous scenario is the practicality of Captain Kirk retaining the oppressive cloak of judicial impartiality throughout the game. Possibly a gamemaster-character could play that part of judicial mumbo-jumbo thus freeing Kirk to do his own investigations like the rest of the characters should.

The heinous act of mercilessly killing an adult mother Horta really made my blood boil with anger and disgust. Not to mention the murder of old crusty Louis Handy, a well known miner in Janus VI. What about all those baby Horta without a mother to show them the way of Horta life in co-existence with people? Are the tunnel runners the only ones



able to outrun the sizzle bugs? What will Dr. Laurel Levine

discover from McCoy during the private rendezvous? Which one of the following doesn't match: Pergium, crystals, Horta acid, Lt. L. Delancy??

Please note that I will not divulge clues or events because I hate reviews that tell all and ruin it for others by exposing critical data!

The plot in this adventure has all the necessary trimmings as well as the beef to make it a most enjoyable and playable role-playing game. Therefore, this critic believes that *Witness for the Defense* is an excellent investment for the new or old role-player and gamemaster alike. I personally recommend this game. □

armed). The combat strategy of the agents is covered and then the vehicles which are on the island are explained. Then mention is made of the supervillains and how they're employed as launch of the Hypnoray Satellite approaches. The placement of the other characters (including Dr. Destroyer) is gone into and then the island is mapped out, followed by maps of Destroyer's bungalow and then the underground complex and launch center. Finally, there are a few options to alter the adventure to personal tastes and stats on all the participants.

This module was written using the first edition rules, which causes a few problems to those using the revised rules. The biggest problem is that the method of Breaking Things currently used in the system was introduced in their second module, so none of the things in this module are given a Defense, just a Body value. The characters are built with the old edition rules, so that their costs don't quite match up with the ones you'd get using the revised rules. Also, the Headquarters and vehicles aren't built using the material in *Champions II*, nor does anyone pay the points for them (I'd give Dr. Destroyer the mastermind option, have him pay for everything, and increase his villain bonus to cover this).

Speaking of Dr. Destroyer, I was bemused to note that his armor is listed as being an Accessible Focus. Does this mean that it's designed to breakaway if grabbed or that it has an obvious design flaw which allows anyone to short it out at any time or what? An

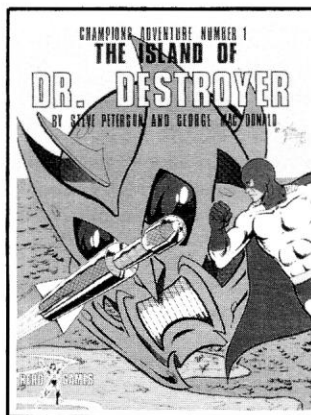
ISLAND OF DR. DESTROYER

By Steve Peterson
and George MacDonald
(Hero Games, \$4.95)

Reviewed by Russell Grant Collins

Dr. Destroyer has created a device which will allow him to control the world. Only a small band of superheroes can possibly hope to stop him in time. This is the concept of the first *Champions* adventure. It boasts a "Fortress island, eight supervillains and much, much more!!!"

This adventure is well laid out. After an introductory briefing section that can be read to the players, the various defenses of the island are described in the order that the heroes are likely to encounter them, along with suggestions on what powers could be used to counter the automatic sensors. The mercenary troops



that Dr. Destroyer has hired are so particularly wimpy that the main problem most heroes will have with them is how to avoid accidentally killing them. In fact, if a dependant gamemaster-character is along, he or she will probably be able to take on these agents (except that they're

explanation would have been appreciated.

Except for Dr. Destroyer, the supervillains are not detailed at all. Their stats are given, but nothing about their origins or motivations, beyond their disadvantages, is given. Since all these villains reappear either in the original rulebook or in *Enemies*, this isn't too bad. It still doesn't explain why they're working for Dr. Destroyer and it requires the consumer to pay twice for the same character stats. Since this scenario is so short anyway, a better idea might have been to develop an entirely new set of villains for this module and give details on them here as well. At the very least, they ought to have

explained that Raccoon's wife, as mentioned in his disadvantages, is Panda, not a gamemaster-character that got omitted.

Also, there aren't any stats for the Hypnoray Satellite, aside from the fact that it has 8 BODY. Does it have umpteen hundred points in an armor-piercing area effect Mind Control or does it work in some manner that makes it as effective against a man with a hundred point Ego Defense as against a moron with a vulnerability to mind control?

The options are all intended to make the adventure easier on the heroes through some sort of unexpected assistance. No thought is given to how to toughen up the adventure if the heroes appear

able to mop the floor with the villains provided without working up a sweat. For example, if Dr. Destroyer had a prototype of his Satellite to use on some of the heroes as they came bursting in to stop him, but it doesn't have enough power to get them all, half of the heroes work for the villains unless they can shake off the effects of the mind control in time. I admit that this isn't likely to be a problem, but it should have been considered.

No consideration is made of what would happen if the heroes fail. Even if all the options are used to make the villains weaker, it's still possible that the heroes will blow it, if only through bad luck. If the device works equally

well on everyone, then Dr. Destroyer can rule the world with no opposition at all, which would tend to ruin most campaigns. If there'd been a note to the effect that heroes with Ego Defense might be resistant to the power of the satellite, this problem would not have been so bad.

Overall, I find it difficult to recommend this module. The maps and details of this adventure are rather well done and an evening's enjoyment is possible with this adventure, but the gamemaster will have to work on it to get ready to run. Hero Games has since produced a few good modules, but unless you're really hurting for a villain's secret hide-out, skip this one. □

Places of Mystery 1: CHILLING CHAMBERS

Edited by William John Wheeler (Companions, \$5)

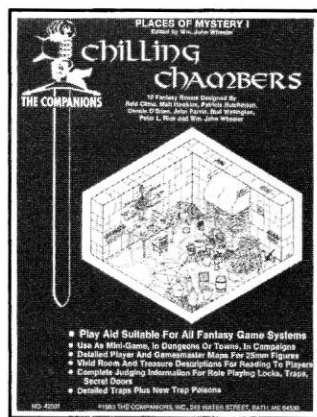
Reviewed by Anders Swenson

Chilling Chambers is an adventure gaming supplement consisting of a number of empty room descriptions for the gamemaster to use in the course of an adventure. The product itself is an unbound, shrink-wrapped collation containing two heavy-stock cover pages (front and back), 24 three-hole-punched text pages, and two double-sized folded map pages.

The text contains the following material: an introduction which explains the intended use of the product and describes the universal fantasy role-playing descriptive system used by the Companions; ten room descriptions; six traps; four exotic poisons; and 25mm-scale plan-view drawings (with some elevations) of the rooms described in the text. The room descriptions are organized in the familiar general-to-specific detail pattern used by the better authors in the hobby.

The rooms are a Barracks—long deserted; a Bower—a formerly rich and well-decorated bedroom; a deserted Chapel with nearby Crypt; a Gaol with dark and disturbing tools strewn about; a Kitchen in utter decay; an Alchemist's laboratory; and the abandoned chambers of a halfling adventurer. The appendix of traps describes in detail five chest traps and a device to slow down unwelcome visitors. The poisons are useful sounding chemicals not found in the standard pharmacopia, but more subtle than the usual fantasy role-playing lethal preparations.

Each room is described with the following headings. The Entrance and the first Rapid Glance bring the characters to the scene and give first impressions. The



Detailed Look and Brief Search paragraphs cover the contents of the room and the details of individual items. The Thorough Examination of the room reveals its last details. Suggested times for all this looking around are given. For example, the Alchemist's Chambers require five minutes for a detailed look, one hour for a Brief Search, and two more hours for a Thorough Examination.

The descriptions of the rooms, traps, and poisons are given as much as possible in terms of real-world concepts and measures. While the Companions have developed a simple system for noting fantasy role-playing stats, the only direct references to game mechanics in this text are some saving-roll instructions for the poisons.

The rooms are intricately described with as much detail as anybody could possibly require. The intent of the authors is to provide enough information on the contents of the room to allow the exploration of one of these rooms to occupy the bulk of a gaming evening. Because the rooms are supposed to be usable in a wide variety of circumstances, no specific monsters or large treasures have been provided, nor is there the sugges-

tion of more than a rudimentary plot development.

One way to use the material would be to design a plot where the player-characters would want to search one of these rooms for a particular object. The gamemaster would naturally have to figure out what the object would be, and why it would be in the room. From there, it would be relatively straightforward to develop the history of the room and the building it is placed in, placing the building in the same physical and social/historical context with the characters, and finally make a situation which will inspire them to go ahead and check the place out. The history surrounding the room (which you have created) will suggest other items to be logically included which could be

treasure for the party. Monsters might either be guarding the room (or some place which covers the only access to it) or be encountered at the end of the adventure, after the end of the search. Most of the chilling chambers are too small to contain a good melee.

Chilling Chambers is a well-executed new concept in fantasy role-playing game aids. While many gamemasters who normally use published scenarios may be put off by having to actually construct a scenario just to use this product, experienced gamemasters certainly know by now that any commercial scenario needs more or less the same sort of preparation before it can be used for maximum effect in a campaign. For its price especially, this is a good buy. □

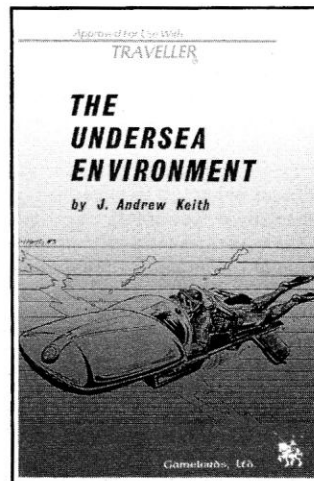
THE UNDERSEA ENVIRONMENT

By J. Andrew Keith
(Gamelords, \$5.95)

Reviewed by Tony Watson

Gamelords is a relative newcomer to the ranks of *Traveller* playaid producers. In this new, "approved for use with *Traveller*" offering, they have, however, teamed with a familiar name in the field of *Traveller*, J. Andrew Keith, to produce a detailed and interesting supplement.

