

clearer!

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This issue is Number 13 (of Volume II) and is intended primarily for *Alarums & Excursions* 12 (July 14, 1976). See you all at MidAmeriCon! Next issue: back to the Big APA.

EN GARDE AT THE RIPOSTE OFFICE

I've decided to reverse the usual order just this once and make sure I catchup on comments. Next ish I'll finally begin the *Tales of Terra Supra*. My thanks to all the new players at Westercon who gave me a chance to expand the Sagas, and I hope to see more of you in the future (I still have your balrog, Fang!). I never got around to getting a copy of *A&E9* so I'll use that as a cop-out to jump right ahead.

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Lee Gold Good grief! You've done an all comment zine, too! Let's see if I can comment on a comment (on a comment...)? ¶ Saving throws on *Detect* spells? I never thought of that. I'll mention it to LBers. ¶ Colorful dragons, indeed. I have a desert saga going, may use Brunet Dragon. How about a *Lavender Dragon*? (Perhaps Tom Digby could suggest...?)

Hilda Hannifen I notice you've run into Demons. How do they compare to Gygax and Blume's *Eldritch Wizardry* demons? ¶ You make me feel almost glad I missed DunDraCon. Your writing was probably far more exciting than the con could have possibly been. (I induce this from having read your writings of LA 2000 and actually been there.) Barely saw you at Westercon; were you running?

Frank Gasperik I'd classify djinn as *daemonae*, neutral subeldila who have not yet made their choice (see *That Hideous Strength* and *The Discarded Image* by C.S. Lewis). Gygax and Blume's "Demons" are similar *daemonae* who have chosen—chaotically! (They could also be viewed as Lovecraftian superaliens. How many hit dice does Cthulhu have?) I like your idea of Djinn seeking to earn their way to heaven. ¶ I note that *Eldritch Wizardry* has rakshasha—but no description! So you have done us all a service. That dice game has got to have come from Zelazny's *Lord of Light*! ¶ I have a problem concerning AMUs, you may help resolve. Suppose they are using a detect mechanism, such as radar, on a continuing basis. (See my upcoming "Saga of Wirenth" in *Tales of Terra Supra*.) Now if magic is thrown, does the radar screen interrupt (since you say magic and anti-magic can't work simultaneously) or is the magic suppressed (which would be a cheap way of suppressing magic, simply turning on an anti-magic device and leaving it on), or what? Since I didn't know about the alternation, I let both go on, but in the future I'd like to know how to resolve this. ¶ So far I've been running hard-keyed overlands, with Chaotics making expeditions in competition to lawful parties to keep things lively and balanced. However, I'll keep flexkeying in mind for my future Dungeons.

Mark Swanson I've read your analysis of the D&D world, and I see no flaws. However, it's clearly for an *evenly rotating economy* (cf *Human Action* by Ludwig von Mises). Note that *Terra Supra* (last *A&E*) is in dynamic condition: a decaying, collapsing neutral core with an infinite positive potential on one side and negative potential on the other. You may argue that *TS* is unstable—but it has the very *conditions* for instability self-consistently built in. Frankly, when it becomes as straightforward as your scenario, it ain't fun no mo'. ¶ Your essay has had some influence on my statistical distributions for expedition wanderers. For one thing, it has convinced me that one of the most probably encounters that an expedition will have is of *other*

expeditions. I'll say no more on this subject until I have a fully-worked out Encounter Matrix. ¶ Always happy to see more filks.

