

THE LUDIC IMAGINATION: A HISTORY OF ROLE-PLAYING GAMES, POLITICS,
AND SIMULATION IN COLD WAR AMERICA, 1954-1984

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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How have the ways we imagine and understand games changed since World War II? Play and games, although inextricably connected, have come to mean quite different things in the early twenty-first century popular culture, and I argue that this change is a cultural product of The Cold War. Today, games are described as products, systems, and even rituals. It is assumed that all games have rules, and these rules are shared through code, manuals, and sometimes oral tradition. Whereas games are systems, play is the embodied phenomenon associated with navigating such systems. Play relates specifically to bodies, and is often—though not necessarily always—connected to games. The nature of games and play is generally agreed upon in both popular discourse and by game studies scholarship. People play games, people play with each other, and the essence of play cannot be reduced to any one product, container, system of rules, or even social ritual. Rules may contort the dynamics of play, but they cannot define the essence of the phenomenon. Building on these distinctions, this dissertation claims, first, that our definitions of games and play are discursively contingent. Second, it develops this point

by showing how in the latter half of the twentieth century, games began to be explicitly valorized over play. Games are typically seen as valuable, productive, and potentially transformative, while play is normally associated with leisurely, childish, and chaotic behavior. Third, alongside the valorization of games over play there has emerged a discourse that this dissertation terms *the ludic imagination* in which “truth” is conflated with quantitative and competitive logics. The ludic imagination contributes to other studies of the Cold War by focusing on the value placed on rationality as well as the affects of isolation and fear that characterize the era’s popular culture and military policy.

I use correspondence, internal reports and memos from the RAND Corporation Archive and The MIT Center for International Studies, as well as hobby publications and trade publications from The Ray Browne Popular Culture Archive and the *Dragon Magazine* CD-ROM Archive in order to reveal a historical arc that connects military ideology around games and play to popular culture. This arc includes documentation from the RAND Corporation, correspondence within a grassroots network of gamers that included play-by-mail *Diplomacy* hobbyists, and the design notes of *Dungeons & Dragons* players. Through these primary sources, I show how networks of military elites at the RAND Corporation overlapped with networks of grassroots hobbyists and together imagined the intersection of games and play. This reading evaluates the limits of these terms by considering how racism, sexism, and homophobia collude with the quantitative and essentialist worldview of military logistics. Here I evaluate the indebtedness of the ludic imagination to a reductionist and pragmatist military ideology and consider what potentials exist to play with its future definition.

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Introduction

We are as ignorant of the meaning of the dragon as we are of the meaning of the universe, but there is something in the dragon's image that appeals to the human imagination, and so we find the dragon in quite distinct places and times. It is, so to speak, a necessary monster, not an ephemeral or accidental one, such as the three-headed chimera or the catoblepas.

Jorge Luis Borges, *The Book of Imaginary Beings* (1957)

Games and play, like the dragon alluded to above by Borges, are confronted in distinct times for distinct reasons. Play scholar Johan Huizinga famously makes clear the ambiguous and often interchangeable historical relationship between games and play.¹ Despite this, play and games, although inextricably connected, have come to mean quite different things in the early twenty-first century.² Games have been described as products,³ systems,⁴ and even rituals.⁵ All games have rules, and these rules are shared through code, manuals, and sometimes oral tradition.⁶ Whereas games are systems, play is the embodied phenomenon associated with navigating such systems. Play relates specifically to bodies, and often is—but does not always have to be—connected to games.

¹ Johan Huizinga in *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*, (Boston, MA: Beacon Books, 1992/1950) 30-35.

² This point refers to the scholarly working definitions of games and play used as of 2015.

³ As critical cultural studies scholars Nick Dyer Witheford and Greig de Peuter argue in *Games of Empire: Global Capitalism and Video Games*, (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

⁴ Game studies scholar Ian Bogost has advanced the perspective that games can be understood as complex systems of interacting units in his early work *Unit Operations: An Approach to Videogame Criticism*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006).

⁵ Here I refer to much of the foundational work in play studies by Dutch historian Johan Huizinga in *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* and French sociologist Roger Caillois in *Man, Play, and Games*, (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2001/1958).

⁶ These are the two defining characteristics of games as defined by Jesper Juul. It therefore follows that rules are not only fundamental to defining what a game is, but they are also contingent on the game's cultural environment. *Half-Real: Video Games between Real Rules and Fictional Worlds*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 55.

People play games, people play with each other, and the essence of play cannot be reduced to any one product, container, system of rules, or even social ritual.⁷ Rules may contort the dynamics of play, but they cannot define the essence of the phenomenon.⁸ Building on these conversations about the distinctions between and defining characteristics of play and games, this dissertation address three primary questions: First, what is the discourse around games and play in Cold War America? Second, within this discourse, what cultural, political, and economic values are ascribed to games and play? Third, what new subjectivities have been produced by the discourse of games and play in Cold War America?

This project addresses these points by considering the communities of practice at a key historical intersection of play and games.⁹ These communities included individuals from radically different subject positions, including the military and scientific elite, high school students, and blue-collar and white-collar workers. This disparate array of communities took part in what I term the American wargaming underground in the 1960s

⁷ Play scholar Miguel Sicart addresses the ontological status of play in his book *Play Matters*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014). Here, he delves into many of the embodied aspects of the phenomenon including its relationship to pleasure.

⁸ In order to make this point, philosopher of play Bernard Suits refers to the figures of the trifter, the cheat, and the spoilsport, who demonstrate how play can take place outside the designated parameters of a game. *The Grasshopper: Games, Life and Utopia*, (Orchard Park, NY: Broadview Press, 1978), 57.

⁹ As this dissertation focuses on historicizing the complex intermingling of simulation and games during The Cold War, it is likely that some ambiguity as to the definitions of the two terms may arise over the course of this reading. In particular, this ambiguity often emerges in the writing of the individuals examined in this project, as they occasionally use the terms interchangeably. For the purposes of my writing, simulation is somewhat of a meta-category within which most games with representational elements rest. In other words, most games are simulations, but not all simulations are games. Simple and highly abstract games, such as tic-tac-toe, are they outliers of this definition as their representational qualities are too vague to meet the criteria of simulation described here. Chess, on the other hand, which is also a highly abstract game, is an edge case as its representational elements have been historically intended to simulate warfare.

and 1970s. From this space of radical discourse between the professional military and grassroots hobbyists, the highly influential role-playing game *Dungeons & Dragons* was born.¹⁰ Its rules crystalized the intersection of military and popular discourse at this time, and have become both common-sense and common-practice within the design of games and simulations ever since the game's ongoing popularity in the late 1970s. This dissertation uses genealogical methods to explore these moments of radical discourse, epitomized by the American wargaming underground, and considers their implications for understanding the historical constitution of games and play throughout the twentieth century.

The entirety of the discussion around play and games in this dissertation is bracketed within the cultural milieu of The Cold War. Three themes are key to this cultural context: (1) The persistent threat of nuclear war weighs constantly on the stories of the individuals chronicled here. This takes shape on a macro-level within political discussions around nuclear deterrence in Cold War think-tanks, but also on the micro-level as themes of isolation and loneliness emerge from the individuals in this study. Games were used both by military strategists to predict and manage the affective states of other nations and by lonely hobbyists seeking new friends. (2) The networks of play with which this dissertation contends were bellwethers of the massively networked society that would develop during The Cold War. Games were central and fundamental to the infrastructure of communication that emerged during The Cold War. (3) Simultaneous to the development of these networks of play, radical new conversations around civil rights were taking place around America. These conversations left their mark on the discourse

¹⁰ The first edition of *Dungeons & Dragons* was published in 1974. This dissertation discusses this in more detail in Chapter 1.

of play and games at the time in discussions that dealt with both themes of inclusivity and the politics of representation. By bracketing this discussion of play and games within the period of The Cold War, we gain insight into the dynamics of historical change and the degree to which the artifacts today are beholden to the politics of the past.