The Undersea Environment is devoted to covering underwater adventures, including rules, equipment, and encounters that apply to that unique setting. Adventures on distant worlds need not be limited to their land surfaces; many planets, like our own Earth, are likely to be largely covered by water. Given advanced technology, it is not unreasonable to expect that the underwater habitat will be exploited; after all, if vacuum worlds and planets with



insidious atmospheres are colonized, watery environs could be colonized as well, and may actually be preferable.

If you are a gamemaster considering fleshing out one of your water worlds for some extended adventuring, this book may be just what you need. This supple-

ment is detailed and complete, and should answer many of the questions that crop up when running such an adventure.

Undersea is divided into three sections: rules, equipment, and encounters. The first section covers skills and special circumstances of undersea activity. Two new skills are introduced, and they, quite naturally, are directly related to the topic at hand. The skill of swimming is available to any character, at least to some degree, whereas the diving skill is less common and a derivative of swimming expertise (which seems to make a great deal of sense). The diving skill is broken down into specific types of diving: scuba, free, and umbilical. The rules also cover the use of other *Traveller* skills under water, grouping them into unaltered, modified, and useless categories.

For example, hunting and leader skills can be used normally, electronics or pilot fall into the modified group and can be applied only with negative die modifiers, while forgery, street-wise, and gambling are considered useless.

The first section also considers the specialized aspects of underwater activity. Notes are provided on various vehicles: grav vehicles, such as an air/rafts are likely to suffer electrical shorts if used underwater; and ATVs designed for land use probably could not stand undersea pressures, more evolved is the section dealing with diving: undersea pressures, gravity, temperatures, decompression, communications, and environmental effects on the senses. The information is quite detailed; there are, for example, two pages of decompression

tables. Having grown up in the desert, I can't vouch for Keith's accuracy, but it does appear to have been backed up with a considerable amount of research.

The second section of the book is a catalog of equipment for underwater adventures. Many of these items are predictable: snorkels, several varieties of wet suits, scuba rigs, and artificial gills. Various specialized equipment appears, along with spearguns, bangsticks, and electric prods. Tables summarize the die modifiers for these weapons at various ranges and against different kinds of armor in the standard *Traveller* format. Other types of equipment range from diving armor to mini subs and a small undersea dome accommodating up to 8 scientists and/or adventurers.

The final sections of the booklet

deal with special encounters, events, and guidelines for adventures. The events are brief paragraphs describing something like an undertow or a reef colony, and formatted to fit into an encounter table. The guide to adventures offers some very short ideas on how to utilize the undersea environment for adventures, rather than scenario outlines. Using the sea as a site for archaeological activities, salvage operations, rescue, or military missions are suggested. Given the wealth of background information contained in this volume, it should not be too difficult for a gamemaster to set up and run an adventure or two under the sea. If your *Traveller* campaign might benefit from such a setting, this book may prove extremely useful, and may in fact find applicability for other role-playing systems. □

FAMINE IN FAR-GO

By Michael Price
(TSR, \$5.50)

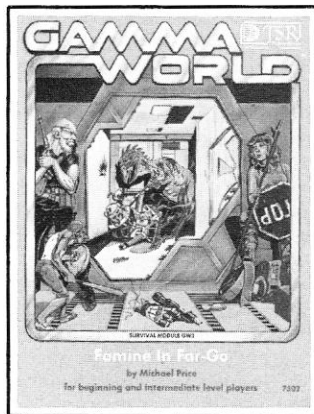
Reviewed by Russell Grant Collins

TSR's second module for *Gamma World* is an interesting quest to discover the cause of the terrible famine that is plaguing the area and a cure for it. It is ideal for the gamemaster just starting out, as the frame of the adventure is that of a rite of passage and the area has much to explore beyond the bounds of this adventure.

The 32-page module also features six new creatures, two new robotic units, three new artifacts, five new mutations, and some new rules to make Pure Strain Humans more viable character types, which appear in the revised *Gamma World* game.

The adventure is well thought out and the Far-Go area makes a good campaign setting, as I said. There is enough danger to challenge most groups of adventurers without being too threatening, especially if they think.

The new rules tend to improve some of the defects of the original



game, such as the weakness of PSH as opposed to mutants. The new mutations, however, lack any clue about how they can be integrated into the charts in the original game, thereby limiting these powers to gamemaster-characters and adventurers who role the "player's choice" option. A gamemaster can easily come up with a system to do so, but he shouldn't have to.

Another factor for the beginning gamemaster to consider is

that the areas of the map not covered by the current adventure are (presumably) to be explored in later modules. In any case, other than their names, nothing is revealed about them so the gamemaster will have to make things up or delay the characters until these modules come out.

The player's map is backed by maps for the gamemaster, limiting its usefulness. Since it's a color map, the obvious solution of xeroxing a copy won't work.

Despite my gripes, however, I recommend this module to any beginning *Gamma World* gamemaster and any other *Gamma World* gamemaster willing to do whatever work might be needed to fit it into his campaign (which may be nothing more than placing the more vital encounters of the adventure into her land). Even if the gamemaster thinks he will have to do a lot of fiddling to blend this adventure into his land, the new rules are valuable. □



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Doing It With Class

Four Professions For **CALL of CTHULHU**

By Paul Montgomery Crabaugh

Call Of Cthulhu is much more than it alleges to be: rather than a specific system for a single author's works, it is really a quite good system for all types of supernatural-tinged adventuring in the 20th Century.

Having realized that, it began to occur to me that the professions available to investigators in the main rulebook exclude several well-known characters and types. (There's more variety in the sourcebook, but I generally

prefer my players to use the main rules—for simplicity's sake, if nothing else.) That led to four new professions for players to indulge in. □

CLERIC

Cleric designates any member of any of the Christian churches. From the point of view of game mechanics, there's not a great deal of difference between them—but the player should be required to be specific about which sect he belongs to. The skills listed will describe most possible positions: priest, monk, nun, minister, and so forth. With some slight modification, one could also describe officials of the other great religions related to Christianity: Judaism and Islam. With still more modification, other religions could be included. Most churches can be persuaded to allow their officials to wander off in pursuit of evil. Although the characters will tend to be somewhat impoverished, they can receive aid and expense money by convincing their superiors of the need. Whether this profession allows any additional protection against (or vulnerability to!) the denizens of the Cthulhu mythos is up to the Keeper.

Skills: Read/Write Latin, Speak Latin, Library Use, Psychology, Debate, Oratory, Occult, Anthropology, First Aid.

Money: 1D3x\$1000 per year.

SCIENTIST

Scientist indicates a researcher, as opposed to a Professor, who is primarily a teacher. Scientists can get permission to engage in odd expeditions from time to time, and, if the expedition reflects in some way on their professional studies, may even get funding and official recognition. Whether Indiana Jones is a scientist or a professor is an interesting question.

Skills: Read/Write Latin, Library Use, any three Knowledge skills as a personal specialty, Spot Hidden Object, Electrical Repair, Debate, Psychology.

Money: Professional.

EXPLORER

Explorer includes a wide variety of professional wanderers and adventurers, who were very common in literature during the period of the game and even somewhat common in the real world. This type of character largely disappeared with the outbreak of the Second World War. The archetypical British hunter is a member of this profession; so, arguably, is Jake "Gold Monkey" Cutter. In real life, probably the best known example of this sort of person is Richard Halliburton. These characters frequently earn their living by writing about their experiences—regardless of whether those experiences end up in the *Saturday Evening Post* or *Weird Tales*.

Skills: Speak Other Language, Anthropology, First Aid, Linguist, Make Maps, Occult, Track, Climb, Ride, Rifle.

Money: As author.

DOCTOR

Doctor indicates any reasonably competent healer. Doctors should have an Education high enough to indicate a degree, and will only technically be termed "doctors" if they have an Education high enough to indicate a Ph.D.

Of the four professions, the Doctor is probably the most important. After all, when the Explorer can't find the way out, and the Scientist can't understand, and the Cleric can't deter...

Skills: Read/Write Latin, Chemistry, First Aid, Library Use, Pharmacy, Treat Disease, Treat Poison, Diagnose Disease, Psychology, Credit Rating, Psychoanalyze.

Money: Professional.

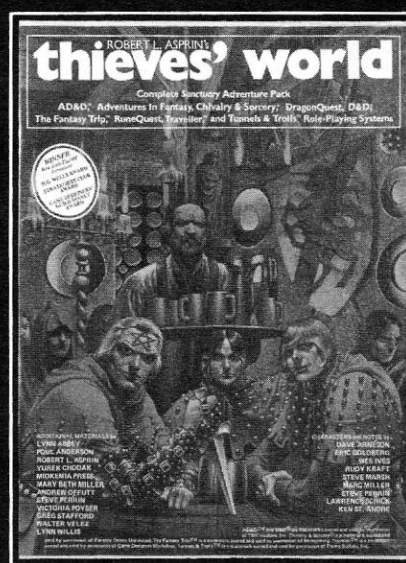
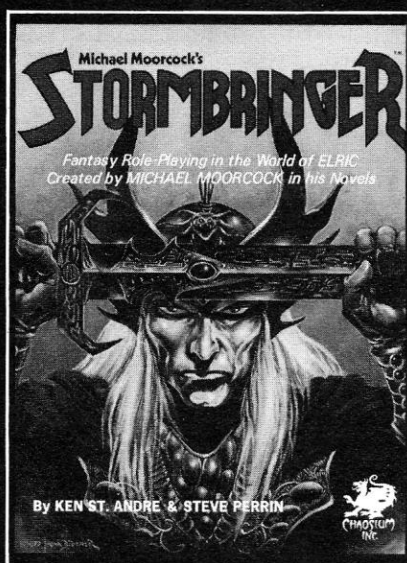
For Gamers Who Want Nothing But the Best!

