

The change in zine title was supposed to coincide with my new website, users.aol.com/xenongames, but it has been delayed.

### scott bennie

*Where Are You Going, My Little One, Little One?* (from *Turn Around*, a song I know as performed by Nancy Griffith): Scenario #2, From Distant Shores, is similar to the “German” invasion of board games that has been going on since Settlers of Catan exploded onto the scene (and before, but Settlers was the breakthrough hit).

### miles corcoran

Welcome. I had the same feeling about *The Invisibles*. After you finish re-reading it, give us a review, would you? I felt *The Invisibles* shared many similarities to *Naked Lunch*, making OTE a very appropriate choice of systems.

### michael cule

*Art of Lace & Steel* (re cts to me): The art is unchanged between editions, so I have been told, but I thought it was rather flat. The shading and line work leaves much to be desired. Many pieces appear rushed. Perhaps I am being too critical; it is certainly better than much rpg art, but it could have been better.

### barry gold

RAE *Living with A&E*.

### lee gold

*A&E Missing a Month* (in your interview with Spike): You mentioned this twice in one interview. I smile every time you bring it up. With the track record A&E has had, you still apologize for one slip 24 ½ years ago that occurred when you were in a foreign country. We forgive you! :)

### spike y jones

*Having a Jewish Friend in Nazi Germany* (cts to Reeve): It is also quite possible for a Nazi to have a friend not knowing the friend is Jewish. I think the inability to identify Jews and gays by appearance fueled (and still fuels) paranoia, resulting in such policies as requiring both these groups to wear badges.

*Ten Commandments* (re cts to Dushay): Listing only numbers 1-10, roman numerals or not, without the classic Ten Commandments tablet graphic (see Robert’s follow-up cts to Lee in #300), may appear completely secular, but it still holds a hidden, religious context and intent. It’s like a knowing wink from the state to followers of the Old Testament.

### dean karukas

*Welcome*. Not knowing the Genesis album that was the template for the adventure, I missed any and all references to it. What is your opinion of the adaptation?

### joshua kronengold

*Grasscutter* (re cts to Zacharov): FYI, *Grasscutter II* is now underway.

### eugene reynolds

Wow, we started subscribing on the very same issue.

### matt stevens

*The Encounter Table*: While the Plamondon method of *Realistic Campaigns* is very interesting, it is also very time consuming. Many of us have neither the time nor the energy to create the background material to the required depth, so we take short cuts. Preset scenarios are one of these short cuts. In modern or historical settings, such campaigns become more feasible.

*Dogmatism*: Interesting idea that ties into the *Realistic Campaigns*, but it would obviously not be appropriate for everybody or every genre. I am intrigued, but not sold. “Rules should be generic or tied to a specific setting.” <sarcasm>Is there a third option?</sarcasm> “Modules can describe NPCs or settings, but they cannot prescribe a plot.” As an example, would Colin’s adventure in #300 be appropriate for a Dogmatic rpg or is there too much of a plot?

### jim vassilakos

*Copyleft*: You realize that if Hasbro-WotC-TSR was really using “copyleft,” there would be completely free access to the d20 core rules, including character creation, even allowing other companies to publish them.

*Derivative Works*: The key to the whole copyright issue is the scope of derivative works. Based on a narrow reading of the law, the vast majority of fan

activity, including fan fiction, is allowed. A broad reading would say all these are off-limits.

From U.S. Title 17, Chapter 1:

A "derivative work" is a work based upon one or more preexisting works, such as a translation, musical arrangement, dramatization, fictionalization, motion picture version, sound recording, art reproduction, abridgment, condensation, or any other form in which a work may be recast, transformed, or adapted. A work consisting of editorial revisions, annotations, elaborations, or other modifications, which, as a whole, represent an original work of authorship, is a "derivative work".

(<http://www.loc.gov/copyright/title17/92chap1.html>):

## comments

issue #301

### paul cardwell

*WotC's Copyright on Trading Card Games* (re cts to Vassilakos): Actually, it's a patent -- #5,662,332. Personally, I think the patent office has gotten way out of hand in awarding patents for non-material concepts like "business processes."