This research intends to facilitate a number of connections between discrete and cloistered disciplines. Broadly, this sort of work can be classified as critical cultural studies, but more specifically it is work towards developing a critical frame to help re-think relevant work in disciplines such as economics, game studies, political science, and communication. Much like the work of MacKenzie Wark, Nick Dyer-Witherford and Greig dePeuter, and Patrick Crogan, this dissertation aims to connect themes from game studies to larger motifs within the American military industrial complex. To this end, it situates game theory—a specific theory of game strategy that came from military research—within our cultural theories of game studies, in order to show how the strategies of game theory influence the common cultural understanding of play.

Game theory, as distinct from game studies, is a theory of game strategy that offers a reliable model for the mathematical assessment of game-like phenomena. Also known as the “minimax theorem” by game theorists, it encompasses the perspective that in most games, the best strategy is the one with the lowest potential loss as opposed to the greatest potential gain. Its impact is well known and game theory continues to be a reliable, albeit somewhat critiqued,¹¹ mode of knowledge for those working in military strategy and economics. It permeates the fundamentals of game design, and exists as a

¹¹ As I explicate in greater detail in Chapter 1, game theory has been critiqued by Adam Curtis in his documentary series *The Trap* (2007), which asserts that it is an overly-rational perspective.

sizeable discipline within economics departments at universities everywhere. But why did game theory find success while other experiments in games, simulation, and strategic analysis have been resigned to obscurity?

To answer this question, this dissertation explores *The Cold War Game*, which was an experiment in political gaming developed at the RAND Corporation at the same time as game theory, in 1954. As will be detailed in Chapter 1, this game was devised to help military strategists play through a number of military potentialities so that they could make an informed decision about what the best strategy for nuclear deterrence was. The game was significant because, unlike the simultaneous experiments in game theory at RAND which focused on the quantitative analysis of game-like situations, *The Cold War Game* focused on the qualitative analysis of role-playing scenarios. This generated unusual and unmanageable data, however, and analysts of the game were hard-pressed to make sense of the game's sprawling, several-thousand page transcripts. Ultimately, the pursuit of role-playing as a analytic of nuclear deterrence proved to be inefficient, and funding was cut after four runs as the game cost too much money and took too much time to play.

The juxtaposition of these two avenues of research at RAND in the 1950s offers some insight into the widespread valorization and acceptance of game theory as a method of analysis and the relative obscurity of role-playing as a method of strategic assessment. Game theory found success within both military and hobby communities because it was an inexpensive, efficient and reliable method of assessment,¹² while role-playing exercises like *The Cold War Game* were mostly forgotten because they required the

¹² Game theory has been used to assess many things, including economic decisions, military decisions, psychological decisions, and more.

commitment of vast resources and time. Not only does this help explain the radically different connotations that play and games hold today, but it also points toward a cultural moment where the two terms were afforded equivalent respect, resources, and appreciation. The experiments in role-playing at RAND are proof that games and play were once held to a more equivalent standard of value and that we as a society have lost our appreciation of play.

However, contemporary, commercial role-playing games such as *Dungeons & Dragons* are a verdant site of interest as they point back to this historical moment of equivalence at RAND in the 1950s, because they are neither unregulated play nor strategic, machinic game.¹³ Although they certainly embody attributes of both,¹⁴ role-playing games are ultimately a hybrid genre that accommodates both definitions (of play or game) but none completely. They speak to the ambiguous usage of the two terms, the murky space of definition which I argue we have lost in the decades since 1950 as game theory more deeply saturated the popular consciousness. Before addressing these historical blind-spots in the field of game studies, I will first outline a definition of role-playing games, which is alluded to by the dragon in the Borges quote. The dragon, like role-playing, refuses to be named, and so we must endeavor to supply a definition for role-playing through terms that are used to name other things.

Structured somewhere between the free and chaotic composition of an activity like make-believe and the mechanical rule-based play of a game like chess, role-playing games meld both elements (free play and rules) into a form all their own. In a role-

¹³Jesper Juul, *Half-Real: Video Games between Real Rules and Fictional Worlds* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 44.

¹⁴ Players are allowed a sense of free action and agential play, yet they are confined by then game's statistical rule-set, and, even more pointedly, the decisions of the referee.

playing game, like in make-believe, there are rarely winners and losers as player goals veer toward collaborative storytelling rather than all-out victory. Individual player scores are rarely kept or accounted for. Additionally, players perform the role of a single character in the game world, and are frequently expected to take on the role of their character when in conversation with others. In this sense, role-play is the play of actors who are expected to embody the characters they play as they interact with others. But, unlike the play in theatrical forums, in role-playing games there is no script; characters are instead bound to the conventions established by a set of scripted rules that are maintained by a referee or judge. These rules govern everything in the fictional world of play, from the way that character's bodies interact with their environments, to the way magic and other forces operate. For example, if your character falls from a hill, you will suffer damage and lose health points. The game's rules explain to both the players and the judge how to maintain these elements. Finally, the rules offer parameters for the judge to establish other characters and settings with which to fill the world. In this sense, the referee embodies the sum of all elements external to the players themselves. The fundamentals of role-playing, as outlined here, are essential to understanding the similarities between the three games considered in this dissertation—*The Cold War Game*, *Diplomacy*, and *Dungeons & Dragons*

Given the hugely combat-oriented content of most role-playing games, I believe there is an urgency for the critical study of game history as evidenced by a burgeoning corpus of game studies scholarship explicitly concerned with critical questions of

interactivity, games, and war.¹⁵ While early work in game studies tended to court somewhat polemical debates around issues of narrative and ludology,¹⁶ recent work has embraced a more critical approach that accounts for the intersection of both formal and cultural qualities in games. The emerging critical work on games has the potential to inform scholarship that has focused on the potential for games to contribute productively to discourses of progress (educational, cultural, and government institutions), and discourses of production (entertainment, military, and advertising industries). An important trend in this emerging corpus of critical work has been the construction of alternative historical narratives that offer perspectives of analysis beyond the early narratives that focused almost exclusively on information technology, innovation, and a scant few businessmen.¹⁷ The emerging critical and historical work on the topic has

¹⁵ Here is a brief list of books which address this topic: Nick Dyer-Witheford and Greig dePeuter, *Games of Empire: Global Capitalism and Video Games* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2009); Patrick Crogan, *Gameplay Mode: War, Simulation, and Technoculture* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2011); and Graeme Kirkpatrick, *Computer Games and the Social Imaginary* (Boston, MA: Polity Press, 2013).

¹⁶ Game studies scholars who work within the ludology paradigm have been critiqued for presenting an approach that is overly technologically deterministic, while approaches offered by those in the narratology camp rely instead on the tenets of Aristotelian dramatic structure to make their points.

¹⁷ See Steven Kent, *The Ultimate History of Video Games: From Pong to Pokémon and Beyond*, (Roseville, CA: Prima Publishing, 2001) and Tristan Donovan, *Replay: The History of Video Games*, (East Sussex, UK: Yellow Ant, 2010) for examples of this common historical narrative.

addressed such diverse issues as gender and representation,¹⁸ the formation of a gaming subject,¹⁹ circulation,²⁰ and simulation.²¹

This study adds to the emerging field of game history by offering a cultural history of role-playing games and their development during The Cold War—a topic which is largely understudied. Unlike the histories of games listed above, this study also resists a viewpoint that privileges computer games as an object of study. Instead it positions games within a broader cultural framework and considers them assemblages that are best defined by the cultural techniques of play demanded by their structure and design. In this way, I hope to avoid reducing games to a purely formal perspective of the digital that freezes out the rich histories of sport, speculation, strategy, play, imagination, dreams, and sharing which have accompanied the form for centuries before the invention of computing. Although these topics have long been of interest to game studies scholars, they have until recently persisted as a blind-spot in the overall trajectory of the field.²²

¹⁸ Laine Nooney suggests that we must look deeper than discourse on inclusion and diversity when asking historical questions of gender and games in her essay, “A Pedestal, A Table, A Love Letter: Archaeologies of Gender in Videogame History,” *Game Studies* 13, no. 2 (2013), <http://gamestudies.org/1302/articles/nooney>.

