Ubiquitous Obliquity

#3

October 23, 1998

Forewarned

Dennis B. Schnolzworth

GURPS AD&D Dragons
Red Dragons
Bronze Dragons
Green Dragons

Feedback

Boilerplate

Robert Knop
1233 Elm St.
El Cerrito, CA 94530

rknop@ncal.verio.com

http://www.ncal.verio.com/~rknop
http://www.ncal.verio.com/~rknop/Omar

(Gratuitous Narcissism)

Forewarned

As promised last issue, I finally have a submission that deals with something other than outer-space science fiction. As threatened two issues back, I'm including some details of my 1st edition AD&D to GURPS conversion. For many years I was an unenlightened AD&D player, so of course once I was illuminated by GURPS I felt the need to convert my ongoing campaigns over to the superior system. I tend to play a lot of things by the seat of my pants, but dragons (classic red and bronze and gold and *etc.* dragons from good old AD&D) were soon to become important in one of my games. I've included the beginnings of my dragon conversion in this issue.

So as not to drag the whole thing down into a morass of AD&D, however, I've also got a character, Dennis B. Schnolzworth, who is designed for a relatively high-powered Warehouse 23/Illuminati sort of game.

I originally intended to review the *ST:TNG RPG*, as well as *GURPS Middle Ages 1* and *Rolepaper* Magazine in this issue. However, with what I've already got here in my typical prose (long-winded to excess), I felt that the submission was getting plenty long enough. (Never mind that time ran short.) Is there a sort of accepted guideline for what is a resonable submission length? Based on my limited observations, most seem to be about 6-12 pages, with some as long as 20 or 21 and some shorter.

I've got a number of different ideas for what to do with the history theme issue next time around. I just hope I have time to do justice to one of them. What comes out may or may not be an adventure for the Timepiece/Stopwatch setting of GURPS Time Travel. If it's not, I do hope to eventually submit some stuff here written for that setting.
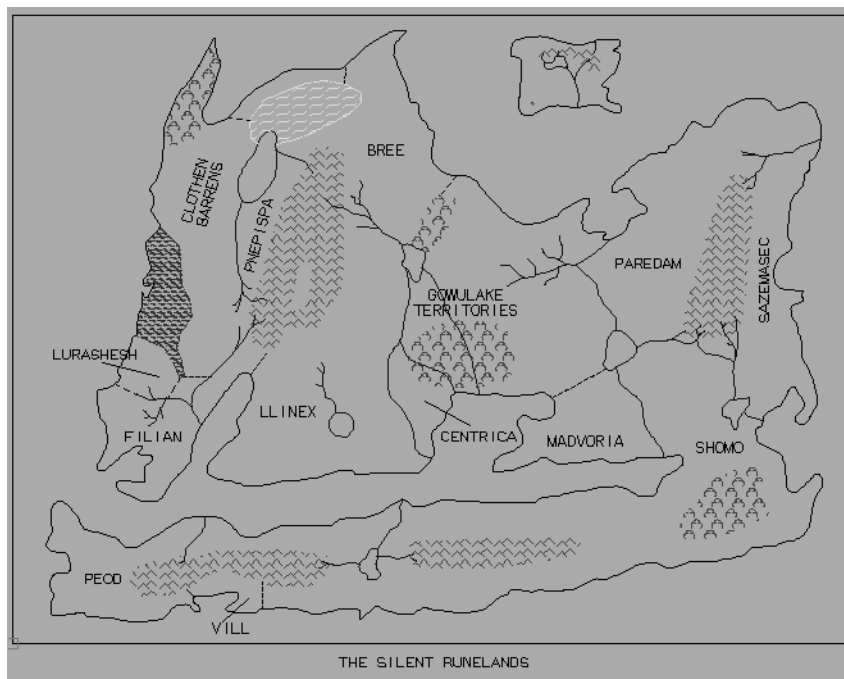
Dennis B. Schnolzworth

Desciription

Dennis is short (5' 6"), thin, and ugly. His posture is hunched over, and his head usually protrudes a little forward. He only seems to wash his hair every other week, and he never combs it, for it's always messy and greasy, sticking off of his head at various angles around his central bald spot. Saying his hair is "dirty" blond describes its condition, not its color. He hasn't been to the dentist in years, and he probably has some trouble figuring out what a toothbrush is for, as his teeth are crooked and vaguely brownish. His pale, pocked skin shows the results of a childhood brush with acne; the thin layer of skin grease on top of it doesn't help the impression he makes. His brown eyes are just on the bloodshot side of normal looking. His lips and nose are thin, and his small ears lay close to the side of his head.

Dennis usually wears a pair of tattered jeans with patches on the knees and threads hanging of the ankles. He wears a dirty but functional pair of sneakers. Normally he wears a T-shirt of most any variety, and an old leather jacket over that. Most of the time when he's outside he wears a dirty, beat up light blue baseball cap which has the logo of the United Federation of Planets on the front.

Dennis has a high voice which might be described as "reedy" in a concert tenor, but is better described as "whiny" in Dennis. He frequently sniffs while speaking, and comes across as shy and slightly arrogant at the same time.

He doesn't relate well with others. Deep down inside, he's a good person, he wants to be liked, and he wants to help other people, but he just hasn't really learned how to show it on the surface. Usually he's curt and short with people, more because he's not fully sure how to deal with them rather than because he doesn't like them. The only time he's comfortable and starts to sound like a normal, confident human being is when he is discussing Classic Star Trek.