CALL OF CTHULHU

A comic book by SANDY PETERSEN

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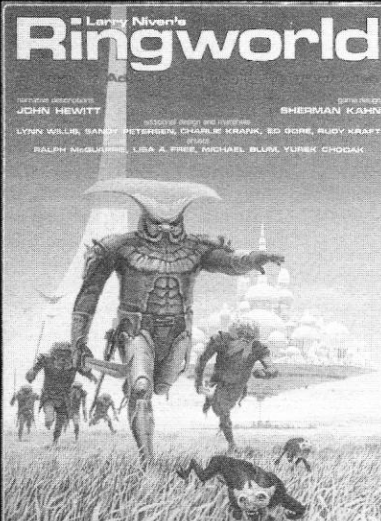
Larry Niven's Ringworld

novelization illustrated by
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game design
SHERMAN KAHN

editorial design and illustrations
LYNN WELLS, SANDY PETERSEN, CHARLIE KRAVAK, BO GOINE, RUDY KRAFT

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Index

A specialized listing of
articles in past issues of
Different Worlds.

Index of CALL OF CTULHU ARTICLES In past issues of Different Worlds Magazine

Issue	Article
19	"Designers' Notes" by Sandy Petersen and Lynn Willis
19	"Guns Against Cthulhu" by Dick Wagenet
19	"Underground Menace" by Sandy Petersen
19	"Errata and Second Thoughts"
19	"Review of Call Of Cthulhu" by Steve Peterson
26	"Psychic Powers" by Randy McCall
27	"Thoth's Dagger" scenario by William Hamblin
28	"H.P. Lovecraft in Call Of Cthulhu" by Ed Gore
29	"Variant Combat Rules" by Paul Montgomery Crabaugh
30	"The Wail of the Witch" module by Keith Herber
30	"Call Of Cthulhu Miniatures Review" by John T. Sapienza, Jr.
31	"Review of Arkham Evil" by Larry DiTillio
32	"Review of Death In Dunwich" by Larry DiTillio
34	"The Crystal of Chaos" module by Peter Gilham
34	"Review of Shadows of Yog-Sothoth" by Anders Swenson
35	"More Magic for Call Of Cthulhu" by Randy McCall
35	"Blame it on Cthulhu" by Larry DiTillio
35	"Death Scenes" by Sandy Petersen
35	"Review of Asylum" by Anders Swenson

Other articles of interest to Cthulhu gamers

Issue	Article
17	"Questworld" by Lynn Willis, et al
19	"Gang Leaders" by Glenn Rahman
27	"Mob Leaders" by Glenn Rahman
32	"My Life & Role-Playing: Starting Young" by Sandy Petersen
35	"Monsters of Green Hell" by Ernest Hogan

HOLLYWOOD continued from page 4

Resurrected. Cthulhu fans, if you haven't seen a Dr. Phibes, see this one. Vincent Price is back. With Vulnavia? One can only hope.

FROM THE PAST: Not too distant a past catchable on cable TV was a little gem of a film called *T.A.G.—The Assassination Game*. Touting this film is yet another example of Ye Ol' Sword eating his words. Long, long ago I expressed doubts about this movie, which tells the tale of college students playing a *Killer*-type game on campus, which becomes deadly as one of the participants starts using bullets instead of rubber darts. I feared the worst, another mad-killer movie. But when I saw *T.A.G.*, well put quite simply it was great. Its story was light, breezy, romantic and filmed with great style. In fact the movie could have been made without the mad-killer plot. And yet, the that plot melds beautifully, because we see the crazed college student gradually

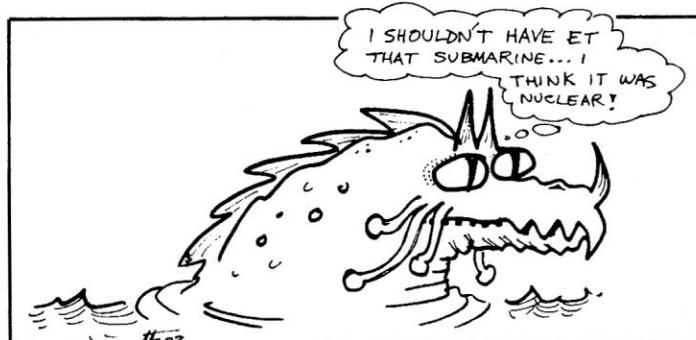
erode and it's made clear that it is not so much the game he's playing that causes it, it's just that this maniac is plain bonkers. He goes from a total creep to a suave, tuxedoed killer very believably. I don't want to give away the flips and flops of the film, but if you are a gamer, I think you're going to like it. You'll see a spirit you'll recognize and get a lot of laughs and thrills along the way. It stars Robert Carradine and a luscious lady whose name, curse my veins, I cannot remember. It might even put *Killer* games in perspective for you. It'll sure tell you when you have gone too far. Again con organizers, I beseech thee, how many times can we sit through *Godzilla Vs. the Mecha-Monster*? Here's a film that might make con attendees sit up in thought. I leave it to you.

And now, adios muchachos. Ye Ol' Sword must polish his blade and face away into that technicolor sunset. If you see me at a con, say hello. Until next time, good gaming, roll them dice and hey, see a movie willya. I have to keep the business going if I want to buy RuneQuest 3. □

Index of MY LIFE & ROLE-PLAYING ARTICLES In past issues of Different Worlds Magazine

Authors are listed in alphabetical order followed by the article title and the issue in which the article appears.

Dave Arneson	"Blackmoor..." 3
Greg Costikyan	"Future Fantasy" 1
Gigi D'Arn	"Life as a Non-Player Character" 31
David A. Feldt	"My Life and Role-Playing with Possibility" 2
Lee Gold	"Alarums and Excursions" 1
David A. Hargrave	"Role-Playing Games, Fantasy and Otherwise" 1
David A. Hargrave	"There and Back Again" 31
Steve Jackson	"Into the Labyrinth" 2
Paul Jaquays	"Fun... Heck No/I Do This for Money!" 1
Leonard H. Kanterman, M.D.	"Where No Man Has Gone Before" 1
Stephen L. Lortz	"My Life and RPGs" 1
Steve Marsh	"The Long Lasting Effects of My Religion 231 Class" 1
Marc W. Miller	"My Life In Role-Playing" 1
Steve Perrin	"My Life Is Role-Playing" 3
Sandy Petersen	"Starting Young" 32
Ken St. Andre	"It Grows on You" 1
Ken St. Andre	"From Khazan to Melnibone... and Back Again" 33
Gerald D. Seypura	"Nostalgia" 31
Niall Shapero	"Memories" 1
Ed Simbalist	"Fantasy Role-Playing" 1
Mike Stackpole	"From Vermont to Arizona" 35
B. Dennis Sustare	"The Design and Solution of Puzzles" 1
Mark A. Swanson	"Trapped Four Years in the Gilded Hole" 1
H.N. Voss	"Ex-Wargamer Reveals All" 33



WHAT'S NEW continued from page 43

and a page of rules. Based on the *Dungeons & Dragons* cartoon show. Playing time: 30-60 minutes.

COMPUTER GAMES

SunDog (FTL Games, 7907 Ostrow St, Suite F, San Diego CA 92111, \$?) by Bruce Webster. "Frozen Legacy: A ZoomAction Adventure Game." For Apple II with 64K, joystick, and color monitor. The object of this science-fiction adventure game is to build a colony for a religious group.

SOURCEBOOKS

The Adventurer's Handbook (Reston, 11480 Sunset Hls Rd, Reston VA 22090, \$?) by Bob Albrecht and Greg Stafford. "A guide to role-playing games." This 208-page book "takes you to the world of fantasy—a world of role playing games in which the

players create and control characters who live their imaginary lives in a specially made game land."

ENDLESS QUEST BOOKS

These pocketbooks are 160 pages each (TSR, \$2.25 each) and are based on the *D&D* game. "Pick a Path to Adventure."

Book 15: Under Dragon's Wing by John Kendall. It is up to a young boy to save his city from the legions of the evil Crimson Wizard with the help of his magical dragon ring and an ancient sorcery book.

Book 16: The Dragon's Ransom by Laura French. A young boy must face danger from fierce orcs, trolls, hobgoblins, etc., to seek treasure in order to raise the ransom that must be paid to the Golden Dragon who stands guard over the Land of Oon.

MISCELLANEOUS

DragonLance 1985 Calendar (TSR, \$6.95) by Larry D. Elmore, et al. Featuring paintings based on the *AD&D* world of Krynn. "The Epic Quest." □

From the designers of THIEVES' GUILD



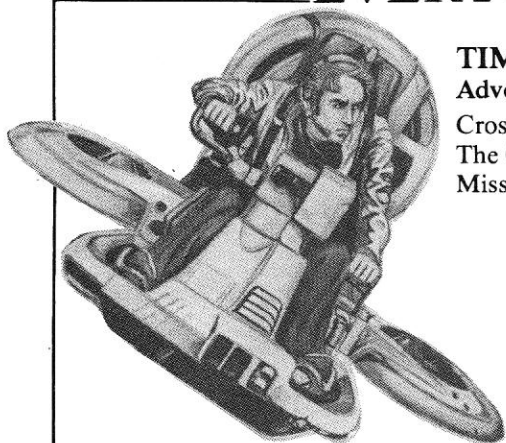
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Books & Gaming

Reviews of books with interesting world settings useful for creating imaginative role-playing campaigns.