¹⁹ Graeme Kirkpatrick constructs a genealogy of gameplay and game evaluation, as he reviews British game journalism in the 1980s. Kirkpatrick, *Computer Games and The Social Imaginary*.

²⁰ Raiford Guins offers a historical approach for understanding the materiality and circulation of aftermarket games in his book *Game After: A Cultural Study of Videogame Afterlife*, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2014).

²¹ Patrick Crogan explores the intersection of war, simulation, and interface in his book *Gameplay Mode*.

²² Since 2013, the field has become more open to approaches that address both digital and analog games. The Digital Games Research Association (DiGRA) has hosted a Role-Playing Games Summit at its international conferences in both 2014 and 2015. Furthermore, the Foundations of Digital Games conference made specific note in their 2014 call for papers that they looked forward to receiving papers on more than just digital games. Finally, two journals that specialize in the analysis of non-digital play and games

By focusing on the unifying aspects of play, this work hopes to offer a perspective that avoids essentializing games to the formal limitations of either digital or analog media. In order to show this perspective, I focused my archival research on recovering first-hand analyses of role-playing from a variety of primary sources centered on the games of *Diplomacy*, *The Cold War Game*, and *Dungeons & Dragons*—all developed within the timeframe of this study (1954-1984).

Sources

The primary sources I reviewed in preparing this historical narrative fall into three types: internal military and para-military documentation,²³ fan publications, and magazines. The military documentation consulted for this research consisted primarily of recently declassified reports and correspondence about experiments in political gaming at the RAND Corporation in the 1950s and at the MIT Center for International Studies in the 1960s. Shifting to the public sector, the fan publications consulted were community-produced publications that arose out of a need to connect communities of play-by-mail games such as *Diplomacy*. Trade magazines, on the other hand, were most often published by a company as a way to support their product line, published on a regular basis, and featured topical articles on whatever topics the editors deemed appropriate to the publication's scope and mission. The two magazines investigated in this dissertation are *The Avalon Hill General* (which was developed to support *Diplomacy* and a variety of

have recently emerged: *The International Journal of Role-Playing* (2008) and *Analog Game Studies* (2014).

²³ Throughout the dissertation I refer to RAND occasionally as a para-military institution. This is because the RAND Corporation was not officially a part of the United States military. They were affiliated with the military as a third-party consultant and contractor.

other Avalon Hill wargames) and *The Dragon* (which was developed by TSR Hobbies as way to support *Dungeons & Dragons*).²⁴

The primary source material that informs this dissertation was drawn from archives at the RAND Corporation in Santa Monica, CA; The Center for International Studies archive at MIT; The Ray Browne Popular Culture Library at Bowling Green University in Bowling Green, Ohio; and the Dragon Magazine CD-ROM Archive.²⁵ Within these archives I was searching for evidence that linked the experiments in role-playing conducted at RAND to the development of role-playing games in popular culture. As I worked through the material in these archives, I became concerned with the ubiquity of white, male writers publishing on war and wargames in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. As a result of this, I found myself attracted to stories that were previously neglected in historical work on the topic (histories by Jon Peterson and Michael Tresca). I have therefore focused my research on historical sites of conflict where certain voices were missing and where a perspective was struggling to be articulated from within previously inarticulate, circumspect, cultural milieu. In this sense, my approach to this archival work has been informed by the genealogical methods established by Michel Foucault—that is, it is intended to challenge dominant forms of knowledge by revealing previously invisible contours of knowledge.

In the essay “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” Foucault identifies two key distinctions of his approach to genealogy. He writes that genealogy must chronicle both

²⁴ Just as *The Avalon Hill General* served as a central text for *Diplomacy* hobbyists, *The Dragon* played a similar role during the early years of the role-playing game hobby

²⁵ The RAND Archive was visited in August 2013, The Center for International Studies Archive was visited in March 2014, The Ray Browne Popular Culture Library was visited in January 2013 and then again in May 2013. The Dragon Magazine CD-ROM Archive was published by TSR Hobbies in 1999.

“descent” and “emergence.” Descent, in Foucault’s definition, opposes itself to an understanding of genealogy that traces only lineage. For example, he defines race as not only a trait that is inherited through familial and biological bonds, but rather, a networked concept which spans popular media, biology, oral tradition, and even literature. For Foucault, descent must be approached in a networked fashion; the work of the historian is to identify shared traits, regardless of lineage, even across spaces that may not be contiguous.²⁶ Next, emergence is where Foucault locates the importance and impact of genealogy. Individual differences emerge where there is a relationship of power and one force dominates over another. Foucauldian genealogy seeks sites of struggle in order to identify the emergence of domination.²⁷ Recognizing both the problematic of emergence and its corollary, the heterogeneity of descent creates the potential for domination to be resisted.

I have organized this dissertation around the concepts of emergence and descent in order to make clear the complexity of discourse around games and play during The Cold War. Chapter 1 deals with both descent and emergence by providing an overview of how the various cases within this dissertation are connected: it juxtaposes the emergence of ludic subjectivity against the plural discursive space that constitutes the descent of role-playing games in The Cold War. I detail the patterns of descent in Chapters 3, 4, and 5. The heterogeneity of how games are approached, defined, and used in these chapters encompasses what this dissertation refers to as the ludic imagination. Chapters 2, 6, and 7 deal concretely with the question of emergence as the concept of ludic subjectivity is

²⁶ Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” 82.

²⁷ Ibid., 84.

introduced and considered as a relationship of domination that must be considered within the context of games, play, and The Cold War.

In order to pursue this Foucauldian approach, I sought out these archives, as the locations where the predominant, hegemonic discourses were documented, in order to tease out the untold stories embedded within them: those of military discourse within games of leisure, of women within a notoriously male hobby, and of play within a discourse of games that is predominantly about mathematics and calculation. In what follows, I will describe the content of these four archives and then further detail my findings regarding the invisible lines of ideology undergirding them.

The RAND archive—housed in a high-security, military building on the beach in Santa Monica, CA—was vigilant about protocols around the security of information. These protocols are in place because the material housed at the RAND corporation deals with sensitive issues around political policy and conflicts that persist to the present day. Some portions of the documents researched here were censored in part or entirely. Before I was granted access to the material, a censor reviewed the documents I requested to black out the portions that were considered confidential. Additionally, although documents were kept chronologically in boxes that tracked the work of key researchers at RAND, the censor would remove some documents in their entirety, as noted by the head librarian, Susan Scheiberg, in an interview accompanying my visit in August, 2013. The RAND archive was somewhat more fragmentary than other archives, which are typically intended to preserve and present the totality of a collection. Within the boxes at RAND the papers were categorized by a two-part typological system that noted first the paper type (with a letter), and then chronology (with a number). For instance, document P-219

would signify that this document was the 219th paper (“P” for paper) archived at RAND, while document R-1484 signifies that the document was the 1,484th report filed internally at RAND. Some common documents that I encountered during my archival study were documents (D), papers (P), reports (R), research memorandum (RM), notes (N), and monographs (M).

My research at RAND was instigated by Herbert Goldhamer’s report, “Some Observations on Political Gaming.” Because I knew that Goldhamer was particularly influential in the development of political role-playing games, I began my research at the RAND archive based on the references Goldhamer cited in his bibliography and the key figures listed in the document itself. Then, by repeating this method in the new sources I collected (footnote chasing), I was able to identify the key actors and to better nuance the institutional space within which these phenomena existed. In order to better contextualize the information in the archive, I also relied on several histories, such as William Poundstone’s *Prisoner’s Dilemma*,²⁸ Fred Kaplan’s *The Wizards of Armageddon*,²⁹ and Sharon Gahmari-Tabrizi’s *The Worlds of Herman Khan*,³⁰ all of which helped to better explain the Social Science Division at RAND, which developed *The Cold War Game*, and its relationship to the rest of the organization and global politics at large. By using primary sources to build my understanding of role-playing experiments at RAND on the micro level and secondary sources to understand RAND on a macro level, this

²⁸ William Poundstone, *Prisoner’s Dilemma*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1992).