### robert dushay

*Backstabbing and Other Meta-Game Issues* (re Rant): I think it is healthy to discuss these issues out in the open. The GM-advice section of rpgs should address them as well.

*Clinton's Liberalism* (re cts to me): I agree that Clinton did not sell out **his** liberalism. He is, above all else, a political pragmatist/amoeba who was more than willing to let the liberal minority of Congress be the target of conservative criticism so that he could push his moderate (at best) policies through.

### lee gold

*Creating Characters in Everway and OTE* (re cts to yourself): The problem with both these games, and games like Hero, Fudge, and GURPS, is that by giving players great freedom (not counting any guidelines from the GM), character creation can take quite a long time as players struggle to imagine a character they want to play. I think having classes or templates overlaid onto a good skill-based system is the best way to help beginners without insulting experts. Once you've settled on a concept, however, jotting down the numbers is very quick for Everway and OTE.

*Magic Resistance* (re cts to me): All good suggestions. I guess my point is that magic resistance

and magical aptitude are not necessarily mutually exclusive and by making them such, GURPS makes world-specific assumptions.

*Wolcott's PC Bokonojo*: LOL

*Grasscutter* (re cts to Kronengold): Usagi's creator, Stan Sakai, takes great effort to make the series as accurate as possible to Japanese history and folklore – within the artistic license of a storyteller, of course. He also includes bibliographical notes and references, even pointing out when and where he has fudged. You would probably enjoy reading Usagi.

### richard iorio II

*RAEBNC*. The last descriptive paragraph of *The Log of the Sea Serpent* says it is written in Estalian, but the game notes say it is written in Tilean.

### rene a louviere jr

*Sympathetic Villains* (re cts to Gold): I would like to hear more specific examples of how the PCs non-combatively defeated the villains.

*Blocking the Sun* (re cts to Cule): Property rights extend upward to navigable airspace. A building cannot be built over another unless those air rights are explicitly handed over, such was the case for the Citibank tower in NYC building into the airspace of a church on the corner of the block. In this case, the church was demolished and then reconstructed in shadow of the skyscraper.

### paul mason

*New Style*: Ignoring issues of intellectual property, you may want to give your parody a name that clearly labels it as such, such as "New New Style."

*Rail Monopolies* (re cts to Gold): Personally, I do not see how replacing a regulated national monopoly with local monopolies helps anything. Look at the break-up of AT&T and the subsequent mergers of the baby-bells here in the States.

### lisa padol

*7<sup>th</sup> Sea's and LSR's GURPS-like Complexity*: Yes! I'm glad I'm not the only one. I find the WW house system equally bogged down with fiddly bits.

*Characters and Plot* (re cts to me): Plots without characters do not make for engaging roleplaying games. Characters without plots tend to stand around with nothing to do. Ideally, I think there needs to be enough plot to give the PCs something to do and discuss, but not so much plot that they cannot do anything outside the plot.

*Sense of Wonder* (re Igheme Revisited): In the early days, sense of wonder was easy because it was all new, not because the games back then were intrinsically more wondrous than today's games. Eventually, the wondrous becomes familiar and you (or at least I) need something new to keep that sense of wonder.

### **nick parenti**

*Cyberpunk Boxed Set*: Do not bother, no matter the cost. It is riddled with errors, inconsistencies, and typos. Wait until you can find the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, *Cyberpunk 2020*.

### **simon reeve**

*Micro-specialization in GURPS* (re cts to Helms): In a campaign that focuses on farming, I would expect lots of specialized farming skills. In campaigns centered on sailing or combat, the skills would be more specialized in those areas with farming skills de-emphasized and non-specialized.