History

Dennis was the fifth of eight children in a moderately wealthy family living in Chicago. His parents used to fight all the time, and never paid much attention to their children. His two oldest siblings, a sister and a brother, both got in trouble with drugs, and spent some time first in juvenile hall and then, after turning 18 without a behavioral reform, in jail. The next sister down got shipped off to live with her maternal grandparents after stealing and wrecking the family's minivan at age 14. Most of the rest of the

Dennis B. Schnolzworth

Junkyard owner, Psionicist and Odious Personal Habit (215 points)

Human Male, 28 years old
ST: 9
DX: 11
IQ: 14
HT: 11
Speed: 5.5
Move: 5

Advantages: Animal Empathy, Danger Sense, Disease Resistant, Manual Dexterity/2

Disadvantages: Ugly Appearance (stringy, greasy hair; bad hygine; browish and crooked teeth; pocked complexion), Odious Personal Habit: quoting Star Trek (-5 points), Low Pain Threshold, Weak Will/2, Oblivious, Uncongenial

Quirks: Major Classic Trek fan, at times identifies with each of the characters from Classic Trek. Abhors ST:TNG and everything later; Likes big dogs, particularly of the junk yard type; Sniffs a lot; Likes old, junker beat up cars which look like hell but

run; Physically, but not mentally, lazy. If he can do it with telekinesis (especially unobserved), he won't lift a finger.

Skills (non-psionic): Animal Handling-14, Brawling-12, Knife-12, Knife Throwing-13, Mechanic (Gasoline Engine)-19, Mechanic (Small Electric Motor)-16[*1], Mechanic (Clockwork and small gadgets)-16[*1], Survival (Urban)-13, Computer Operation-16, Computer Programming-16, Computer Hacking-14 (Default from Comp. Prog. -4), Electronics (Computers)-15, Lockpicking-14, Scrounging-15, Driving (Stock car)-11, Knowledge (Classic Star Trek)-15[*2], Conspiracy Theory-12
 *1: Defaults from Mechanic (Gasoline Engine) at -4
 *2: I've assumed this is Mental/Average, although perhaps it should be a hobby skill and Mental/Easy...?

Psionics: Electrokinesis Power/4, Cyberpsi-15; Healing Power/4 (Limitation: only usable on others, -50%), Healing-12; Psychokenesis-10, Telekinesis-14; Teleportation/10 (Limitations: un-conscious only, uncontrollable, -50%), Autoteleport-13

kids were similarly dysfunctional. Dennis actually got in the least trouble of all of them, but he was also the most socially inept, and none of the rest of the family really liked him.

When he wasn't watching *Star Trek*, he was off at a local junkyard, befriending the large toothy dogs and generally living in his own mind. At first, the junkyard owner tried to keep him out, but eventually decided Dennis wasn't a problem and ignored him. It was here, at age 14, that Dennis discovered his psionic talents, when he was able to move around a few screws and washers just by thinking about them. He secretly nurtured and developed this, increasing his ability to lift heavier and heavier things. He never ran into anybody else who was psionic, and he didn't become curious enough to research it. Over time, Dennis came to realize that he had a natural affinity for computers. He spent a lot of time in high school on local Commodore 64 bulletin boards, mostly for purposes of software piracy. He also developed his talents as a computer programmer (he writes code which is very ugly and spaghetti-like, but it's very efficient and gets the job done), and hacker. He found that his psionic ability allowed him to operate the computer just by thinking about it.

It was his senior year in high school when Dennis learned about his third psionic ability. A couple of the jocks at school decided that Dennis was enough of an Odious Personal Habit to require being some serious bullying. Just before one of them was about to deliver a solid kick to Dennis' crotch, Dennis suddenly dissapeared and found himself cowering in a corner of the school library. Since then, during periods of stress or intense concentration, Dennis has found that he will upon occasion teleport himself elsewhere. He has never learned to control this skill.

After graduating from high school, Dennis went to work at the local junkyard where he'd hung out. His mechanical talents, coupled with his telekinesis, proved useful. Six years later, when the owner of the junkyard suddenly died in a very mysterious and suspicious boating accident, Dennis inherited the junkyard. (He was very surprised to find himself named in the former proprietor's will... it seems that the former owner had no family to speak of.) Since then, he's moved to and spent most of his time in the shack at the center of the junkyard. He actually has a rather impressive computer system, complete with a T1 line to the internet, in the shack. He's proven to be very good at finding the parts people need when they come into the junkyard looking for things, and he is also very good at maintaing cars and hobbling together automotive contraptions from dubious collections of parts gathered from around the junk yard. Dennis loves Bruno and Walter, the two large black junk yard dogs that live in the junkyard.

Dennis discovered his healing ability after Walter was hit by a car. The poor, broken dog was bleeding and dying, and Dennis found that he was able to restore the dog to just enough health so that it might heal itself naturally. He was exhausted after so doing, and slept for the next 24 hours straight. He hasn't experimented much with his healing ability since then.