²⁹ Fred Kaplan, *The Wizards of Armageddon*, (San Francisco, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991).

³⁰ Gahmari-Tabrizi, *The Worlds of Herman Khan: The Intuitive Science of Thermonuclear War*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

dissertation offers a thorough insight into the work on gaming being done at RAND in the 1950s.

This nuanced perspective was further bolstered by my research at the MIT Center for International Studies, another archive that I sought thanks to Goldhamer's "Some Observations on Political Gaming," in which he noted that Lincoln Bloomfield at MIT had been very much influenced by *The Cold War Game*. Following this lead, I went to the archive at the MIT Center for International Studies to investigate this connection. This archive—an unassuming room in a section of the university's library—was more traditional than the RAND archive, since it was uncensored. Whereas papers at the RAND archive were ordered on a case-to-case basis, screened, and then provided afterward, at MIT, papers were preserved in their entirety, rather than pulled individually from boxes. Also unlike RAND, the papers at MIT had no classification system that related the documents by source. Instead, papers were simply organized according to larger categories such as correspondence, experiments, and notes. Despite this difference, the two archives were fairly similar, in that both helped to tell the stories of researchers working at the cutting edge of political gaming in the 1950s and 1960s. These two archives—both pertaining to military or para-military matters—housed articles written primarily by white, male social scientists. In order to find the voices of women writing about role-playing games, I had to turn to other—notably non-militaristic—archives.

Although far from the majority of contributors, some women were writing and editing articles about games at this time, such as Penelope Naughton Dickens, an editor of *The Pouch*.³¹ The Hoosier Archive at the Ray Browne Popular Culture Library houses

³¹ A *Diplomacy* fanzine published in New York city during the early 1970s.

many such articles, which will be discussed at length in chapter four. The Hoosier Archive—a collection of documents in the university’s library—has two primary types of holdings: fanzines³² and individual files. The archive is massive in scope, housing over 14,000 copies of fanzines filed chronologically, as well as boxes devoted to the archive’s original curator, Walter Buchanan—a Vietnam navy veteran, *Diplomacy* enthusiast, and engineering professor at Texas A&M University—and his own fanzine, *The Hoosier Archive* (from which this archive takes its name).³³ Buchanan’s correspondence was organized chronologically rather than by topic, thus reflecting the development of his interests over the years. In addition to fanzines and Buchanan’s documents, the Hoosier Archive also included a few game manuals, and many issues of the magazine *The Avalon Hill General*.³⁴

Although the Hoosier Archive contained a substantial amount of material about play-by-mail *Diplomacy*, some fanzines, such as *Alarums and Excursions*, focused on other games, such as *Dungeons & Dragons*. Nonetheless, the holdings on *Dungeons & Dragons* were few, so it was important for me to refer to other sources in order to better flesh out an understanding of the communities that played the game. Thus, I consulted The Dragon Magazine CD-ROM Archive, the most concise of the archives reviewed in this dissertation as it simply presents the first 250 issues of *The Dragon* and all eight

³² Fanzines are self-published magazines—typically mimeographed or Xeroxed—that focus on the special interests of their editor and affiliated fan community. For more on the production of *Diplomacy* fanzines, please see chapter four.

³³ *The Hoosier Archive* and it was a fanzine devoted to indexing other fanzines within the *Diplomacy* community.

³⁴ As will be detailed further in Chapter 1, *The Avalon Hill General* was the commercial magazine responsible for bringing the *Diplomacy* community together through a series of columns entitled “Opponents Wanted” that helped interested players contact one another in the interest of running large-scale games of *Diplomacy*.

issues of *The Dragon's* predecessor, *The Strategic Review*. Rather than a physical space, this is a digital archive published on CD-ROM in 1999, and is the result of corporate interests at Wizards of the Coast³⁵ attempting to make past issues of *Dungeons & Dragons'* flagship magazine available to interested fans. It is simply organized chronologically, and offers Adobe PDF copies of all the anthologized magazines.

The third, fourth, and fifth chapters in this dissertation all draw upon the sources consulted in these archives. The third chapter draws namely on materials from the archives at RAND and MIT, the fourth chapter leans heavily upon the material presented at The Hoosier Archive, and, finally, the fifth chapter uses material found in the Dragon Magazine CD-ROM archive. When quoting from these sources, I left the original text intact, so all spelling errors and grammatical errors are deliberate. All archives contribute to my work in telling a new history of role-playing games that acknowledges military influence, marginalized voices in the communities, and the emergence of ludic subjectivity as part of the ludic imagination.

A Genealogy of Role-Playing Games

I have used the various archival sources noted above to conduct genealogical research on what a role-playing game is. Thinking with Foucault,³⁶ these genealogical methods offer a way to recuperate a lost perspective of the past, to descend through the accidents, errors, and falsehoods which have yielded that which we value today. It is through this method of inquisition that historical genealogy seeks to reveal invisible structures of power.

³⁵ The company which owned the holdings of TSR Hobbies, *The Dragon's* publisher, at the time of the archive's publication in 1999.

³⁶ Michael Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *The Michael Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow, (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1984), 81.

Foucault wrote, “Genealogy [...] seeks to reestablish the various systems of subjection: not the anticipatory power of meaning, but the hazardous play of dominations.”³⁷ It is through this method that this dissertation locates a somewhat paradoxical double-masking: First, it considers how the rational aspects of game theory have come to be embedded within the supposedly playful role-playing game. Second, it investigates how the playful domain of role-playing³⁸ came to be fundamental to the logical calculus of game theory.

It is in the articulation of this paradox—that is, the hyper-rational practices of military simulation necessitating playful approaches to divination, and later the fantasy and science-fiction worlds of role-playing games relying on cold military analytics—that the play of dominations can be revealed: the inescapability of a stoic military as it intersects with what is also an ineluctably playful and flexible market. This paradox defines the intersection of role-playing games and game theory during The Cold War. The communities which negotiated this intersection—the RAND Corporation Social Sciences Division and the play-by-mail community of *Diplomacy* hobbyists—provide an avenue for understanding the historical production of what I term the ludic imagination. How have the rational presuppositions of game theory affected the ways that we consider, design, and reproduce play? Likewise, how have the embodied and ritual aspects of role-playing affected the ways that we negotiate and understand gamic simulations? The history of role-playing games brings these questions into focus, and, as such, allows us to grapple with the deep relocation of ideas as they are shared between military elites and

³⁷ Ibid., 84.

³⁸ I distinguish here between role-playing and role-playing games, since the technique of role-playing has long predated the form of the role-playing game, which was popularized by *Dungeons & Dragons* in 1973.

grassroots hobby communities. Within this concept of the ludic imagination, this dissertation theorizes a particular twentieth-century ideology that I term “ludic subjectivity,” and presents a thorough and nuanced historical investigation of the historical events that led to its emergence.

Chapter 1, “The Ludic Imagination,” offers an overview of the concurrent work done at RAND in role-playing and in game theory. By reviewing these perspectives, I show how their experiments in role-playing games were considered mere supplements to the experiments on game theory. After showing how this hierarchy between games (game theory) and play (role-playing) was established at RAND, this chapter moves on to discuss how these concepts were related to the play-by-mail *Diplomacy* community in the 1960s and 1970s. The chapter ends by explaining how *Dungeons & Dragons* reflects the ideals of ludic subjectivity in its mechanics. By showing how concepts of games and play were debated at RAND, disseminated and considered in the *Diplomacy* play-by-mail community, and finally reproduced through the game mechanics of *Dungeons & Dragons*, this chapter provides a narrative arc that connects the cases in the work that follows.