*Michelson-Morley Experiments* (re cts to Jones): No experiment, no matter how well designed or analyzed can prove something does not exist. M-M only showed that the speed of light did not depend on the direction of flow through the ether. These conclusions can be explained away with any number of theories on the nature of ether, but which are more easily and elegantly explained by concluding ether does not exist and the speed of light is a universal constant.

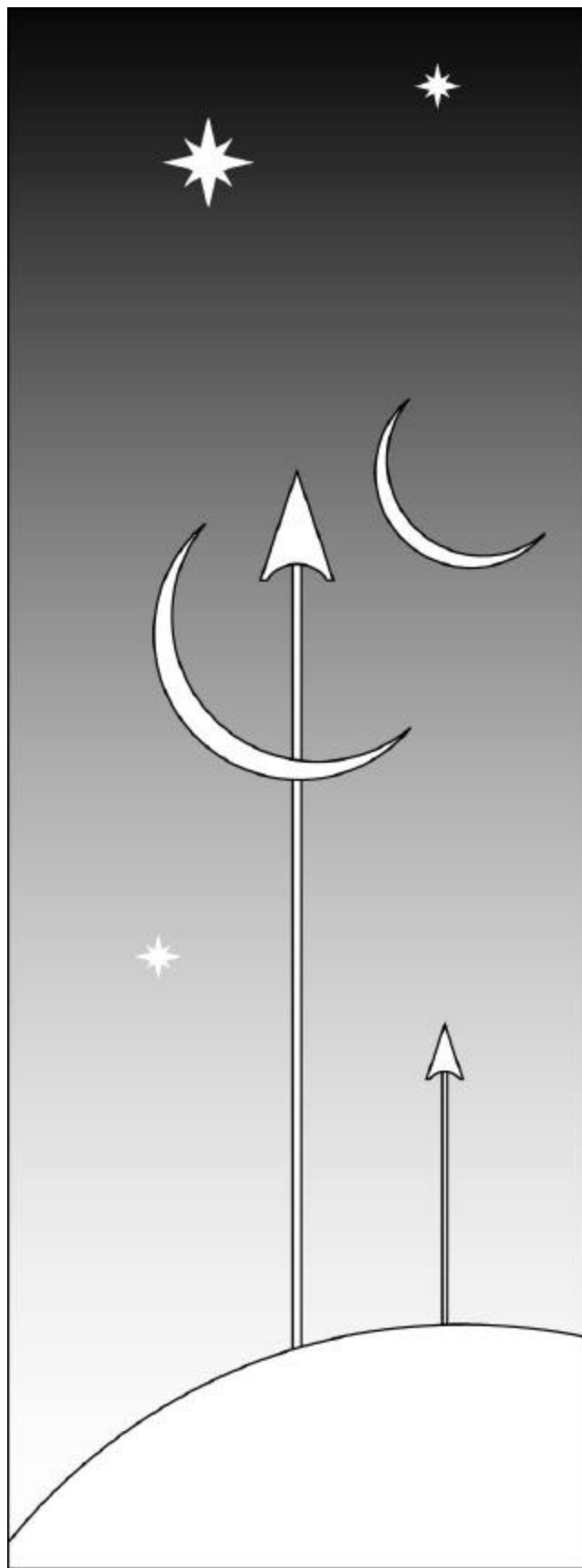
### **colin d speirs**

*G vs E* (re cts to Padol): I also enjoyed the show very much, though it took me a while to sit down and watch it – it kept moving in the television schedule. I think it would make a good premise for an rpg campaign, though In Nomine carries tons of baggage GvE just does not need.

### **jim vassilakos**

*Language of Creation*: I have also been tossing around a magic system along these lines. Perhaps the language itself is lost, but there are fragments and derivations, including varying written and spoken forms, resulting in many styles of magic that differ from each other but have many similarities, much in the way romance languages are related via Latin.

In the film *Dogma*, no mortal could hear the true voice of God and live. The language(s) of magic is probably just an interpretation that can be used by mortals, rather than the True Language used by the gods.



RAEBNCs to everyone else – #301 was an exceptionally enjoyable issue.