Dennis and the WH23 Conspiracy

Even if you're a practiced and accomplished driver, you can't do anything about the other idiots on the road. Dennis was driving on the freeway through central Chicago, in a really, ugly, beat-up junker that is the sort of car that he prefers. Suddenly, this bozo in a fancy red sportscar comes swerving across four lanes of traffic in order to catch an exit at the last minute. Dennis had to stomp on the brakes to avoid a collision. His heart pounding, he suddenly and unconsciously teleported out of the car.

Where he ended up he didn't recognize. It seemed to be a laboratory of some sort. There were two women and one man in white lab coats leaning over this huge contraption of wires and fuses and computer chips. Above it all was a screen and a mouse. A man wearining a black suit and sunglasses was sitting at the screen and manipulating the mouse. He was grousing at the three scientist types, muttering something about a temporal post-ad-hoc manipulator not working. On the screen was the image of JFK in his car on that fateful day in Dallas, only it was from a different angle from the well known Zapruder film. The man in black seemed to be controlling some of the other people present in the scene using the mouse.

All of this Dennis took in in just a few moments, for one of the women looked up and said, "Hey, how did you get here?!"

The man in black's head whipped around, and seeing Dennis, he drew a large and nasty looking pistol out of his jacket. Dennis hit the deck, but was grazed on his arm by the bullet. It was just a minor wound, but Dennis felt the pain and howled... he also disappeared, re-appearing in a public restroom in Chicago.

Dennis made his way back to his junkyard, and spend the next several months cruising the net and the libraries, researching the Kennedy assassinations and various conspiracy theories. It was probably some carelessness during this research that allowed the agents of the conspiracy to track him down, as four months after his first brush with the conspiracy four MIBs showed up at his junkyard, intending to make him dissappear. They found, however, that in attempting to get to the center of the junkyard, all manner of mufflers, head gaskets, spark plugs, hubcaps, door handles, seat springs, and distibuter caps came flying their way, forcing them to take cover. Never mind the two vicious dogs.

By the time they got to Dennis' shack, Dennis was huddled in the corner begging for mercy. One of the MIBs noted that Dennis' computer had no input devices connected to it whatsoever. Suspecting that they were looking at a reasonably talented psionic, they decided that perhaps this person could be used to further the ends of the Warehouse, and decided to bring him back to their masters rather than just to terminate him on the spot.

Author's Notes

Dennis is a character I created for an online Warehouse 23 game which never seemed to start. At any rate, I never heard a thing from the putative GM after I sent him this character submission. In the game, the characters were to be recently recruited agents of the Warehouse. I decided to have a little fun and create one of those yucky sorts of characters that opponents of point-based systems pull out as examples of the problems with point-based systems.

I realized only in retrospect that I had probably originally been inspired by Scott Paul Maykrantz's "Mr. Pig" from AOTA #32. It may be from there that I got the impression that an unpleasant junkyard owner was a good idea. Dennis is enough different from Mr. Pig that I don't feel like this is plagiarism, so I've included him here for your viewing pleasure.

Dragons, and General Conversion Power Levels

Call me a sentimental old fool, but I always rather liked the dragons of old 1st edition AD&D. It may be because they were one of the cooler "sexy" things from the AD&D Monster Manual, or because they caught my adolescent imagination as a youngster. For whatever the reason, though, I still like the colored and metallic dragons from AD&D. My Runelands campaign is a conversion of 1st edition AD&D, complete with a long and gory trans-lation of the spells to the GURPS magic system. Dragons were about to start appearing in one of the games I run in this world, so it was time to convert the dragons.

I had a number of goals in making this conversion. One thing that always distressed me about AD&D dragons is how easy they are to kill. Dragons should be serious foes, worthy in their own right of powerful kings or wizards. An fight with an ancient dragon is something which should only be undertaken with a lot of forethought and preparation. Dragons should also be interesting NPCs, fonts of ancient (and perhaps odd) wisdom that humans have forgotten.

A lot of people on GURPSnet seem to believe that AD&D charac-ters translate to piddily point values when you convert to GURPS– I've seen 11th level AD&D characters estimated at something like 150 GURPS points. I am firmly in the other camp. While I agree that 1st and 2nd level AD&D characters are in fact piddily, and probably worth well less than 100 points, once you get to mid-range and high levels (even as low as 5th), AD&D charac-ters start to get pretty powerful com-pared to the masses of humanity about them. Especially if these char-acters have psionics, I found that I usually needed in excess of 200

...continued

GURPS AD&D Dragons

Introduction

This conversion is going to be a little bit complicated, in order to avoid redundancy. First, I will detail some general characteristics that all dragons share. After that, I will present the racial template for each subspecies of dragon (red, blue, bronze, etc.). (Actually, I've only got red, green, and bronze dragons this time around, but eventually I'll do them all.) Then there's the fact that as dragons age, they get bigger, smarter, and more capable. Some of the advantages, attributes, and skills that come with age are in a table for each dragon subspecies. Those which don't fit well into the table are mixed into the main text about the dragon.

The "basic" varieties of dragon can be divided into "evil" colored dragons and "good" metallic dragons. Selfishness and greed is fairly hardwired into the psychology colored dragons, and it is rare for an individu-al of the species to rise above them. Similarly, various codes of honor are hardwired into the more noble of metallic dragons (bronze, silver, gold), and it is rare for an individual to sink beneath them. The colored dragons, from weakest to strongest, are white, black, green, blue, and red. The metallic dragons, from weakest to strongest, are brass, copper, bronze, silver, and gold.