Chapter 2 of this dissertation, “Implications for Literature,” intends to show how the historical inquiry into the ludic imagination intervenes within both the literature of game studies and digital media studies. It discusses several discourses around games and shows how it is difficult to locate a perspective that avoids essentializing games as either effective tools of social transformation or objects of mere leisure. It explains that the ludic imagination intends to intervene in this conversation by showing how the two discourses are related. The chapter also touches on some approaches to race and gender in digital media studies, and shows how the emergence of ludic subjectivity intervenes in

these discourses by showing how the ideologies of community are reproduced as code.

Chapter 2 helps to make clear how this work on the ludic imagination stands as a critical intervention in these fields.

“Political Games, Role-Playing, and RAND,” Chapter 3, considers the development and testing of Herbert Goldhamer’s *The Cold War Game* in more detail. It offers a historical portrait of the American military experiments in role-playing as they were conducted at the RAND Corporation in the 1950s. This chapter explains the relationship between the experiments in game theory at the RAND Corporation and the experiments in role-playing. This chapter shows how game theory was hierarchically elevated above role-playing in experiments at the RAND Corporation. It considers Herbert Goldhamer’s theorization of the non-rational, epitomized here by what he termed Communist ideology, and the ways that he saw role-playing games as a way to inhabit the psychological spaces of the ruling elite of other nations. Unlike the hyper-rational theorems of game theory, role-playing games provided Goldhamer an insight into the affective and emotional states that might trouble a leader considering a nuclear strike. It concludes by noting the failure of *The Cold War Game* to gain substantial institutional momentum and suggests that this failure was related to economic efficiency of game theory as compared to the unstructured and expensive framework of role-playing.

Chapter 4, “Understanding the Culture of Play-By-Mail *Diplomacy*,” then turns to the culture of the American wargaming underground in an effort to show how wargaming hobbyists debated the limits of games and play in the 1960s and 1970s. The goal of this chapter is to offer insight into the communication practices of this community, and offers a dynamic set of graphic visualizations to help understand the scope of the play-by-mail

Diplomacy network. After showing the breadth and complexity of the network, Chapter 4 highlights some moments of debate over the censorship of hate speech within the network in an effort to help contour the community's racist and sexist makeup.

The introduction of military ideology to the play-by-mail *Diplomacy* community is the subject of Chapter 5. In the early 1970s, about fifteen years after the experiments of role-playing at RAND, writing on the allegedly confidential *The Cold War Game* emerged in the most unlikely of places: grassroots wargame fanzines. One such series of fanzines, edited by teenager Larry Peery in San Diego, thus constituted an attempt at bridging discourses between wargame hobbyists and the political-military elite. This discourse was not just happening on the hobbyist's side; others, like well-known military tactician and fantasy writer Jerry Pournelle, participated in these fanzine communities, thus epitomizing the dialogue between both hobby gamers and military strategists. This chapter builds on these avenues of discourse to better understand the relocation of ideas as they traveled between radically different social and political spheres. By exploring these relocations, this chapter tracks the valorization of games over play, and shows the adoption of role-playing and game theory by the grassroots.

Chapter 6, "Representation and Commercialism in Role-Playing Games," focuses on the communities that developed *Dungeons & Dragons*. It analyzes game mechanics to depict how the worldview of the ludic subject emerges while also tracking the changes of *Dungeons & Dragons* as it transitioned from a game that had a sense of shared community development and ownership to a game that was wholly owned, regulated, and policed by the company, TSR Hobbies. While the earlier chapters show the discrete historical construction of games and play, this chapter highlights how this is articulated

within a set of game mechanics. As such, this chapter explores issues of representation and procedurality and shows the degree to which the quantitative elements of game theory persist in a game ostensibly about the qualitative practice of role-playing. By understanding *Dungeons & Dragons* we can understand the complexity of discourse around the idea of role-playing and recognize the degree to which the ideologies of military simulations, those which affect the ludic imagination, persist in game design.

Together, these chapters offer a genealogy of role-playing games and highlight changes within the historical relationship between games and play. By understanding this relationship we can better understand how these terms are historically contingent and constructed.

Chapter 1: The Ludic Imagination

This chapter offers a narrative logic for the historical work in this dissertation. It explains how work on play and games at the RAND Corporation is discursively connected to grassroots communities of hobby play-by-mail *Diplomacy* in the 1960s and 1970s, and then how these grassroots communities developed *Dungeons & Dragons*. Within these communities, it offers an overview of how the role-playing game was defined and imagined between the years 1954 and 1984. These definitions are discursively related to one another and through Foucauldian genealogy, we can see the grain of this relationship. This dissertation shows how the term “role-playing game” was in a state of flux between two meanings during this time: In one sense, I show how the term takes on a meaning derived from play-acting and improvisation, referring to the practice of getting into character, and working through the character’s personality, desires, and foibles. In another sense, role-playing games are *games* and thus they also are governed by procedural and mathematical structures.³⁹ Although I argue that the definition of a role-playing game stabilizes with the game *Dungeons & Dragons* in 1973, the concept was also established by the practices of the *Diplomacy* hobby community in the 1960s, as well as by experiments at the RAND Corporation in the 1950s. These points of genealogical descent include *Diplomacy* players who were role-playing when they took on and spoke to one another through leadership roles (such as the president or prime

³⁹ I make this claim because games involve rules and rules are procedures. Additionally, all role-playing games involve mathematics to some extent. This is the key differentiation between role-playing games and games like *Fiasco* (2009) or *Once Upon A Time* (1994) that fall into the subgenre of storytelling games due to the heavy emphasis on storytelling, acting, and narrative within them.

minister) and experiments at the RAND Corporation devoted to applying play-acting and improvisation techniques to military conflict. This related set of historical moments helps to explain the domain of what this dissertation refers to as the ludic imagination.

By recognizing the heterogeneous ways that games and play are defined, the emergence of dominant definitions within the discourse can be better questioned. This dissertation aims to question the understanding of games today by using Foucauldian genealogy to reveal how they became entangled within militaristic, political, scientific, and consumerist discourses between the years 1954 and 1984. The evidence for this entanglement is notable because of how it clearly shows how games and game strategy have been economically privileged as a rational and efficient set of techniques for managing warfare, business, and even our everyday affairs. Furthermore, the stabilization of the concept of a role-playing game around *Dungeons & Dragons* demonstrates the extent that this hierarchical construction reflects the value placed in games as opposed to play. A close reading of the game's mechanics (such as the reading detailed in Chapter 6) reveals how these rules occupy a privileged position in our understanding of the role-playing game, and shows how the supposedly rational apparatus of games is haunted by other problematic lines of thought such as essentialisms, biological and otherwise. Thus, we can see how the RAND Corporation's experiments in game theory instigated a broader cultural interest in the militaristic and economic value of games.

This chapter reviews the impact of game theory by reviewing the production, distribution, and dissemination of *The Cold War Game*, *Diplomacy*, and *Dungeons & Dragons*, respectively. By thus situating the game mechanics, story, and culture next to one another, it is my hope that the analysis that is laid out in the following chapters can

be tied to the larger narrative thread presented in this dissertation that shows how a drive for efficiency in military operations and hobby labor leads to a gradual polarization of games and play. Because analyzing play and playful mechanics was often cumbersome and time consuming, social and institutional actors such as the RAND Corporation and the creators of *Diplomacy* and *Dungeons & Dragons* had an interest in streamlining these processes of analysis. They often defaulted to a set of quantitative and efficient mechanics that were game-like insofar as they offered players a stable and concrete range of choices that gave players a sense of meaningful decision-making, yet veered away from the wild and uncontrolled scope of play. As will be detailed in this chapter, an understanding of the time-consuming processes of games and community communications belies the shared interest in efficient analysis that permeated the consciousness of the scientists at the RAND Corporation as well as the hobbyists within the wargaming underground.