THE HERO WITH A THOUSAND FACES

By Joseph Campbell
(Princeton University Press, \$7.95)

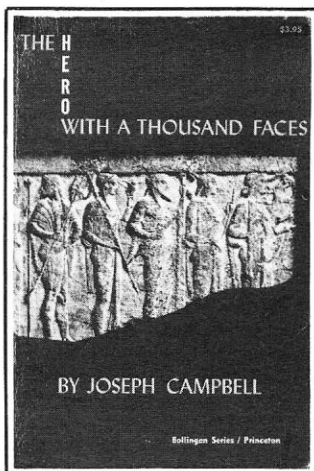
Reviewed by David R. Dunham

Is there any connection between mythology and role-playing games? I think not.

Already I can hear shouts of protest. Sure, my fantasy role-playing campaign has mythological creatures like dragons and unicorns, too. It has no connection with mythology, either. They are just fantasy creatures, devoid of meaning. A myth, by contrast, does contain meaning. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* seeks to explain the hero myth and the symbols that appear in it.

According to Joseph Campbell, the tales of all heroes boil down to a single story, which he calls the "monomyth." In a nutshell, this consists of the phases of separation, initiation, and return. An example of these phases is Moses climbing the mountain, receiving the law, and returning with it to the Israelites.

There are of course some variations. Campbell examines the path of the hero in detail, with examples including King Arthur, Buddha, the Frog King from the Brothers Grimm, Gilgamesh, the Sumerian goddess Inanna, the Eskimo trickster Raven, and Rip Van Winkle. To summarize (see Figure 1), the hero is lured, carried away, or voluntarily proceeds from his mundane surroundings to the threshold of adventure. There he defeats a guardian and proceeds alive, or, if slain, descends in death. The hero then journeys through a dream landscape "where he must survive a succession of trials. This is a favorite phase of the myth-adventure." Not everyone or everything he meets is necessarily an enemy: he may also receive magical aid. He eventually arrives at the crux of the adventure, undergoes a supreme ordeal, and gains his reward. This may be sexual union with the World-Goddess, atonement with the Creator-God, or his own divinization. In some cases the hero has to steal his reward (bride, fire, etc.). He then sets about returning to the normal world (perhaps having to flee pursuers and pass more obstacles). Back at the threshold, with external help or



on his own, the hero is reborn into the world, and brings it his restoring boon.

The pattern of the hero myth, repeated over and over in the legends of different cultures, doesn't bear much resemblance to many of the role-playing situations I have seen. While not every scenario must result in the world being restored, there are still lots of possibilities for grounding a role-playing adventure in the foundations of the hero myth.

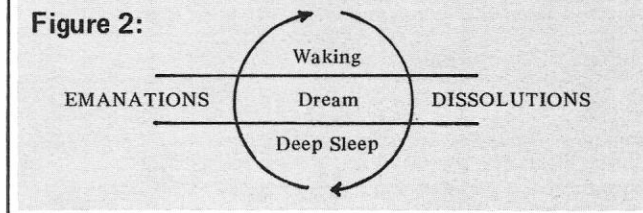
The hero's cycle is the basis for the *RuneQuest* heroquests (see for example "Waha's Quest" by Greg Stafford in *Different Worlds* 4). Generally the would-be hero-quester follows a path previously laid out by a legendary hero. He still faces a possibly dangerous separation, initiation, and return, but has an advantage over the original hero in that he knows more or less what to expect. Of course, the rewards aren't as big the second time around. While the hero myth revolves around a single person, rather than the group of characters usually found in a role-playing game, the group could quite easily act as the helpers the hero meets during the test phase of the adventure.

Even if you don't want such a direct connection with mythology, the elements of the monomyth are relevant to just about any kind of adventure. There's an obvious similarity to the plot elements of literature (motivation, rising action, climax), except that the monomyth is specifically the distillation of adventure literature. Try putting the same elements in your scenarios to add a touch of the heroic. (For a more general discussion of how to do this, see Ken Rolston's "Adven-

Figure 1:



Figure 2:



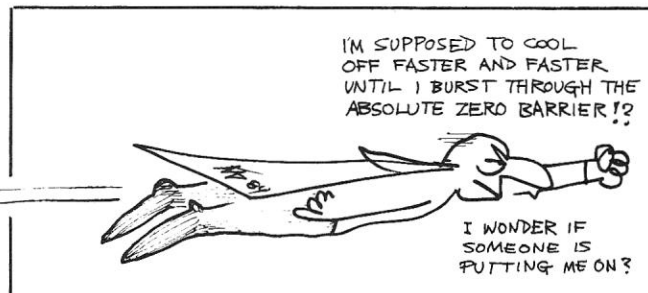
ture By Design" column in *DW* 30.)

The latter part of the book deals with the cycles of the cosmos. It begins in a blissful condition, degrades to the current state, and eventually improves again (see Figure 2). The author connects this to our own dreaming: consciousness must be refreshed by passing into deep sleep and back; likewise, the cosmos must be renewed. The job of the hero is to make sure that the cycle is not held up. This often means dealing with a dragon or tyrant who represents the status quo. This section is not as useful for the scenario designer, but will help anyone designing a complete campaign background.

Is there any use for mythology today? Campbell says that myth is killed by being interpreted as biography, history, or science. But he also points out the connection between mythology, dreams, and psychology. Both dreams and myths are symbolic "of the dyna-

mics of the psyche." Dreams are our private mythology, while the psychologist is the "modern master of the mythological realm." "Mythology . . . is psychology misread as biography." Campbell certainly seems to be a follower of Jung and Freud. In any case, he says that the intent of myth is to transmit traditional wisdom (which is not always rational knowledge).

The Hero with a Thousand Faces is not an easy book to read. While it isn't overly dry, it isn't exactly entertaining, either. It took me three starts to get through it. This may be due to the fact that I don't usually read scholarly books for entertainment. But I think it was worth it, not only because I have used the monomyth in my campaign, but because I have a better understanding of how a mythology should be designed. There were lots of other insights, too. Perhaps now I can write an acceptable *RuneQuest* cult. . . □



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What's New

New products and publications for the adventure role-player.
Game companies are encouraged to send samples of their new releases for announcement in this column.

NEW SYSTEMS

Element Masters (Escape Ventures, Box 4330, Va Bch VA 23454, \$?) by Kenneth D. Burridge, et al. This second edition is 160 pages and comes with a 17"x11" map of Vinya and a character sheet.

Justice Inc. (Hero Games, 92A 21st Ave, San Mateo CA 94403, \$15) by Aaron Allston, et al. "The Role-Playing Game of the '20s & '30s." Comes boxed with a 96-page rulebook, an 80-page campaign book, and dice. "Live The Adventure!"

Ringworld (Chaosium, Box 6302, Albany CA 94706-0302, \$25) by Sherman Kahn, et al. "Roleplaying Adventure Beneath the Great Arch." Comes boxed with a 60-page Explorer Book, a 36-page Technology Book, a 44-page Creatures Book, a 48-page Game-master Book, playaids, and dice. Based on Larry Niven's science-fiction novels. "The Authorized Roleplaying Game."

Stalking the Night Fantastic (Tri Tac, Box 61, Madison Hgts MI 48071-0061, \$12.95) by Richard Tucholka and Chris Beiting. "Supernatural Role Playing." This second edition is 104 pages spiral bound.

Star Trek (FASA, Box 6930, Chicago IL 60680, \$?) by Guy W. McLimore, Jr., et al. This second edition basic game comes boxed with a 40-page Star Fleet Officer's Manual, a 48-page Game Operations Manual, a 40-page Cadet's Orientation Sourcebook, and dice.

TimeMaster (Pacesetter, Box 451, Delavan WI 53115, \$?) by Marc D. Acres. "Adventures in the 4th Dimension." Comes boxed with a 64-page Traveler's Manual, a 32-page Guide to the Continuum, a 16-page "Red Ace High: An

Introductory *TimeMaster* Adventure," a 27"x20½" double-sided map, 140 counters, and dice. For ages 12 and up. "A Great Time Any Time."

FOR ADVENTURES IN TEKUMEL

Swords & Glory, Vol. 2: Tekumel Player's Handbook (Gamescience, 01956 Pass Rd, Gulfport MS 39501, \$20) by M.A.R. Barker. "For Adventures in Tekumel." Comes boxed with a 244-page rulebook, a 16-page Combat Summary, a 12-page Sorcery Summary, playaids, and dice.

FOR CALL OF CTHULHU

"Glozel Est Authentique!" (TOME, Box 319, Kirkwood NJ 08043, \$?) by Stephen Rawling and E.S. Erkes. A 64-page book. Contains two scenarios. The title scenario leads the investigators to France where they will try to solve a puzzling archeological enigma. The second scenario, "Secrets of the Kremlin," probes the depths of the ancient citadel and the mysteries of the early Czars.

FOR CAR WARS

Expansion Set 5: Double Arena (Steve Jackson Games, Box 18957, Austin TX 78760-8957, \$2.95) by Steve Jackson. Comes with two double-sided 21"x32" maps of the Buffalo Municipal Coliseum and the Dumbarton Slalom Arena in Oakland, California, 48 counters, and instructions. "They call the Buffalo arena Murphy Memorial—if anything can go wrong, it will!"