Ken Pick Another con report, seeming no relation to the previous. "DunDraCon of Many Faces"? ¶ Cynthians? But of course! Now, how about Moties...? ¶ Gygax already sanctions *humanoid* clerics, such as elves, hobbits, dwarves. Granted, they're supposed to stick with their race, but after they've started that way, encounters and attrition could easily change the composition of the resulting party. I have assumed that allowing elves, hobbits and dwarves also allows mermen, orcs, ents, etc. The Uruk-hai can have a particularly nasty anti-clerical cult or two. ¶ "Intermonster duels?" As long as you bring it up, one *Tale of Terra Supra* will concern a certain sorceress who threw a fire elemental at our intrepid overlancers. They hit her with an arrow, breaking concentration, and she ran for the Dimension Door her necromancer husband was opening for her. First of all, he brought out his pet Salamander to hold off the elemental until she would get through. Yep, a Salamander vs Fire Elemental. Turns out Salamander has less hit points, but a better than even chance because he does several times more damage with his tail. Fire Elemental has *reduced* hit damage against other fire creatures. Oh yes, battle ended when Wirenth whacked the Salamander on melee turn before he aced the elemental. The group then gave the castle name and owner to the wounded elemental (spoken in magic by mages with *Read Magic*) and the elemental took off to finish its revenge. The Sorceress called up a fresh Water Elemental, and as the battle was from her castle where her husband could keep distractions free, she overcame (extinguished?) the Fire Elemental. Is that what you had in mind? ¶ Saga: different style than Hilda's, but... I think we got us another!

Nicolai Shapero Sphexes look nasty. Do you remember that critter in *War Against the Rull* by Van Vogt? Only way they could kill him was to get him to slice his own tongue and drink his own blood? That's the one! Want to work out the specs?

Dick Eney It is irrelevant how much *D&D* costs to produce; price is determined by *demand*, not cost. The way the market reduces price is by competition, which you were in favour of providing. So you are right, old friend—why be defensive (and worse, use bad reasoning to defend a good position)? Copyrighting is *not* a way of paying writers; every publisher is aware of that. It is a means of restricting competition in the marketplace and, as usual, the Invisible Hand of Adam Smith (which appears in my world, by the way) found a way around the invasion via Xerox and imitators. ¶ Your work on two-weapon fighting was badly needed. Thanks for starting the ball rolling.

Sherna Burley/Cumerord Well, I'm glad you enjoyed the satire on damsels. Yes, people have been playing them with gusto down here in the Southland. ¶ A neutral is one with *mixed premises*. You bring up Ayn Rand; O.K. She's a super-lawful, with a cult of atheist clerics. Before 1969, Nathaniel Branden would have been the first Objectivist Patriarch. Lawfuls are dedicated to the maintenance of natural law; Chaotics to its perversion. Neutrals either swing both ways in confusion, or "worship their whims," following their emotions without analyzing rationally the source of those emotions. (Gygax and Blume Neutral Druids would fit the second category perfectly.) ¶ RE: Some of us (i.e. me) are aware that a Natural Law analysis leads to an egoist morality. Lawfuls, if fully consistent, would be egoist, trade-oriented, and stateless. Neutrals would be egoist and altruist (either out of confusion or lack of will), trade or pillage as the spirit moves them, and support limited states. Chaotics would be utterly altruist (remember they're the exclusive human-sacrificers), prefer plunder to trade, and totalitarian statist. Is that what you were aiming at? ¶ Back to Sherna: I agree with Dick on Chaotics enjoying harm, etc., at least if "enjoy" means value

satisfaction. Probably the reason I get into such good arguments with Dick is that we agree on enough to really go after the points of disagreement with an arsenal of common understanding. ¶ *Detect Poison* is already researched by *Warlock*; use it at will. (From *Spartan*, rules on which Caltech variant is based.) Check *Spartan* out for the others, too. Damn good idea, analysis spells. ¶ Hmmm, I'd put agnostics or any other untenable position in neutral category, but atheists will usually be either Lawful or Chaotic. Nonetheless, an Anti-Magic User, for example, who is atheist because he was raised that way and never thought about it, could easily be a Neutral. ¶ That magic-annihilating yellow smoke bomb reminds me: it must be possible to throw a reverse of *Permanent* on objects, and a higher-level version would wipe out magic in a 10' radius (then come the *Extension* spells). Mages (even Chaotics) would have a vested interest in suppressing any devices/artifacts/whatever which had the same effect, but since Clerics have no magic to lose, it makes sense that they would guard and maintain knowledge of such. High-level alchemists, too. ¶ If you use the *Critical Hits* table in *Warlock*, which all LBers do, it is possible to get an I.K. (Instant Kill) on the highest level. ¶ Many DMs write out characteristics of treasure, and give it to players folded, to give to future DMs. So far honour system has worked here. ¶ Amazon River Amerinds (some) were into cannibalism. Mayans were Lawful, Toltecs Neutral, Aztecs Chaotic (very roughly speaking). ¶ Perhaps a long loc, but a long and flowing loc . . .