The chapter first offers a brief overview of the historical evolution of game theory and an analysis of its role within the ludic imagination. Notably, it shows how game theory requires players to consider one another oppositionally, and to find ways to abstract the elements of a game to numbers that can be compared on a grid.⁴⁰ By understanding the strategic affordances of game theory, this chapter aims to understand what some dominant strategies for approaching games have been, and how these strategies are linked to military, economic, and scientific discourse. The chapter concludes by suggesting that while the definition space of games and play is contested

⁴⁰ One of the most common analytics in game theory involves creating a chart that tracks the potential gains or losses one might incur when making a decision. By comparing the potential choices of player one to player two on a grid, a game theory helps to determine the choice through which a player stands to lose the least ground, money, points, etc...

throughout The Cold War as evinced throughout my cases, a dominant military subjectivity—ludic subjectivity—best exemplifies the play of domination within the ludic imagination.

Game Theory

As described above, game theory is characterized by oppositional and quantitative logic. This logic defines the idea of ludic subjectivity within the domain of the ludic imagination. A common example of the application of game theory is known as the “cake example”: If there are two gluttonous children who want to eat a cake, and their parent wants to split it between them evenly, game theory suggests that the parent should tell one child to split the cake, and the other to choose which slice they want to eat. Because the child splitting the cake would not want to have less cake than the other child, they will split the cake as evenly as possible. Splitting the cake is like a game, and this thought experiment is founded on the premise that both children aim to eat more cake than the other. From a critical perspective, however, this scenario makes many assumptions about the nature of the children involved. It takes for granted that they will both act selfishly and according to their own interests, and also presumes that they are both familiar with geometry to the extent that they can ascribe mathematical values to slices of cake. The children in this example have been made into ludic subjects since their parent sat them at a table and forced them to strategize over cake. If the children believe that there is such a clear, quantitative, and logically sound dominant strategy in this scenario, then they have internalized the strategies of game theory. For the ludic subject, the strategies of game theory are taken for granted. In fact, game theory is so pervasive as an analytic for game

strategy that there is no discourse for analysis outside of it. The ludic subject considers numbers to be the essential truth of the world because numbers are an efficient means of quantifying and predicting behavior. Additionally, the ludic subject has been touched by military politics that assume an oppositional relationship between bodies. The cake example epitomizes both of the attitudes of the ludic subject, in that it assumes that the children see one another as opponents, and that the cake is something that can be quantified—for there can be no concept of “more” or “less” without numbers. We must turn to a brief history of game theory if we are to understand why its internalization produces the attitudes of ludic subjectivity.

It is widely known that game theory is a theory of rational behavior. First developed by mathematician John von Neumann in 1928, it was later refined by John Nash at the RAND Corporation in the 1950s to accommodate situations where a coalition between two players was impossible (such as The Cold War). Game theory was designed to optimize strategy in games and a large portion of its persistence is derived from its adaptability as an approach to economics, politics, and military strategy. This section offers a brief historical overview of game theory and its logic and then concludes by linking game theory and ludic subjectivity.

In a 1928 essay entitled “Theory of Parlor Games,” John von Neumann offered a mathematical proof for optimizing strategy in two-player games.⁴¹ This paper established one of the fundamentals of game theory: the “minimax” theory. Von Neumann’s minimax theory was a mathematical proof that posited that the ideal strategy for most games was one where a player both minimized their losses and maximized their gains.

⁴¹ William Poundstone, *Prisoner’s Dilemma*, (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 41.

Since most games rely on mathematics in their mechanics, it is often possible to abstract player positions into mathematical values, and then to determine potential losses or gains for all possible actions. By abstracting concepts into numbers and then comparing all possible actions, players can derive an optimal strategy for gameplay. Like the children in the example above, the minimax theorem assumes that the rational choice is the one which allows the child dividing the cake to gain the most and lose the least—and so the child divides the cake evenly each time the example is played out.

Things get more complicated when games become more complicated than the simple division of cake. Early game theory relied on comparing two player positions on a grid, but when more players were introduced to a game it became harder to solve for an optimal strategy using that simple technique. For example, in a three-player game, two players cooperating with one another could guarantee a win over the third.⁴² Although von Neumann and his collaborator, economist Oscar Morgenstern, approached some of these multiplayer games in *A Theory of Games as Economic Behavior*, they were ultimately limited by the complexity of global abstractions, which would require a comparison of the possible actions of millions of players.⁴³ But von Neuman's interest in the application of game theory to such political problems led him to consult at the RAND Corporation in the 1950s.

The RAND Corporation's mathematics department became a magnet institution for scientists working with game theory in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. In pursuit of this theory, the director, John Davis Williams, recruited talent such as von Neumann to use

⁴² Ibid., 63.

⁴³ Ibid.

game theory in an effort to predict and control conflict during The Cold War. As historian Alex Abbella explains:

An obese, genial, and charmingly eccentric mathematician, Williams was director of the newly created Mathematics Division. . . He personified what would become hallmarks of RANDites—a love of pleasures of the flesh, a dedication to abstract theory, and a sense of absolute self-righteous married to an amoral approach to politics and policy. While he coolly advocated a preemptive nuclear attack on the Soviet Union that would annihilate millions, he also published a book on game theory called *The Compleat Strategyst*, which he mordantly described as “a soporific on all unpleasant passions.” Williams believed that every human activity could be understood and explained by numerical rationality. From the start, one of his pet projects at RAND was developing a theory of war along the lines of Einstein’s grand unified theory of physics.⁴⁴

William’s approach to game theory and warfare epitomizes the hallmarks of the ludic subject—numeric rationality and oppositional thinking. By understanding game theory’s embeddedness within the RAND Corporation, where it competed with other simultaneous projects around games that were not as efficient, we can better understand game theory’s pervasiveness. William’s belief in game theory produced a pervasive discourse around it both in the military as well as society at large.

One of the other mathematicians that Williams hired in this initiative was the economist John Nash. Nash is most famous for what is referred to as the mutually assured destruction (MAD) doctrine, the theory that a nuclear war between the United States and

⁴⁴ Alex Abbella, *Soldiers of Reason: The RAND Corporation and the Rise of the American Empire*, (Orlando, FL: Houghton Mifflin, 2008), 13.

Russia was unlikely to occur because in almost all scenarios it would produce a result that was in the worst interests of both parties. This theory is derived from Nash's work in seeking ways to quantify equilibrium in multi-player games. As William Poundstone explains, "[Nash] demonstrated that any two rational beings who find their interests *completely* opposed can settle on a rational course of action in confidence that the other will do the same... This rational solution of a zero-sum game is an equilibrium enforced by self-interest and mistrust."⁴⁵ For Nash, opposition should be taken for granted when playing games, and the rational strategies that follow this sort of competition can be relied upon as a form of strategic equilibrium. In other words, when game theory is applied to society, winning the game means maintaining the status quo.

Nash believed that the maxims of game theory could be generalized to all human behavior. Further showing the sense in which the dynamics of the individual are related to the dynamics of game theory, Nash writes in his dissertation, "Our theory, in contradistinction, is based on the absence of coalitions in that it is assumed that each participant sets independently, without collaboration or communication with any of the others."⁴⁶ The absence of coalitions, the elevation of individuality and assumption of opposition are fundamental to the ludic subject. Nash admits that isolation is imperative for his theorems to be accurate, instructing that "there should be no pre-play communication among the players."⁴⁷ This requirement of isolation furthers the degree to which it is apparent that isolation and atomization is a fundamental requisite of game theory.

⁴⁵ Poundstone, 97.

⁴⁶ John Nash, *Non-Cooperative Games*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1950), 1.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 21.

From Nash we can see not only how the politics of opposition are incorporated within the logic of game theory, but also how there is an ontological assumption that numbers are the fundamental basis of all reality. This focus on the value of numbers is articulated in Nash's dissertation (1950), "This paper introduces the concept of a non-cooperative game and develops methods for the mathematical analysis of such games,"⁴⁸ the role of mathematics (and therefore numbers) in game theory is taken for granted. That said, this point should not be understated: Nash's entire theorem is premised on the idea that games, and therefore conflict, can be mathematically analyzed, a perspective that assumes that social relationships can be conceived of as numbers. After all, as noted earlier, Nash was hired at RAND specifically because his director, John Williams, was convinced that all human activities could be reduced to numbers and then considered through the stratagems of game theory.