FOR CHAMPIONS

Champions III (Hero Games, \$10) edited by Steve Peterson. "Another Super Supplement." This 80-page book includes an article on random superhero generator, optional modifications to old powers, new powers, new power modifiers, new power advantages, new power limitations, new combat rules, campaign aids, and various new record sheets and forms.

FOR CHILL

Village Of Twilight (Pacesetter, \$?) by Gali Sanchez and Carl Smith. A 32-page book. The adventure involves the search for a lost tribe of werejaguars. "Local Indians were not sure where the tribe had gone, but believed them to be relocated somewhere in the jungles of southeast Mexico. . ."

FOR FRINGEWORTHY

Rogue 417 (Tri Tac, \$5.95) by Richard Tucholka. "After Doomsday You Can Survive." This is a 32-page campaign module. In 1994, a deadly bacteria is accidentally released in a lab in Syria. It mutates and quickly kills 60% of the world population within the year. The object of the game is survival. "The Lucky Ones are Dead."

FOR LOST WORLDS

The following are all 32-page booklets (Nova, Box 1178, Manchester CT 06040, \$6 each) with at least one playaid. They are all by Alfred Leonardi.

Woman in Scale with Sword and Shield.

Hill Troll with Club.

Fighter Mage with Magic Sword. Also comes with five spell cards and two sword cards.

Cold Drake.

FOR MS&PE

Raid On Rajallapor (Grenadier Models, Box 305, Springfield PA 19064, \$?) by Gary Pilkington. For 4-6 players. "The job seemed easy enough; raid a heavily guarded estate in northwestern India and steal a valuable statue . . . Yet, this is one mercenary contract you are having second thoughts about. Your employer seems confident of your success, perhaps, too confident." A 48-page book.

FOR THE MORROW PROJECT

The Starnaman Incident (Time-line, Box 11051, Lansing MI 48901, \$?) by C. Starnaman and H.N. Voss. A 52-page book. "One hundred and fifty years ago the people of Starnaman fought a bloody war of liberation. For over ten years they struggled against a

reign of terror. Team H-9 finds itself enmeshed in a legend of horror and hatred passed down to people that they do not know."

FOR OGRE AND G.E.V.

Shockwave (Steve Jackson Games, \$3.95) by Steve Jackson. Comes with 224 counters, a 13"x14½" map that fits on any side of the G.E.V. map, and instructions which include 12 new scenarios. New units include a Cruise Missile, three new types of G.E.V., and the Superheavy Tank.

FOR STALKING THE NIGHT FANTASTIC

Module 1: Hellsnight (Tri Tac, \$5.95) by Richard Tucholka, et al. "A city dies at midnight." A 32-page spiral-bound book. Contains seven scenarios: "Massacre on Cass Ave," "The Augmented Man," "The Happiness Plot," "Walk On Water," "Roach Hotel," "Serengeti USA," and "The Last Panzer." Also includes additional rules for the game.

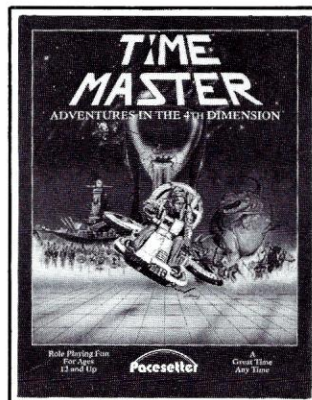
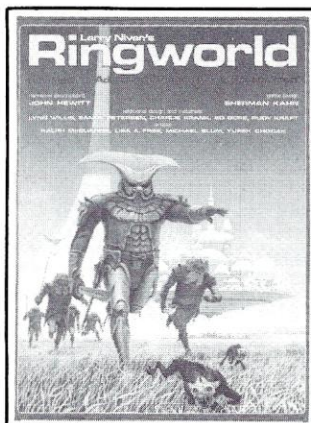
FOR STAR TREK

The Klingons (FASA, \$15) by Fantasimulations Associates. "A sourcebook and character generation supplement." Comes boxed with a 64-page rulebook, 20 pages of playaids, a 4-page "Intrusion" adventure, a 16-page "The Natural Order" adventure, and 112 counters. "The Klingon Empire Wants You!"

Trader Captains and Merchant Princes (FASA, \$6) by Fantasimulations Associates. "Included are all the rules and charts needed for the creation of various traders, privateers, merchants, con-men, and rogues. A complete system for trading commodities, playing the stock market, procuring a bank loan, and the economics of running a starship are presented." A 52-page book.

Ship Construction Manual (FASA, \$6) by David F. Tepool. "Any ship from the mighty Enterprise to an Orion Blockade Runner can be constructed and the player reference panel drawn. Basic data is included for the Federation, the Klingon, Romulans, Gorn, and Tholians." A 56-page book.

The Vanished (FASA, \$6) by Guy W. McLimore, Jr. and Greg Poehlein. "It started as just a friendly conversation—until suddenly there was no one left to talk to! The crew of the Federation Starship must find out why—before



they too are among The Vanished . . . Included are complete deck plans for FDR 39 and a complete crew roster for use with this adventure. . . " A 40-page book.

Denial Of Destiny (FASA, \$6) by Andrew Philip Hooper. "The planet Aleriad, barred to Star Fleet and independent vessels, is a doomed world. Your mission: take a rescue fleet and save as many of the natives as you can. Simple??? Not quite. The Alerians are religious fanatics and believe it is their destiny to remain on their world." A 40-page book.

U.S.S. Enterprise Deck Plans (FASA, \$15) by Jordan Weisman, et al. Comes boxed with a 12-page Ship Recognition Handbook and nine 22"x33½" double-sided deck plans for use with 15mm miniatures.

Klingon D-7 Class Battle Cruiser (FASA, \$12.50) by Jordan Weisman, et al. Comes boxed with a 12-page Ship Recognition Handbook and six 22"x33½" double-sided deck plans for use with 15mm miniatures.

Ship Recognition Manual: The Klingon Empire (FASA, \$7) by Jordan Weisman, et al. This 32-page book "contains 14 vessels of the Klingon Imperial Navy. All available data on each ship is presented in this volume, including: Tonnage, Crew, Range, Warp Speeds, Weaponry, and all game information."

Ship Recognition Manual: The Federation (FASA, \$7) by David F. Tepool. This 32-page book "contains 14 vessels of the United Federation of Planets. All currently available unclassified data for each ship is presented in this volume . . . along with all information necessary to add these vessels to your game."

FOR TIMEMASTER

Crossed Swords (Pacesetter, \$?) by Carl Smith. "With the Three Musketeers." A 32-page book. For 2-8 players. This adventure simulates *The Three Musketeers* story of saving the Queen's reputation by retrieving her diamond pins from her paramour in London and returning them to Paris in time for the Royal Ball.

FOR TRAVELLER

Adventure 12: Secret of the Ancients (GDW, Box 1646, Bloomington IL 61702-1646, \$5) by Marc W. Miller. "Set in the Regina subsector of the Spinward Marches, this adventure concentrates on a search for an archaeological site which can reveal who the mysterious Ancients were and perhaps solve the puzzle of their history." A 48-page booklet.

Alien Module 1: Aslan (GDW, \$6) by J. Andrew Keith, et al.

"Adventure and Intrigue with a Proud Warrior Race." "Spinward of the Imperium, a race of ferocious carnivores has evolved to intelligence and rules hundreds of star systems. They are the Aslan, interstellar neighbors of the Imperium." A 40-page book.

Alien Module 2: K'kree (GDW, \$6) by J. Andrew Keith and Loren K. Wiseman. "Encounter with the Enigmatic Centaurs." "One of the Imperium's interstellar neighbors is a six-limbed vegetarian race known as the K'kree. Their empire includes hundreds of star systems, and their rule within their territory is absolute." A 40-page book.

Beltstrike (GDW, \$12) by J. Andrew Keith. "Riches and Danger in the Bowman Belt." Comes boxed with 12 character cards, 17"x11" map of Koenig's Rock, 12-page Bowman System Reference Book, 12-page Belter's Handbook, and four 4-page scenario folders: "Lodes of Adventure," "On The Rock," "Claimjumpers," and "Archeology."

The Desert Environment (Gamelords, 18616 Grosbeak Ter, Gaithersburg MD 20879, \$6.95) by William H. Keith, Jr. This 56-page booklet deals "with the particular situations and problems of travel and survival in a desert climate." Includes rules on navigation, finding water, mirages, sunburn, heat stroke, flashfloods, sandstorms, equipment, adventures, etc.

Duneraiders (Gamelords, \$6.95) by William H. Keith, Jr. "Riches, danger, and mystery lie within the arid wastes of Tashakraar, a desert world peopled by the savage and enigmatic (sic) Duneraiders. The players soon learn that desert nomads and desert heat aren't the only enemies they face when they find themselves trapped in the midst of vicious inter-corporate war!" A 56-page booklet.

Disappearance On Aramat (Grenadier Models, \$7) by Gary Pilkington. For 4-6 players. "The x-boat message from a group of archeologists on Aramat is long overdue. The planet is seemingly peaceful and uninhabited. What could have happened?" A 48-page book.

FOR V&V

The Dawn of DNA (FGU, Box 182, Roslyn NY 11576, \$?) by Kenneth Campbell. A 20-page book with over a hundred cutout counters. Dr. DNA has a diabolical plot to feed pills to human-kind that will turn them all into zombies.

From the Depths of Space (FGU, \$5) by Stefan Jones. A 24-page book with 84 cutout counters. The Capellans has annexed Earth

to their Hegemony and is sending an invasion force.

FOR WITCH HUNT

A Tyme of Darkness (StaCom Simulations, Box 833, Bayonne NJ 07002-0833, \$5.50) by Richard Driscoll. This 20-page book includes two scenarios, rules clarifications, and a rumor table. The title scenario involves sick cows in Salem, 1692. The second scenario, "Tragedy at the North River," involves Cotton Mather and a child drowning at a fall festival.