The eight age categories of dragons are: very young, young, sub-adult, young adult, adult, old, very old, and ancient.

The Base Racial Template

All dragons have the following set of advantages: Ambidexterity (10), Cast Iron Stomach (15), Combat Reflexes (15), Discriminatory Smell (15), Extra Encumberance (5), Extra Flexibility (Tail) (5), Four Legs (5), Flight (Winged, Cannot Hover) (24), Full Coordination (50), High Pain Threshold (10), Infravision (15), Penetrating Call (5), Peripheral Vision (15), Rapid Healing (5), Regrowth (only small extremities) (20), Unaging (15). In addition, all dragons share three natural attacks, Constriction Attack (with their tails) (15), Claws (talons) (40), Teeth (fangs) (10).

All dragons have the following set of disadvantages: Monstrous Appearance (-25), Poor Grip (-5), Horizontal (-10), Inconvenient Size (-10). (Each individual racial template has a number of others as well.)

Finally, all dragons have the racially learned skill Flight (Winged) at DX (2 points).

The basic dragon package costs 246 points, but is incomplete. It is the basis for the individual dragon subspecies packages detailed below. To

General Dragon Age Table

Age	Acute Vision	Acute Hearing	Enh.Move (Running)	Enh.Move (Flying)	Fear Aura	Cost
VY	0	0	-	-	-	0
Y	1	1	-	-	-	4
SA	1	1	-	1	-	14
YA	2	2	-	1	-	18
Ad	3	3	1	1	-3	42
O	4	4	1	2	-2	61
VO	4	4	2	2	-1	76
An	5	5	2	2	0	85

determine the total cost for a given dragon, add four things: the basic dragon package (above), the basic dragon age package (from the *General Dragon Age Table*), the additional subspecies advantages, and the subspecies age features. Note that in the end these are racial templates. So, for example, ST is given as the racial ST bonus, not as the ST of an average individual. To determine the ST of an average individual, add the ST bonus to 10.

All dragons, regardless of subspecies, get varying levels of Acute Vision, Acute Hearing, Enhanced Move, and a "fear aura", according to the *General Dragon Age Table.*

The "fear aura" of dragons applies to dragons aged adult and older. Just the sight or sound of a dragon may be enough to drive many to a Fright Check, but in addition to that there is a supernatural aura surrounding dragons that can raise fear in those underneath when a dragon flies overhead. When a given dragon first flies overhead, and when the dragon charges, any underneat, or at the end of the charge, must make a Fright Check. This fright check is at +3 for adult dragons, +2 for old dragons, and +1 for very old dragons. The "fear aura" costs 10 points for adult dragons, 15 points for old dragons, 20 points for very old dragons, and 25 points for ancient dragons. (These point values are included above. I assigned the costs by guessing what I thought they were worth, with some thought to it being somewhat equivalent to the Panic spell as a knack.)

Many dragons are mages. The more intelligent dragons will more often be mages; white dragons are only infrequently mages, while gold dragons are almost always accomplished wizards. As a rule of thumb, dragons will not tend to acquire the magery advantage until they've at least reached sub-adult age. Only ancient dragons of the more powerful sorts (red, silver, gold) will tend to have the highest (seventh through ninth) levels of magery. It is not uncommon for bronze, silver, and gold dragons to obtain a few levels of clerical magery as well. Levels higher than the second of clerical magery are granted to these dragons by Bahamut himself. (I'm using my GURPS Runelands version of magery; you may read more about it at http://www.ncal.verio.com/~rknop/Omar/gurps_rl.)

Conversion Notes (Continued)

points to convert a 5th-7th level character to GURPS while preserving the concept and general ability of the character as much as possible.

Part of this comes from my conversion of the magic system. If you simply map AD&D spells to similar GURPS spells, you weaken magic users. AD&D spells can be pretty far-reaching. Even a simple AD&D fireball is much more effective than a *GURPS Magic* fireball. There is no real GURPS equivalent to the AD&D magic missile (first level, always hits, two will usually kill an orc). If you want to convert the munched nature of AD&D characters when going to GURPS, you almost can't map them to the GURPS magic system without giving them a whole lot of new spells.

Because AD&D magic is so effective, and because I converted those spells rather than using the *GURPS Magic* spells, I rasied the costs of (especially higher levels of) magery. Of course this means that 5th-7th level 1st edition AD&D magic users when converted to GURPS are going to be expensive characters. Then, to be fair, you have to give the fighters pretty good strenth and dexterity, skills like Tactics, high skill in several different weapons, etc.

All of which actually isn't terribly relevant. I merely want to establish that I see AD&D at levels greater than 3 or so as a high power game, and that my GURPS conversion of 1st edition AD&D reflects this perception. Given that, I still want dragons to be something to reckoned with– I want them to be stronger relative to the GURPS characters in my world than they ever were relative to the AD&D characters in the game system they come from. The dragons you'll read about here are converted with this in mind. I was trying to preserve the nature of the dragons, not their exact stats and detailed abilities and attack routines.