Joel S. Davis If clerical miracles don't "always work," it is because (A) the eldil/god did not wish to grant it or (B) it was blocked by opposing eldil/god. There is far too much literature sharply distinguishing clerical miracle-working from magic. In the Renaissance/Enlightenment era, Magic (even "white") was prohibited by most churches of their clerics. Just because Gygax was a bit loose in terminology is no reason to eliminate a huge literary background to fantasy-simulation, far more than the other interpretations. ¶ I'm with you on free will all the way. ¶ Your Lawful/Chaotic bookkeeping has me intrigued. Ways of earning eldilic assistance, no less! But actually, when one of the characters loses alignment in Long Beach, it's amazing how unanimous all but its player are, usually with comments like "I was wondering how long you were gonna put up with that before you zapped his alignment." ¶ Thanks for the invitation. You sound like someone I'd like to take in/go into my/your overland/dungeon. Drop over when you're in Long Beach vicinity.

Glenn F. Blacow I can sympathise strongly with your efforts to maintain economics and reason in the game. ¶ What is "Clerical Sleep?" ¶ And "R. E. Heinlein?"

Hendrik Pfeiffer Shame to see al that work on Druids wiped out by *Eldritch Wizardry*. Same condolences to Jack Harness.

Nick Smith Ah? Someone else with a typesetter. I have a Mergenthaler Linocomp. And you? ¶ Like to meet the Pasadena crowd. Maybe we could bet Long Beach, Pasadena, and L.A. (have I left anyone out?) together for a mini-con in the Southland?

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Lee Gold Mighod! Copy count is up to 125?! ¶ Funny how Gygax is open to more interpretations than the Bible. (My assumption is if Gygax forbids *magic* weapon-type, it forbids a *fortiori* non-magic but same otherwise weapon-type.) By saving [missed that type "saying"] thieves are allowed magic swords and magic daggers, I assume he means they are only allowed swords and daggers. Is Gygax reading this? Will he settle the matter? ¶ OK, I'll bring the Illuminati next time I expect we'll meet on D&D ground. I hope you'll have chaotic treasure for incentive and plenty of Lawful monsters? ¶ Saruman may have been corrupted by Sauron, but Saruman himself made the ultimate choice. Even the One Ring could ultimately be resisted by a fully committed free will. ¶ Yes. (True Neutrals.) ¶ Enjoy your *Dispell Magic* buttons and *Exits*. How about a *Shower of Dispell Magic* potion, perhaps discovered in a Wizard's living quarters? After a long, hard day of casting, getting grimy from all the magic, the Wizard loved to get home, clean up, etc. Of course, the expeditioners who triggered it won't know what the shower was until it's affected them—maybe never. Also, one could figure out how long magical clothes and weapons are suppressed by soaking in *Dispell Magic Potion*. Probably thoroughly "clean" a cloak in an hour, I'd think. And for course, a Holy Water Shower in a Cleric's abode functioning as a potion of *Dispell Evil*?

— Interestingly, I agree with both you and Eney on the Gygax question. I agree with your reasoning and his actions. But you and I, at least, are already aware of the set of premises we each have that allow this apparent paradox, and unless someone else expresses an interest, I'm closing down my end of the debate.