FOR AUTODUEL GAMES

UltraForce (AutoVentures, 1002 Warrington Dr, Austin TX 78753, \$7) by Aaron Allston. A 32-page book, includes AutoVentures' Quick-Play Auto-Combat System. Players are members of an elite military service answering directly to the Chiefs of Staff and the President. The two scenarios involve a huge armored combat vehicle and a team of ambushers.

FOR ANY SYSTEM

Cloudland (Grenadier Models, \$7) by Tony Fiorito. For characters of levels 1-4. "You have heard rumors that Cloudland is a huge castle built many decades ago by a powerful mage. The mage is long dead, but creatures still fight for control of the castle's awesome towers. Beneath the walls of Cloudland, in its subterranean expanses, are rumored to be untold riches and strong, arcane magicks." A 48-page book.

Citybook II: Port o' Call (Blade, Box 1210, Scottsdale AZ 85252, \$9.95) edited by Liz Danforth and Michael Stackpole. "22 fully-developed seaside businesses for use with any role-playing system including over 70 completely developed non-player personalities to interact with player characters in over 60 suggested scenarios for City adventures." A 116-page book.

Treasure Vault (Blade, \$6.95) by Steven D. Howard and Stephen Peregrine. "A compendium of 26 thoroughly described and very

interesting items (magical and otherwise) plus 38 interconnected non-player characters in 57 suggested scenarios for use in any role-playing game." A 40-page book.

The Quest (Icarus Games, Box 834, Urbana IL 61801, \$?) by David Emigh. "A Fantasy Role-Playing Scenario Design Aid." This 64-page booklet discusses six types of quests: the sword quest, the broken sword quest, the unicorn quest, the dead companion quest, the dragon quest, and the bride quest. Also included is a bibliographic essay.

MAGAZINES

Simufant 2 (c/o Frank Lassak, Margaretenstr. 21, 2000 Hamburg 6, West Germany, 2 DM) edited by Frank Lassak. A 44-page digest-sized German-language gaming magazine. "Der Informator für die Neue Spielkultur." This issue includes: an article on "Astrologie in AD&D," game reviews, a fantasy story, an interview, etc.

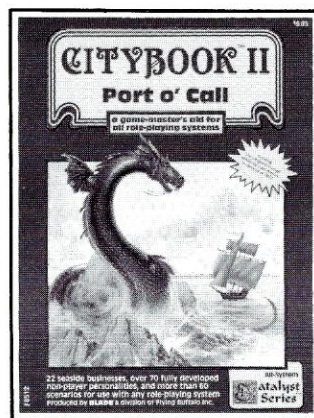
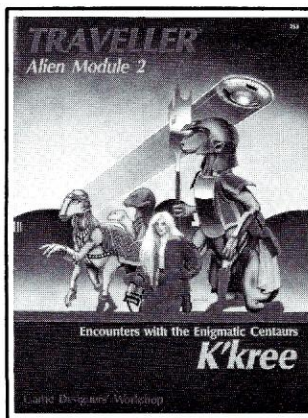
OTHER GAMES

Globber (Steve Jackson Games, \$4.95) by Allen Varney. "A peculiar game for two players." This 16-page book comes with a 16"x21" map and 140 counters. The game pits the exploding children of Ticketa-koo against Globber, their cheerfully homicidal blob-like babysitter in an alien playpen.

Judge Dredd (Games Workshop, 27-29 Sunbeam Rd, London NW10 6JD, England, \$7) by Ian Livingstone. "The Game of Crime Fighting in Mega-City One." For 2-6 players aged 8 to adult. Comes boxed with a 22"x33" map, 54 Action Cards, 21 Sector Cards, 28 Perp Cards, 28 Crime Cards, 6 Judge Cards, 6 playing pieces, 24-page Umpty Candy Card Album, a die, and a 4-page rulebook. Playing time: 1-2 hours.

Quest for the Dungeonmaster (TSR, \$?) by ?. A fantasy adventure game for 2-6 players, ages 6 and up. Comes boxed with a 17"x21½" map, 6 counters, 52 cards,

continued page 38



Film Reviews

Reviews of outstanding feature films of interest to adventure role-players. Good movies are indispensable sources of gaming ideas.

Reviewed by John Nubbin

GREMLINS

Director Joe Dante
Producer Michael Finnell
Screenplay Chris Columbus
Music Jerry Goldsmith
Photography John Hora

CAST

Rand Peltzer Hoyt Axton
Kate Phoebe Cates
Billy Zach Galligan

A small town inventor wants to give his son something really different for Christmas. What he finds is a small creature called a mogwai. He basically steals the animal for his son giving it to him just in time to destroy their home, neighborhood, and town for Christmas day.

The theme of *Gremlins* is a cross between the old chestnuts, "there are some things man was not meant to know," and "the only thing worse than wanting something is having it." One may assume the reason the movie has a blending of two such vague morals is that every facet of the movie is merely a hodging of handy bits, all of it thrown together to help hold in place the series of special effects which are the film's only distinguishing feature.

Gremlins was made to sell toys; greeting cards, puppets, figurines, coloring books, T-shirts, and anything else for which the producers can sell licenses. It is a tacky, senseless, cruel, bigoted, cold motion picture, one filled with in-jokes, self-congratulations, and a greedy disregard for those who pay to see it which rivals that of a snake oil salesman.

Little in the film makes sense. For instance: the three rules. "Don't get them wet." Aside from the fact that every time they eat they will get wet (chicken fat on their lips, etc.), we see these creatures getting wet all the time, and nothing happens. One has to run through the snow to get to a swimming pool to produce more of his kind? Why doesn't he simply roll in the snow? Surely snow is closer to water than a chlorinated pool.

"Never feed them after midnight." Midnight where? The term 'midnight' is just a concept. There really is no such thing, excepting the mid-way point between dawn and dusk, which is certainly not 12 o'clock every night.

"Keep them out of bright light." If bright light kills one of them at the end, why not both? The bad gremlin, granted, falls directly in the sun's path, but the good one is in the same room, and after watching the same one earlier freak out over a bathroom light, it seems reasonable to expect he should have gotten fried at the end as well.

One can go on and on, tying knots in the film's lack of logic, but it is to little avail. The simple truth is, the filmmakers simply did not care to work at creating a picture which made sense. They have taken a relatively good idea and explored only one aspect of it—like so many others recently—the special effects.

The town they created for *Gremlins*, and the people they brought to life to populate it are a fantasy. Everyone is stiltedly half-dimensional. It is the old Muppet

thinking; make the people awkward, silly, and characterless, and the puppets have to look as if they have personality when placed next to them. No attention was paid to the people in the film. They are all fools, and worse than fools. No one is allowed to be competent, unless they are nasty. In the filmmakers' eyes—what could it matter? Everyone on screen is only there to be tormented and murdered by the Gremlins.

Of course, for those who are willing to pay their money for nothing but special effects, *Gremlins* is perfect. The puppets go through their paces most expertly. When they are meant to make the audience laugh, they do it with ease. When their function is to terrify, they accomplish that with equal ease. There is plenty to see in the film, especially if one is into the Joe Dante brand of 'real-world intrusion' humor he so loves. One can watch Steven Spielberg glide by on a bizzare bike, and see *Raiders* jokes to one's heart's content. As in *The Howling*, Dante has again failed to keep any distinct line between the humor and the horror.

The director's main problem is in realizing that for us to care about the characters being stalked, possessed, destroyed, etc., in a horror film, we must first care about them. In *Halloween*, we want Jamie Lee Curtis to escape because she is intelligent, decent, and basically a good person. We are still shocked when her friends are killed, but if she or one of the children had

died, the deaths would have been senseless.

Dante does not understand this, or at least, he does not care to understand this. Here, as in his segment of *Twilight Zone—The Movie*, he has made his characters little more than Warner Bros. cartoon figures. We never care if the coyote gets hit by a falling rock, and we don't care if Polly Holliday gets launched to a smearing death in *Gremlins*.

All in all, it is just another exploitation film. Trading on Spielberg's name and reputation, it is merely a money-maker—just another summer film which in the end has nothing to keep it in our memories past Thanksgiving.

STAR TREK III THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK

Director Leonard Nimoy
Producer Harve Bennett
Screenplay Harve Bennett
Music James Horner
Photography Charles Correll, A.S.C.

CAST

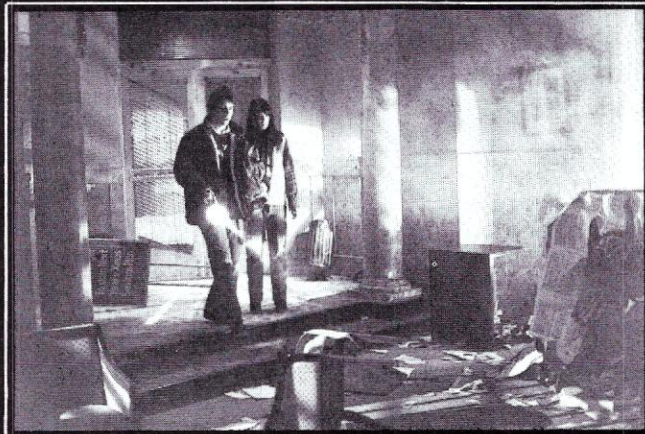
Kirk William Shatner
Spock Leonard Nimoy
Kruge Christopher Lloyd
Sarek Mark Lenard
High Priestess Dame Judith Anderson

It's one of those 'scratch your head' films; you either like it, or you don't. Interestingly enough, unlike both of the previous films, this time around one's enthusiasm can be directly determined by one's enthusiasm for the entire Star Trek concept. If you liked the show, you'll like this movie—



Zach Galligan (left foreground) is awed by the small and highly-unusual pet he receives from his father (Hoyt Axton, rt.) while his mother (Frances Lee McCain) looks on with equally high interest.