The Polymorphing Advantage

None of the GURPS shapeshifting abilities did quite what I wanted, so I contributed to the confusion by defining my own:

The Polymorphing advantage is a modified version of the Morph advantage (p. CI61). It is an inherent ability which more or less mimics the 4th level mage spell *Polymorph Self*. It has the following differences from Morph:

• You cannot imitate different indivduals of each species. There will only be one "you" of your original race. If you change your gender from female to male, you will look like your twin brother. If you change from human to elf, you will be an elf who looks somewhat like you did as a human. You can change to (say) different breeds of dogs, but every time you change to a golden retriever, you will always look like the same golden retriever.

• Your clothing and equipment may be absorbed into the change. However, you may not create clothing or equipment, and you may not alter your clothing and equipment other than by absorbing it into the change. So, if you change from a human to a halfling but opt not to become a naked halfling, you will be swimming in clothes several sizes too large.

• You may increase your body mass to 2 times its original value, or decrease it to as little as either 1/8 its original value or the size of an average human (whichever is less).

• It costs 1d-3 (minimum 1) fatigue to make a change. It costs an additional point of fatigue per factor of two change in body mass (e.g. reducing your mass to 1/8 its original value costs an additional 3 fatigue).

• It does *not* cost fatigue to return to your natural form.

The Polymorphing advantage costs 50 points. As with Morph, you must learn the Shapeshifting skill to take advantage of your

Dragon Attacks

Dragons all share four natural attacks: claws, teeth, tail-lashing, and tail-constriction. Dragon claws count as talons, and so may be used for thrust/impaling damage or swing/cutting damage. Dragons are ambidextrous and have full coordination, so may attack with both forelegs at once, on two opponents if they are both in the dragon's field of vision (and close enough to be subject to the attack). Typically, they rear back on their hindlegs and use their tail for balance when so doing.

Dragon teeth count as fangs, and so do impaling damage, with the base bite damage based on the table on page B140.

Dragon tails are extended strikers, uually with a long reach, that does crushing damage and may be used to constrict unwary victems. Although the dragon's tail is behind it, dragons have long prehensile necks that allow them to see behind them and aim their tail (although this means that they cannot properly aim attacks in front off them during the same round). Note that with the constriction attack of a draogn's tail, it is important to use the Rule of 16 (CII-190) for the contest between the dragon's and the target's strength. Even if this isn't orthodox under GURPS, without it it becomes ridiculously easy for many dragons to instantly crush people with it's tail. (The alternative is to take away the constriction attack, which I don't think I want to do.)

In addition to all of this, dragons have breath weapons. I calculated the point cost for most of the breath weapon using the "cheap" improvement scheme on page CI-72. In 1st edition AD&D, these breath weapon were only usable three times per day. However, they also tended to have a larger, "cone" area of effect, in contrast to the more common and smaller "jet" effect in the conversion here. As such, instead I've limited all dragons' breath weapon to take 15 seconds of recharge, for -20% the cost.

Red Dragons

Red dragons are the classic, vicious, greedy, rapacious, bloody, virgin-eating, town-killing, fire-breathing dragons. The oldest red dragons are the strongest of the "evil" colored dragons, the followers of Tiamat. Many of them are mages, and many of them speak human languages. Despite the fact that for all practical purposes they live forever (ignoring the effects of questing knigts), these dragons are quite rare. No ecology could support many of them!

Red Dragon Racial Template

This template is common to all red dragons. On top of this are added the attributes and additional advantages that come with age, listed in the *Red*

Dragon Table.

All red dragons have the following advantages: Dragon (246), Immunity to Disease (10), Invulnerability (Fire) (100).

They also have the following disadvantages: Bloodlust (-10), Greed (-15), Megalomania (-10), Odious Racial Habits (eats people) (-15), Sadism (-15), Stubbornness (-5), Bad Smell (sulfur) (-10), Vulnerability (magical cold) (-5).

The invulnerability of red dragons to magical cold is just that. A red dragon might be very uncomfortable in near-freezing weather, but it won't take damage. However, it does take extra damage from magical frost spells and the like.

The "basic" red dragon package (including the general dragon package) costs 271 points.

Finally, on top of this add the advantages and costs from the *General Dragon Age Table*, and the additional features summarized in the *Red Dragon Table*. The costs on that table are the final racial template cost. They include the features there, the generic dragon package, the generic dragon package for the appropriate age, and the red dragon package. (In other words, although you have to look all over the place to find all the advantages and disadvantages, you can get the racial cost just by reading this table. You don't have to do math.)
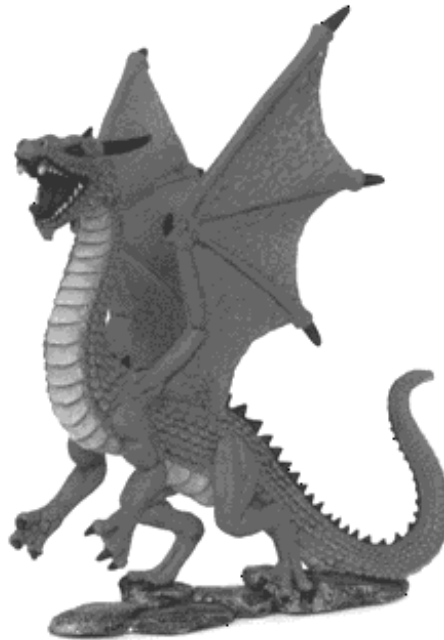
Polymorphing (Continued)

ability. You are granted the appearance and locomotion of the creature you assume- although you must be practised in the use of those methods of locomotion! For example, if you assume the form of a bird, you must have the Flight (Winged) skill in order to actually be able to fly. You also get the natural attacks (such as claws) of the form you assume, but with your own attributes (i.e. strength, etc). You do not assume any of the other abilities, magical abilities, or keen senses of the form you assume. So, though you may be in the form of a hawk, you do not have its keen vision.