The critique that game theory reduces bodies to numbers and people into opponents has also existed since at least 1952. The anthropologist Gregory Bateson wrote a letter to mathematician and philosopher Norbert Wiener condemning game theory:

What applications of the theory of games do, is to reinforce the player's acceptance of the rules and competitive premises, and therefore make it more and more difficult for the players to conceive that there might be other ways of meeting and dealing with each other . . . its use propagates changes, and I suspect that the long term changes so propagated are in a paranoidal direction and odious. I am thinking not only of the propagation of the premises of distrust which are built into the von Neumann model *ex hypothesi*, but also of the more abstract

⁴⁸ Ibid., "Abstract," paragraph 1.

premise that human nature is unchangeable... Von Neumann's "players" differ profoundly from people and mammals in that these robots totally lack humor and are totally unable to "play" (in the sense in which the word is applied to kittens and puppies).⁴⁹

Bateson's concern is that the assumption of competition necessitated by game theory does much to provoke the worst and most paranoid instincts in people. Game theory is read by Bateson as a hegemonic strategy that forces others to robotically conform to its logics.

British documentarian Adam Curtis has also expressed a number of concerns about game theory in his 2007 BBC documentary *The Trap*. In this film, Curtis shows how game theory was picked up by intellectual leaders in psychology during the 1970s and 1980s and questions its implementation in some popular self-help practices. Most importantly, Curtis argues that the institutionalization of game theory in economics, politics, and psychology has led to two pervasive truisms: "you can only trust the numbers," and "humans will betray you." Curtis's expert characterization of the widespread social and institutional adoption of game theory reveals the politics of numerical essentialism and oppositional thinking of what I have identified as the discourse of ludic subjectivity.

Ludic subjectivity is a radicalizing and oppositional ideology that puts a name to these critiques of game theory. It highlights the pervasiveness of game theory as a strategic mindset for managing all forms of competition and conflict. My theorizing of ludic subjectivity aims to situate the adoption of game theory alongside the widespread

⁴⁹ Quote from William Poundstone, *Prisoner's Dilemma*, 168.

techno-cultural adoption of games and the tensions within this discourse. As values, rules, and regulations become coded into more of society's infrastructure, it is important to recognize that the strategies chosen for navigating these rules are often derived and adopted from the games played in parlors, bedrooms, and living rooms worldwide on computers and consoles. Designers code people, places, and things through numeric qualities so that games and other computer programs can parse and consider these numbers through the binary logic of difference. Other forms of games that focus less on numbers can be imagined though, key among them being the role-playing game. To understand the discursive impact of game theory, we must first explore *The Cold War Game*, a role-playing game that was developed at the RAND Corporation in the 1950s. By seeing how role-playing has been historically constructed as a supplement to game theory, we can consider the military constitution of ludic subjectivity as a worldview within the ludic imagination.

The Cold War Game

Although this dissertation attributes the oppositional and quantitative nature of ludic subjectivity to experiments in game theory at the RAND Corporation's Mathematics Division, it is important to understand these experiments as one of many approaches to games and play that constitute the discourse of the ludic imagination in the period that extends from the earliest moments of the Cold War (immediately following World War II) and throughout the next forty years. Simultaneous to these experiments in game theory in the 1950s, work was being done on role-playing simultaneously in the Social Sciences Division at RAND. By understanding how *The Cold War Game* was developed as part of

an initiative at RAND to quantify and understand non-rational behavior we can then consider how the absence of role-playing techniques in future military discourse reflects the ubiquity of ludic subjectivity in the military sector. Despite this sense of ubiquity, experiments in role-playing at RAND persevered between 1954 and 1956, and the conversations around these experiments continued at RAND and other academic think tanks, like the MIT Center for International Studies into the 1960s. In all of these locales, military officials were interested in discussing what was to be gleaned from *The Cold War Game* even though the game was experimented with for only two years.

Simply put, *The Cold War Game* was a role-playing exercise in which players took on the roles of rulers of various countries involved in the Cold War and responded to various hypothetical scenarios, as an attempt to analyze how leaders might respond in these situations. Role-playing games were developed as machines of politico-military divination in the RAND Corporation's Social Sciences Division, lead by sociologist Hans Speier. After fleeing to the United States from Germany in 1933, Speier helped found The University in Exile at The New School for Social Research in New York. Here he served an appointment as a Professor of Political Sociology until 1948, occasionally consulting with the Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service (a division of the Federal Communication Commission) and the Office of War Information as a propaganda specialist. Before joining the RAND Corporation in 1948 to head the Social Sciences Division, Speier wrote an essay entitled "The Future of Psychological Warfare" for the academic journal *Public Opinion Quarterly*. In this essay, Speier detailed instances of

psychological warfare in World War I and World War II, and made suggestions regarding its future use as an effective military technique.⁵⁰

Psychological warfare involves the use of propaganda to coerce populations toward political ideologies. As elaborated in a monograph by Alan K. Abner, chief of the Psychological Warfare Branch of The United States Air Force, psychological warfare often took the form of aerial drops of leaflet propaganda, radio broadcasts, word-of-mouth rumors established by a covert network of subterfuge agents, notes packaged within commodities such as tobacco, toilet paper branded with slogans and catch phrases, and messages disseminated by portable AM radio receivers, short wave transmitters, and carefully delivered explosives.⁵¹ But, before this strange range of techniques was adopted by captains like Alan Abner in the United States Air Force, it was theorized by experts such as Hans Speier in university-based Political Science departments and not-for profit military think tanks such as the RAND Corporation. But in 1948, as Speier notes, psychological warfare was still impractical and underdeveloped.⁵²

As Speier noted, a key problem when implementing psychological warfare was its prohibitive cost:

As the nation demobilized its armed strength after the wars, expenditures for purposes of psychological warfare were not curtailed in proportion to the reduction of the total funds appropriated for defense but were, as a matter of course, reduced to nil. At present hardly a skeleton organization for planning and

⁵⁰ Hans Speier, "The Future of Psychological Warfare," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 12, no. 1 (1948), 5-18.

⁵¹ Alan K. Abner, *Psywarriors: Psychological Warfare During the Korean War*, (Shippensburg, PA: Burd Street Press, 2000), 65-66.

⁵² Hans Speier, "The Future of Psychological Warfare."

research in psychological warfare exists, and the legacy of experience accumulated during the last war in both tactical and strategic propaganda is being dissipated by negligence. There is also an almost complete lack of accurate studies of the effectiveness of the various propaganda measures and devices used against the enemy in the second world war.⁵³

This focus was surely part of Speier's agenda, as he was hired by the RAND Corporation to head the newly conceived Social Science Division. His appointment was directly influenced by propaganda filmmaker Leo Rosten (who was responsible for the animated Disney collaboration "War in the Pacific") who knew Hans Speier from their prior work together in the Office of War Information and who consulted with John Davis Williams, then head of the RAND Mathematics division, which was tasked with developing techniques for preventing the escalation of nuclear war.⁵⁴ Whereas Williams was intrigued by social psychology due to the pioneering work of John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern in game theory,⁵⁵ Speier's work on psychological warfare was more influenced by the tradition of Communication in the Social Sciences than the mathematical formulae of game theory.⁵⁶

⁵³ Hans Speier, 5.

⁵⁴ Fred Kaplan, 63-70.

⁵⁵ Game theory was popularized in von Neumann and Morganstern's book, *A Theory of Games as Economic Behavior* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1944). By 1950 it was a primary topic of inquiry for mathematicians like John Nash who were working in RAND's Mathematics department.