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Zach Galligan and Phoebe Cates, as the youthful residents of the picturesque mid-American town of Kingston Falls, examine the unexplained havoc wreaked on the bank where they both work.

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if you didn't, you won't; it's as simply as that.

The first one, *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, was as pretentious as its title. It was made pompously, and in some ways desperately. Trying to please fans, critics, and everyone in between, it failed miserably, pleasing no one except the most die-hard admirers.

The Wrath of Khan, on the other hand, sought to correct the mistakes of the first. Its efforts were directed toward making, not so much a *Star Trek* film, but just a film. It succeeded. *Wrath* was a success, with fans and non-fans. It has its critics—the original *King Kong*, motherhood, and chocolate chip cookies have their critics—but by and large it redeemed everyone's faith in the property, and pleased all its audiences.

The Search for Spock, however, seems to have been made solely for the fans. The more in-jokes one knows, the more facts one has gathered about the Enterprise and her crew over the years, the more one will enjoy this film. This is in one way a criticism, and in another it is not.

In truth, any film should be able to stand on its own. Everyone should know why the audience applauds when the camera rests on the brown bundle of fur, or the slightly middle-aged blonde, or Dr. McCoy when he grabs at the shoulder of the man in the bar. It is cheap filmmaking to hang the balance of one's efforts on the audience's knowledge, rather than on one's own skill, and yet, that is what we have here by the bushel.

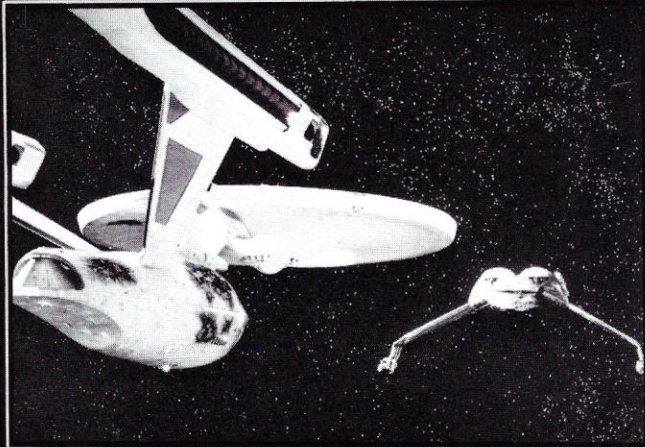
And yet, how can anyone rightly expect the filmmakers not to take advantage of such a unique situation. Outside of James Bond, no other genre storyline, not even *Star Wars*, has as many 'in' references as *Star Trek*. On one hand they snub their new viewers by pandering to the old, and yet, if they do not, they snub

those who made them what they are in the first place.

In all honesty, those in power did not rely too heavily on the past in *Search*, but also, in all honesty, they did not make a very good film, either.

PLUSES: The special effects were good; the music was excellent. James Horner has done a better job reblending his themes for *Search* with a far surer hand than John Williams did with his for either *Jedi*, or *Temple Of Doom*. The plotting of the storyline is sure and true. It is not only a good story, it is a good *Star Trek* story.

MINUSES: Nimoy's direction is boring. Although he has some clever ideas about the uses of close-ups, most of the time he wastes everything in front of his cameras, including the good performances of most of his fellow actors. The humor is too prevalent; there are too many laughs, and they hurt the flow for anyone expecting something in the way of a serious adventure.



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And lastly, there is no villain.

As odd as it may seem, *The Search for Spock* has no real adversary for Kirk to pit himself against, which after all, is the basic thrust of every *Star Trek* story—Kirk (or some other Enterprise officer) against some evil. This time out, the foe is 'circumstance,' which is not really an enemy at all. People are in the wrong places at the wrong time, doing the wrong things. Christopher Lloyd's bumbling Kruge is no threat, nor Star Fleet's tin commanders—everyone knows Kirk can out-manuever such pawns with his eyes closed. The real enemy here is fate—Spock's fate.

Kirk is really fighting mortality again, as he did in *Khan*. In *Khan*, however, he was battling his own. We already know Capt. Kirk can cheat death, we've seen him do the trick a thousand times. To those who want more than re-runs of the same old tricks, *The Search for Spock* is fairly pedestrian fare. It is by no means the failure the

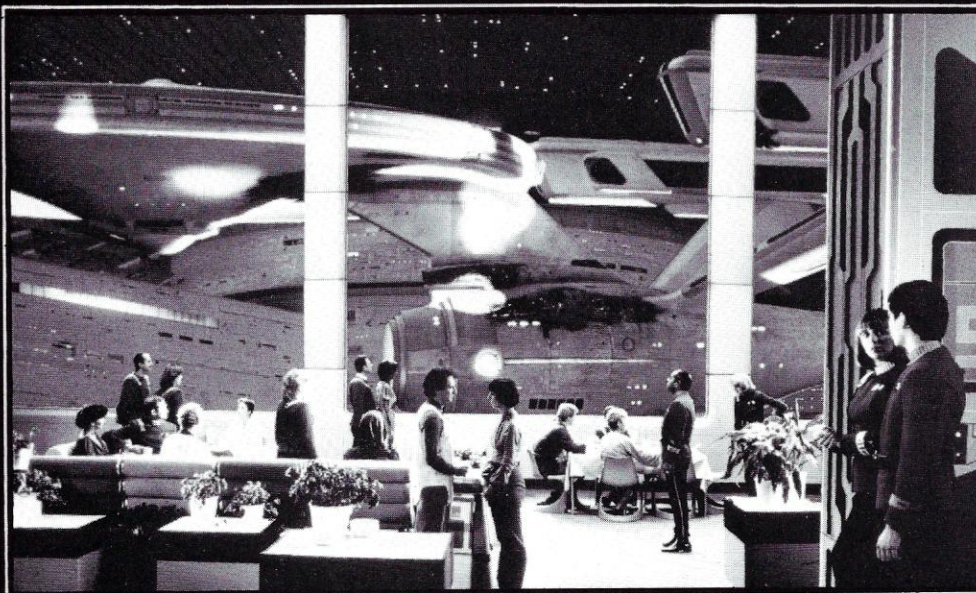
first film was, but it is also by no means as good as the second.

The Search for Spock is only a long TV episode. At \$4 to \$5 a pop, even the fans may grow weary of such productions. This is not to say that the *Trek* phenomenon is over, or even dying. If it can widen its horizons, give its audiences more of the *Star Trek* world, instead of less, it should enjoy growth for decades to come.

Search is a turning point. If it goes from here to galactic war, or troubles of planetary size, things should do just fine. If it continues to dwell introspectively on a handful of individuals, however, it will most likely tarnish quickly, and that would be a shame, indeed. □

NEXT ISSUE:

A review of all the movies we haven't covered



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A Letter from Gigi

Adventure gaming news and gossip
from the nosiest gamer-reporter
in the world, Gigi D'Arn.

Dear Tadashi,

Oh well, I didn't make it to ORIGINS this year after all. My Toyota broke down near El Paso and as I was waiting for its repair, this big Texan came along and invited me to his ranch. One thing led to another and I never got any closer to Dallas. I had a lot of fun but I still have saddle sores.

Among the winners of the ORIGINS awards this year were: Grenadier Model's *Call Of Cthulhu* figure series. Victory Games' *James Bond 007* role-playing rules, Blade's *Stormhaven* adventure, and the *Dragon* magazine. And elected to the Adventure Gaming Hall of Fame this year was DAVE ARNESON. Newlyweds get all the breaks.

Who was HOWARD THOMPSON waiting for at the bar in ORIGINS and why didn't he want GREG STAFFORD to know who?

TSR Rumor Dept: Are *D&D* sales down? ... Is TSR on a 4-day work week? ... Did TSR file for Chapter 11 in the Bankruptcy Courts? Is DAVE ARNESON worried about the status of his contract with them? ... Was TSR offered \$8 million for their

game company? Did TSR counteroffer with \$15 million? Sounds affordable to me, all you need is some big bank to bankroll it. ... Did TSR get the rights to do a role-playing game based on the TV series *Dynasty*? Shades of *Dallas*. ... Check any of the above with which you agree.

TOME's next *Call Of Cthulhu* module is tentatively titled *The Toy Shop*. Their first *Stormbringer* module due later this year is now tentatively titled *Blood Lust*.

A "Get Well Soon" message to RICHARD TUCHOLKA of Tri Tac who was in an accident the day after ORIGINS and will be laid up "for a month due to fractures and possible restructuring surgery (too many hits lost and no constitution saving roll)." No further details available on the accident.

Adventure Systems of Houston TX has acquired the play-by-mail rights for *Car Wars* from Steve Jackson Games. SJG reported gave them the rights when the original licensee, Prometheus Games of Austin TX, folded. SJG has also been happy with Adventure System's *Illuminati* PBM



game which they had licensed previously. Adventure Systems has agreed to honor all existing balances players had with Prometheus. The *Car Wars* PBM game will, however, be a completely new design.

Are GDW's *Traveller* sales down because of FASA's *Star Trek*?

Bye, bye, *Gameplay* magazine. After reaching a circulation of only 3000 after 13 issues, the magazine's venture capitalists have fired JAKE JAQUET and put the magazine on hiatus while they plan a new direction, as well as a new title. Anyone interested in buying my collection?

Did West End steal Tadashi for their magazine? I guess not.