Within the world of the Runelands, this ability *very* rarely (read: 20 point Unusual Background) comes about as follows. Those who consider themselves Necromancers have long learned that there is some small amount of mana in pain; it seems that pain focuses and draws in the local mana fields. This is true also of the pain of childbirth. Sometimes, for reasons that most knowledgeable of wizards and sages don't claim to understand, a particularly strong concentration of the local mana fields is present during a birth. That child will almost always have some startling attributes or abilities. Sometimes they manifest themself as the polymorphing advantage.

Red Dragon Table

Age	PD	DR	ST	IQ	DX	HT	Length (yds)	Weight (lbs)	Arm Reach	Tail Reach	Breath Weapon Damage	Range	Total Cost
VY	1	4	+20	-1	+2	+2/15	5	800	0	2	1d	3	614
Y	2	5	+30	0	+2	+3/25	8	1600	1	3	1d	3	731
SA	2	6	+40	+1	+3	+3/35	11	2400	1	4	2d	6	859
YA	3	7	+50	+2	+3	+4/45	14	3000	1	5	2d	6	946
Ad	3	8	+60	+3	+4	+4/50	16	3600	2	5	3d	9	1038
O	4	9	+70	+4	+4	+5/55	18	4100	2	6	3d	9	1150
VO	4	10	+80	+4	+4	+5/60	19	4400	2	6	4d	12	1202
An	5	11	+90	+5	+4	+6/65	20	4500	2	7	5d	15	1314

The Bronze Dragon Code of Honor

It consists of: always keep your word, don't kill except for food or in defense of yourself or another, always treat others fairly, uphold justice in all of your dealings.

Image Credits

The scanned pictures of miniatures are thanks to Paul Stokstad. He painted and photographed the miniatures. Paul, who has been my gaming buddy and one of my best friends since childhood, has done a beautiful job painting a vast array of fantasy miniatures. You can see some of his work on his web page at:

> http://www.crl.com/
> ~stokstad/paul/miniatures

The scanned image of the Bronze Dragon (below) was taken without permission from the 1st edition AD&D *Monster Manual*.

Bronze Dragon Table

Bronze Dragons

Bronze dragons are the weakest of the three races of "noble" metallic dragons (bronze, silver, and gold). They are given to living in caves near lakes, particularly in mountainous regions. The tend to be more friendly and open than silver and gold dragons, what with being closer to the "common man" (if only by a small margin). Although just as fond of jewels and treasure as the next dragon, a Bronze dragon does not suffer from greed or miserliness as do the colored dragons and the lesser metallic dragons. Bronze dragons suffer from a minor Duty to higher ranked metallic dragons; although it is uncommon, a bronze dragon is bound to obey the orders of silver and gold dragons, should the situation arise.

Bronze dragons have a breath weapon which is modelled by the natural attack "lightning." (I was never fond of the secondary breath weapon from the *Monster Manual*, so I've omitted it.)

Bronze Dragon Racial Template

Bronze dragons have the following advantages: Dragon (246), Immunity to Disease (10), Invulernability (Electricity) (75), Reputation (noble, trustworthy) +3 (15), Polymorphing (Limitation: non-human animal forms only, -20%) (40)

Bronze dragons have the following disadvantages: Vulnerability (Magical water attacks, e.g. water elemental) (-3), Code Of Honor (Bronze Dragon) (-10), Duty (gold and silver dragons, occasional) (-2).

All bronze dragons know the skill Shapeshifting at IQ (4). All told, the bronze dragon package, including the general dragon package, costs 375 points. Add to this the age costs, summarized in the Bronze Dragon table. As with red dragons, the listed costs include the full cost for the racial template.

Age	PD	DR	ST	IQ	DX	HT	Length (yds)	Weight (lbs)	Arm Reach	Tail Reach	Lightning Damage	Range	Total Cost
VY	1	2	+15	-1	+2	+2/10	4	600	0	2	1d	3	662
Y	2	4	+25	0	+2	+3/20	7	1400	1	3	1d	3	805
SA	2	5	+35	+1	+2	+3/30	10	2100	1	3	1d	3	883
YA	2	6	+45	+2	+3	+3/40	12	2600	1	4	2d	6	975
Ad	3	7	+50	+3	+3	+4/45	14	3100	2	4	2d	6	1084
O	3	8	+60	+4	+3	+4/50	16	3600	2	5	3d	9	1161
VO	4	9	+70	+4	+4	+5/55	17	3900	2	5	3d	9	1264
An	4	10	+80	+5	+4	+5/60	18	4100	2	6	4d	12	1330

Green Dragons

Green dragons are forest-dwelling dragons. They are of a mean temper, and don't hesitate to consume anybody or anything which offends them. They see themselves as feudal lords, and the true masters of the forest. They prefer bleaker, more dangerous, and more "evil" sorts of woods. When a green dragon choses a forest (or a segment of a forest) over which it will rule as lord, it will tend to collect around itself vassals which are similarly nasty and ill-tempered creatures– but nothing more powerful than the dragon itself! In their quest for world forest domination, green dragons are the sworn enemy of elves (and the feeling is mutual).

