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Featured Image "Frozen Hourglass" by Sam Bald @ Flickr. CC BY.

VOLUME 9, NUMBER 1

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Minimizing Cultural Bias in Escape Rooms — Shannon McDowell and Scott Nicholson

Book Review: *Forschungsdrang und Rollenspiel* — Evan Torner

Book Review: *Dread Trident* — Adrianna Burton

EDITORS' NOTE

"Like sands through the hourglass, so are the days of our lives," was the opening voiceover of a popular soap opera while many of us were growing up. That voice seems to haunt us now as we start Year three of a global pandemic that has shaken us loose from our foundations. It is hard to distinguish between one day and another, as with grains of sand, but it is also nevertheless our job as scholars to continue our work despite the existential uncertainty and monotony. Fortunately, we have the delightful sandbox of analog games scholarship, where so many excellent scholars now turn to analog games as vibrant, vital objects of study. As the enthusiasm around our GENeration Analog conference last year proved to us, traditional and hobby gaming now offer themselves up for serious public debate and social commentary, which means that many field-defining conversations are happening during these pandemic years.

This month's issue concerns material that had been drifting through the timelessness of the pandemic but has finally found a home in an issue all its own. The eclectic mix of 2 reviews of tabletop role-playing game academic volumes and a longform practical guide to escape room design reflects this. Indeed, Scott Nicholson and Shannon McDowell's "Minimizing Cultural Bias in Escape Rooms" is a master class in hard lessons learned from many years of design experience. If one is making escape rooms for learning or entertainment, as Nicholson and McDowell contend, cognitive barriers and accessibility must remain at the forefront of a game designer's process. AGS editor Evan Torner reviews *Forschungsdrang und Rollenspiel*, a first-ever AGS review of a book in a foreign language. The co-edited volume is a welcome deep dive into the popular German system, *The Dark Eye*. Finally, Adrianna Burton reviews Curtis Carbonell's 2019 monograph *Dread Trident* on the posthuman literary qualities of TRPGs. Burton navigates Carbonell's "realized worlds" thesis, which offers the whole corpus of TRPGs up for literary studies debate. Finally, the Call for Papers for the next GENeration Analog conference, taking place online July 29, 2022, will be released soon. The topic, in alignment with Asmodee Game In Lab, is *Embodiment and Materialities*. Don't hesitate to talk to us informally if you already have a few ideas you'd like to try out.

The pandemic has been grueling for all of us, but we hold fast to the optimism that our authors' work matters and is productively shifting the global games conversation toward new horizons. In this new year of 2022, we wish for all to stay hopeful, inspired, and curious.

—The Editors, January 10, 2022