For people who like page-flipping fun: Nova is scheduled to come out with one new *Lost Worlds* (winner of this year's ORIGINS award for best fantasy boardgame!) module a month thru Nov '84. You can also now subscribe and receive one free module for every six you subscribe to. Any they are also planning to release a *Dragonriders Of Pern* book-game using the *Ace Of Aces* system.

Steve Jackson Games' experiment to split *The Space Gamer* magazine has apparently failed. The second magazine, *The Fantasy Gamer*, after only about half-a-dozen issues, has been discontinued. *TSG*, which used to be monthly, will now be SJG's only magazine, and will be published only bimonthly.

Grenadier Models will be expanding their *Call Of Cthulhu* miniatures series with 12 new sets of three different figures each, all new, with an equal mix of monsters and humans.

Congratulations to PAUL & RUTA JAQUAYS for their new son, ZACHERY ALEXANDER.

Mother and child (and father) are reportedly doing fine. Also, congratulations to GREG & CAMELIA STAFFORD for their newly adopted son, JASON.

Message from LOREN WISEMAN: "If thou tootest not thine own horn, who will toot it for thee?"

Errata Dept: GEORGE SCHUBEL did not die of a heart attack as I reported in issue 34. Apparently GEORGE SCHUBEL SR. was the one who suffered heart attack. He is reportedly now almost completely recovered and is doing well considering he is an octogenarian.

Ral Partha is pleased to announce that they will be releasing a series of boxed *RuneQuest* miniatures this fall. The first set will be player-characters and the second set will be a selection of monsters. All are to be sculpted by BOB CHARRETTE. Trollkin Forge will continue to import Citadel's *RuneQuest* figure line from England.

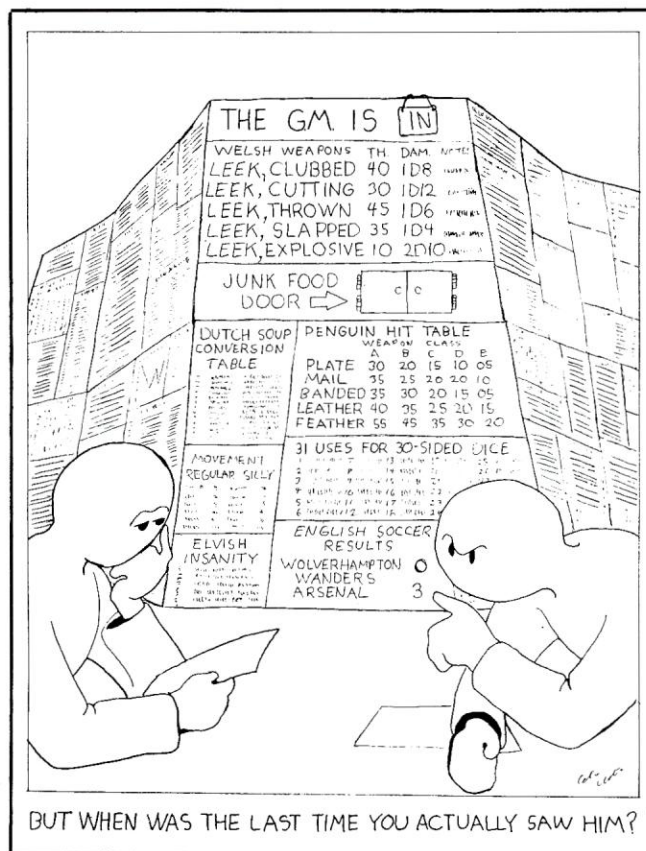
Steve Jackson Games has announced the formation of the American Autoduel Association. *Car Wars* devotees will now be able to attend local and regional tournament. SJG will sponsor the national championships every year at ORIGINS.

HENRY THOMAS, star of *E.T.*, used to play *Traveller* but doesn't play games anymore. "My friends asked me to play every day," he explains, "and I didn't have time for anything else."

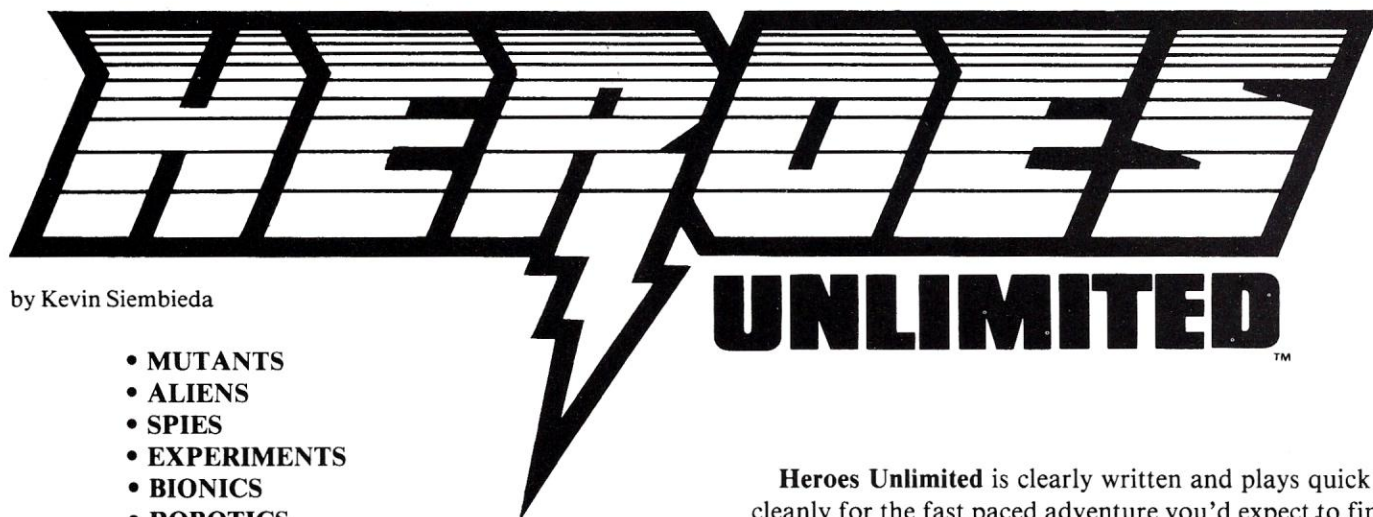
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Love,

Gigi



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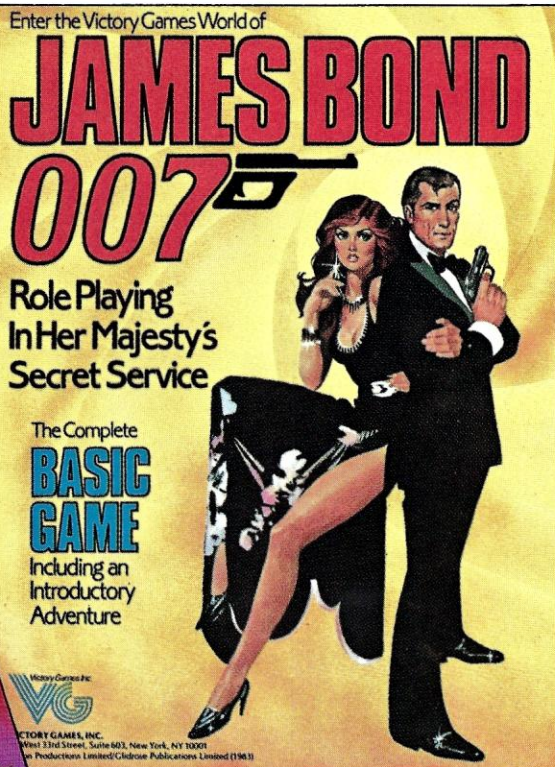
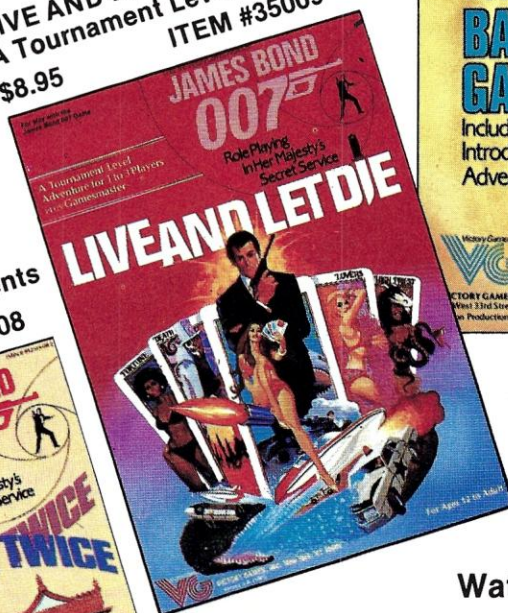
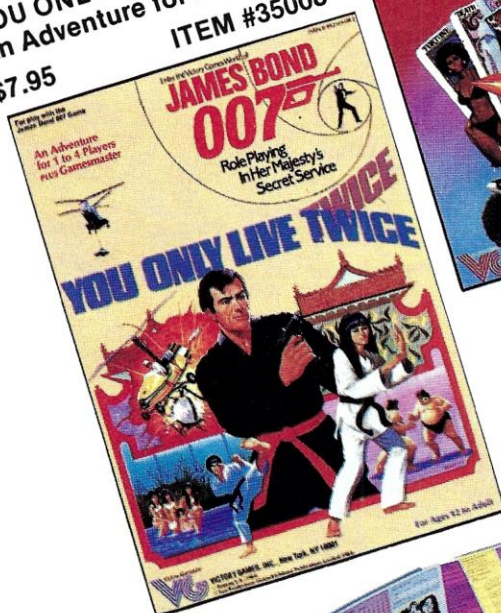
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