The green dragon breath weapon is a cloud of venom. I used the Venom advantage to model this, with three modifiers: Range (+35% per 5 yards), Area (+100% per 3 hexes size), and level (base cost is 15 points/level). (This is quite a ferasome weapon at higher levels.)

Green Dragon Racial Template

All green dragons have the following advantages: Dragon (246), Immunity to Poison (15), Absolute Direction (Limitation: only in or over forest, -20%) (4)

All green dragons have the following disadvantages: Bad Temper (-10), Bully (-10), Greed (-15), Jealousy (-10), Megalomania (-10), Odious Racial Habit (eats people) (-15), Weak Will/2 (-16), Racial Enemy (Elves) (-40)

The green dragon package costs a mere 169 points. Add this to age benefits in the *General Dragon Age Table* and the *Green Dragon Table*.
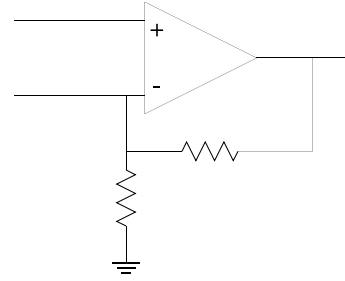
References

Naturally, in creating these dragon racial templates, I referred to a number of things. The books I thumbed the most, of course, were the GURPS *Basic Set* and *Compendium I*. I glanced at a couple of other GURPS books (*Bestiary*, *Dinosaurs*, *et al.*) while converting the dragons as well. Obviously, I referred to the 1st edition AD&D *Monster Manual*. I did not look at the *Fantasy Bestiary*, because, alas, that is one GURPS book I have not been able to find. Finally, I found Dr. Kromm's version of GURPS dragons (from his web page) very useful as a general guideline of what sorts of things one should consider and expect.

Green Dragon Table

Age	PD	DR	ST	IQ	DX	HT	Length (yds)	Weight (lbs)	Arm Reach	Tail Reach	Venom Lvl	Venom Range	Venom Area	Total Cost
VY	1	2	+5	-2	+1	+1/5	4	600	0	2	1	5	3	335
Y	1	3	+10	-1	+1	+2/15	6	1100	1	2	1	5	3	462
SA	2	4	+20	0	+1	+2/25	8	1600	1	3	1	5	6	645
YA	2	5	+30	0	+2	+2/35	10	2100	1	3	2	5	6	767
Ad	2	6	+40	+1	+2	+3/40	12	2600	1	4	2	5	9	880
O	3	7	+50	+1	+2	+3/45	13	2900	1	4	3	10	9	1038
VO	3	8	+60	+2	+3	+4/50	14	3100	2	5	3	10	12	1176
An	4	9	+65	+3	+3	+4/55	15	3400	2	5	4	10	12	1331

Feedback

Craig Roth

I'm so new it may not be my place to say this, but: Welcome. Living ships: evolved or designed? I presume the latter. Were they designed from scratch, or modified from organisms that seemed to have some of the right properties? What you've show us in two pages is a tantalizing hint at what could be a very interesting universe/background. I'd be interested to know what else you've done with it. The Vreadul: that's just a name given to inhabitents of the ship. I presume that they can originate from any number of other species. One could visualize an uninhabited ship that comes across a derlict (nonliving) vessel with a crew barely hanging on to survival. The Ta'Hean adopts the crew, and a RPG campaign ensues.

The Magus Device was fun. I approve of the puns. I'm going to keep this one at the back of my head as something to potentitally introduce to a game if things get slow.

RYCT me: I've actually got that Forward book, but haven't read it yet. The reason I didn't put a counterbalancing stalk past geosynchronous orbit was this conceptual problem I have with beanstalks. Specifically, you've got this huge arm on this planning spinning around and sweeping out disk with a huge area around the planet. It's moving at speeds vastly different from the orbital speed everywhere except out at geosynchronous orbit. This to me intuitively seems dangerous. Consciously, I'm aware that one just takes it into account when plotting one's orbits, and it's not that big a deal. But the thought of that thing sticking out there swinging around at the wrong speed... well, that's why I kept it as short as I could.

Mikel Jon Featherston

RYCT me: I haven't worked out the history of that Earth yet. I have started working out the current interstellar political situation, but haven't really fleshed too much out. The choice of Brazil was mostly arbitrary. I did need a spot on the equator, which limited it. Tsiolkovsky was a Russian scientists from the turn of the century (if memory serves) who was one of the first ones who thought about space stations at the top of beanstalks.

Have fun surfing in your office. I look forward to your In Nomine stuff.

Brett Slocum

Does "left handed" get to count as a quirk? That seems equivalent to counting "green eyes" as a quirk. On the other hand, if Weyrdin were "born" right handed, but had trained himself to do everything left handed, that would be something I'd agree easily counts as a quirk. I liked the bit about Weyrdin and his laser pistol.