Fang (and others) I notice you mention "clerical scrolls." I've never heard of them. However, here in Long Beach, we've introduced *Tracts* which accomplish the same end. *Tracts* should either be general (but still sharply distinguished between Law/Chaos) and Sectarian—written only for members of that particular religion. *Tracts* have become very popular among clerics here. When to give them in Gygax-rolled treasure? I roll 33% chance on "scroll category" they will be *Tracts*. *Tracts* will obviously be less common since opposite alignments will pervert/destroy the other's. ¶ You're the Neutral expert/lover? I guess I could match you in Law/Chaos (or secure alignment vs insecure [neutral]). Maybe our worlds could go on a rumble . . .

Mark Swanson "Dracus kept *poping up*?" You mean he kept changing to a Catholic patriarch? Some sort of polymorph, I suppose. ¶ How in the world are you playing *Detect Evil*? Suppose the Stone Monsters are Lawful (used by lawful Mage)? And if they are switched of, they would *still* have the alignment they had, so if Chaotic or Neutral, they *should* give a *Detect Evil* reading. You seem to be playing *Detect Evil* as a *Detect Enemies*—which implies you are detecting *Potential over Inherent Evil*. No way I'd buy that in *Terra Supra*. *Potential* evil would require *Foretelling* ability.

Wayne Shaw Fafhrd is not a Thief, more of a Bandit. Mouser might be a combined Thief-M.U. I also interpret Gygax as proscribing thievish archery. ¶ I seem to agree with most of the rest. Your spells sound particularly useful for Overlands. Thanks.

Nicolai Shapero I hate to be the first to tell you, but 2+4 will generally give you *higher* values than 3 (mode of 2D6=7, add 4 gives 11; mode of 3D6=10/11; and of course the lower values with a "+" are propped up relative to the steep fall-off of 3 dice). Otherwise, wereotters are fine. ¶ Enjoyed your adventure. I don't suppose "Sir Nicholas" is related to another with the surname Van Rijn? ¶ You're dead wrong on casualty rate for "straight Gygax." I play *Warlock* melee, but otherwise Gygax, and the kill rate in *Terra Supra* has been about 10-25% with everyone going up levels and getting pinned every day. (*Terra Supra* has an accelerated "day" with highly packed hard-key encounters, and several wanderers per day, to make up for experience acquired and healing overnight.) And in playing other dungeons, my fighters go up a level in three expeditions (or die). I think what you are most neglecting is the generally pro-life bias of DMs. You mean you have no Wandering Lamas in your world?

Eric Holmes Good idea. Already incorporated. In fact, you can hire a whole mercenary army if you got the gold in *TS*.

Wes Ives Pet dogs have arrived in Long Beach. A hoka has a St. Bernard big enough to ride (we keep referring to him as the hoka's horse and correcting ourselves . . .)

Sean Cleary I'd go even farther than you do. I'd like to switch *Animate Dead* out of the M-U's into the Cleric's table. Definitely anti-clerics should be able to control undead—but give them a saving throw if not created by that cleric, and a second if of a different sect of Chaos. ¶ Weaklings are hilarious.

Dan Pierson Many good points I cheerfully second. However, I must completely reject your "Chaotic Good, Lawful Evil" categories. None of my characters or worlds would be compatible with it. Come to think of it, Gygax would have to rewrite D&D since he put elves in lawful category, lawfully *Detect Evil* while Chaotics *Detect Good* and so on.

Lee Gold Ah, Lee, how does the M-U use a Familiar?

Ken Pick Oh no! Someone else has Fremmen? How about *shai-huluds*?

Jerry Jacks I like your saving throw formula. Problem is, how do you get 00, 20, etc.? Is not three 6-sided dice for saving throws standard? What do you use? [NOTE: since writing this, there has been a general switchover to 20-sided die. *Where* the hell does Gygax say one way or the other?] ¶ Since the armor removing remark from Lee was originally directed to me, thanks for the info. Mage-fighters (combos) must remove armor before casting spells.

[CONTINUE & HOPEFULLY CONCLUDE NEXT ISH!]