Arthur Shipkowski

Personality and Roleplaying: I have tried to play vastly different characters, but they've all been fundamentally facets of me, I believe. I think I would find it very hard to play a PC who was fundamentally different from myself. I've seen others who I believe are better than myself at playing characters which aren't drawn from their own nature. With NPCs, though, I'm able to play people who aren't at all like me. I can't say how well drawn they are, but usually one is not so attached to each NPC as

a GM as one is to one's PC as a player. As such, it becomes easier to play the NPC in a way which you wouldn't want to be, especially if it's a minor NPC. To really get into the mind of your PC as a player, I think you have to have something in your own experience or nature that you can connect to it, however vague.

RYCT me, I was just afraid people would notice it was negative feedback in the drawing... of course, we all know that in electrical circuits, usually negative feedback is a good thing!

Dan Smith

I hate to sound picky, but the fonts were a touch hard to read. I did enjoy reading the log of your PBEM. Several things in it made me chuckle; I kept track of some of the first few: "...sparks jump from wooden planels. Something's going on here." "Bruno- a small but thick human." Sounds familiar, somehow.... "Bonus fun- this is a musical game". One of the things I have on my list to work up for AOTA one of these years is my "GURPS Musical Theatre" rules. I thought about it a fair bit during the run of "Music Man" earlier this year.

If you ever are running a PBEM and are looking for players, drop me a line! :)

Lisa Steele

Re: "Deep Impact," I haven't actually seen that one yet. I did see "Armageddon," despite being aware that Morgan Freeman is a superior actor to Bruce Willis. You'll like the latter movie if you like Bruce Willis action flicks; I was amused by it, but it was no "Hamlet." (I like that sort of action moive; I call them "Robert and Linda" movies. Linda is my sister, and her boyfriend frquently doesn't have the patience for that kind of movie, so she'd rent them and watch them with me (back when we were housemates).) There were several scientific gaffes... in particular, their solution couldn't have worked. Even if you allow a huge wallop of poetic license to

allow the exact set of coincidences necessary for the solution to work, there would have been all sorts of smaller debris generally pulverizing bits of the surface here and there.

An X-COM GURPS game sounds like it would be a good high-action game for gamers who like Bruce Willis movies...

RYCT me, I suppose one day I should attempt to write up an orbital mechanics article. It would be quite difficult to do well. On one hand, you'd have to avoid getting too techincal, using equations and terms that require a couple of years of college physics or math to follow. On the other hand, you'd have to avoid glossing over the detail so much as to make the effort worthless in the first place. I'll think about it and see if I can come up with something reasonable to submit.

Scott Maykrantz

I liked your "instant robots" section, although I would more see it as a "Robots Lite" than an instant robots section. I agree that an instant robots section would be very valuable in GURPS Robots, but I fear that even what you've written might be a touch long for it.

Thanks for compiling the list of additional innate advantages for Robots. Of course, using it means that in any sort of nonextreme point-value campaign, you can't have a robot PC without some creative limiting.

Re: your note in about Vacuum Support: "Why are all these advantages combined like this?" I had exactly the same thought when wrestling with exactly the same issue (robots outside in space).

Bits & Pieces, as a collection, was excellent. Some were merely insightful and interesting, others were brilliant. I find myself wanting to rush out and try many of them. I was amused most by Plummet Survival.

Steve Dickie

Congratulations on the kid!

I enjoyed the Demonic Spirits article. Some good ideas there, and a good thing to throw at unsuspecting PCs. I'd have accepted it (including the main text) into Pyramid, but then I'm not the editor.

Do write up T.W.Rolleston; not just the stats, but the history of this fellow.

Michael David Jr.

Jackdeath: a higher tech, less magical, and less reliable version of Steve Dickie's Demonic Spirits?

I liked the writeup of the Tempest's Hand TV series. I've seen GURPSifications of existing TV series, but to take a new concept, make it a TV series, and then GURPSify it is new to me. It sounds like you've thought about this a lot, though, and you've created an interested and workable set of characters. I fear it might work better as a TV show than an RPG, though. The setup for an RPG is great, but I doubt any player would actually play the characters the way you see them.... though reading your thanks, it sounds like you may have played a game with these characters...?

David Pulver

Abydos sounds demented but like a lot of fun. The Lazarus story was always one that disturbed me a little (though perhaps not for the obvious reasons). Undead dancing the streets at the festival.... Is there going to be a USA version of Abydos?

Henrik Martensson

I wish the best to your father in law.

Being a frothing-at-the-mouth Babylon 5 fan (mostly because of my *Airplane*-style drinking problem), I had eyed (but not purchased) *The Babylon Project*. Most reviews I've read of it were less positive than yours, however. Have you played the game? I have this suspicion that the B5 universe may not actually be a great one for gaming, but this is not based on any actual experience. (It is my bias that frequently the best gaming worlds don't make very good worlds for fiction, and vice versa. There are a different set of base requirements for what makes a good RPG and what makes a good setting for fiction. JMS has shown us that the B5 world is a great one to tell a story in.)

Jeff Pfaffmann

GenCon sounds like it was an adventure.

I'm not into minis myself. (I have nothing against them; indeed, I would probably enjoy them, but there are the usual constraints: Time, folks to play with (my RPGing is already mostly over the internet), and expense (though looking at the number of GURPS books on my shelf, I shouldn't talk).) However, Carnage sounds like it's a lot of fun. You ought to go ahead and write GURPS Carnage... the combat system is already done for you!

Robert Gilson

My condolences on the loss of your friend. It's a little shocking how much bad news was in this issue of the APA.

How did the wedding go? By now, you are Mr. Gilson.