⁵⁶ The history of Communication as a division of the social sciences has been critiqued by Christopher Simpson in his book *Science of Coercion: Communication Research and Psychological Warfare, 1945-1960*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996). Simpson has critiqued the discipline for developing propaganda model communication as a way for social scientists to influence the opinions and actions of large groups of individuals.

Although primarily developed by Herbert Goldhamer, *The Cold War Game* must be understood as a result of Speier's collaboration with Williams. The game accomplished two things simultaneously. On the books the game was a research tool intended to help the mathematicians working for Williams quantify and calculate emotional, or "non-rational," states. In addition, *The Cold War Game* was a natural step in furthering Speier's interests in psychological warfare. The game was intended to help understand the psychological aspects of players so that the RAND Corporation, the military, or other sovereign interests could anticipate and react efficiently to future military conflicts. This dual purpose of the game was crucial, it is important to recognize the ways that propaganda and psychology were used as techniques of warfare alongside the quantitative and supposedly rational analytics of game theory. The reduction of all work at the RAND Corporation to mathematics has been misrepresented by at least one author who has written on the topic to date.

For example, this error was written into the seminal journalistic exposé, *From Sun Tzu to XBOX*, by Ed Halter. Mistaking Goldhamer's role-playing games for computer games, Halter explains:

One of Rand's military innovations was a politico-military game, a Cold War update of kriegspiel, developed in the 1950s by Herbert Goldhamer. Not just concerned with the movements of troops and weapons, the politico-military game also factored in economic and diplomatic concerns, all of which were converted to numerical values for calculation. About five or six of these three-day affairs were held at the Pentagon during the 1960s, with one group of officials playing team Blue (the U.S.) and another group playing as Red, an opposing nation or

force in the given scenario. Team Blue would have consisted of high-ranking members of the president's cabinet, the CIA, State Department, and the Department of Defense; red would be area specialists — Kremlinologists or diplomats, for example. After each game's conclusion, its findings were shaped into a half-hour mock-documentary, souped up with stock footage of missile launches, riots, and armies on the march, which would be screened before the Pentagon and State Department officials for analysis. Because of their sprawling, complex nature, the politico-military games were apparently not used for actual prediction or strategy, but more as an educational tool for understanding possible outcomes in various global situations.⁵⁷

Although Halter's narrative is certainly a clear and powerful one, things at RAND were not nearly this simple. Goldhamer's game did not effectively convert economic and diplomatic concerns into numeric values, rather, it faltered at such tasks. Furthermore, the role-playing techniques used in the game were worlds away from the informatic exercises which characterized *SIERRA*, a series of logistics games hosted on computers by the RAND Corporation with teams nicknamed "Red" and "Blue", and with which Halter seems to have conflated *The Cold War Game*. Like many other narratives, Halter's focuses primarily on the intermingling of technology (in the sense of electronics) and warfare but neglects the ways in which propaganda and psychology were techniques being developed simultaneously within the discourse of role-playing games. Furthermore, and most importantly, this narrative omits the important discussion staged in the RAND Corporation relating to the control of rational (i.e. mathematical and logical) and non-

⁵⁷ Ed Halter, *From Sun Tzu to XBOX: War and Video Games*, (New York: Avalon Publishing Group, 2006) 91-92.

rational (i.e. emotional and ideological) motivations, characterized primarily by the techniques through which games model the decision-making aspects of our cognitive psyches.

Although most narratives about *The Cold War Game* fail to acknowledge the significance of RAND's interest in the non-rational, I contend that the non-rational is an integral aspect of research on role-playing games and their broader implications for society. Although role-playing games have rarely been theorized explicitly, Johan Huizinga was deeply interested in the non-rational aspects of play, and argued that non-rational acts are part of what makes play spaces formally indistinguishable from ritual spaces:

As a rule people reduce this over-all congruity of cultural forms [between the temple, tennis-court, and chessboard] to some "reasonable", "logical" cause by explaining the need for isolation and seclusion as an anxiety to protect the consecrated individual from noxious influences...Such an explanation puts intellection and utilitarian purpose at the beginning of the cultural process...If, on the other hand, we accept the essential and original identity of play and ritual we simply recognize the hallowed spot as a play-ground, and the misleading question of the "why and the wherefore" does not arise at all.⁵⁸

For Huizinga, the question of why such spaces, both hallowed ground and the playground, required the trappings of the sacred was an over-intellectualization of the concept of ritual and an attempt to schematize that which resists easy categorization. In this same vein, the researchers at RAND were, in their way, also developing a method for

⁵⁸ Johan Huizinga, 20.

controlling this primal and deeply affective ritual mode of play. Furthermore, by schematizing it, they were dabbling in a moment of experimentation that held vast implications for the definition of and production of a technique for the embodiment of subjectivities that would come to be known as role-playing within the wargaming underground. However, as this dissertation will show, although role-playing has the potential to allow for the embodiment of alternate subjectivities, its commercial form is rarely so introspective. Instead, role-playing usually serves as a thin mechanic that adorns the ubiquitous mathematic and oppositional form of the commercial game.

Diplomacy

To understand the dissemination of these ideas—game theory and role-playing—we must turn to the communities practicing them within the popular culture of the 1960s and 1970s. While chapters four and five will offer a more concrete vision about how game theory and role-playing were negotiated by these communities, it is important to first understand how the grassroots *Diplomacy* community provided a centralized network of dissemination for wargaming hobbyists in the 1960s. By understanding the scope and impact of this platform, we can better understand the impact of the community in evaluating and integrating two military techniques developed at the RAND Corporation, game theory and role-playing, within their practices.

Diplomacy was a strategy game primarily played by mail by hobbyists in the 1960s. These communities would send one another transcripts of their moves along with a first-person fictional and historical commentary as to why. In this way, the players of *Diplomacy* collaboratively constructed fantastic worlds for the play of their game.

Diplomacy was not considered a role-playing game, as the concept of a role-playing

game would not be formally articulated until *Dungeons & Dragons*. Nonetheless, as a wargame that relied heavily on negotiation mechanics, *Diplomacy* employed many early role-playing mechanics and is thus a significant part of the history of role-playing. In this game, players took on roles when playing and were given a large amount of agency in how they negotiated (they could say or do anything). These mechanics share similarities with the decision-making agency allotted in *Dungeons & Dragons* (which would grow from sub-groups in the *Diplomacy* community), which epitomizes the role-playing game. Although there are some similarities, *Diplomacy* differs from most role-playing games in that there is no referee, only rules and game mechanics. *Diplomacy* simulates the military events leading up to World War I. Each player takes the role of a European power, and controls a set of tokens representing their units around a map of Europe. If one—or several players working together—is able to outnumber an opponent's unit, then a battle takes place and the opponent's unit is removed from the board. All moves are executed simultaneously and recorded in secret after players have deliberated amongst themselves about who they will ally with in order to cooperate and overwhelm their enemies.

The game simulates the military events leading up to World War I. As each player initiates dialogue with the others and pushes their tokens around on a map, world military events are simulated. Furthermore, as much of the game revolves around the idea of discussion, deliberation, and decision, players are often expected to justify their decisions to one another. Alliances and betrayals are a big part of the game. If Jill asks Martin to help her wage war on Tim, and Martin agrees but does not actually help out, Jill stands to lose her tactical purchase through the exchange. In a game taking place around a table, Jill would probably confront Martin and request that he explain his treachery. If this were

a game of postal *Diplomacy*, this exchange would be simulated within a press release from Martin that explained why his nation opted out of the war pact.

As approximated in the above example, there is supposedly a one-to-one correspondence between the map of Europe on which the players shift their tokens and the actual, material and historical Europe where World War I took place. The tokens on the board simulate troops, and, within the game's logic, the bigger army will always persevere in combat. The players take on the roles of powerful leaders simulate diplomatic negotiations with other player-leaders through live conversation. In groups participating in postal play formally written "press releases" are circulated by players—staged as self-consciously dramatic performances of a country's military posture—in an effort to add flavor to the game, and occasionally to encourage other players to take military or diplomatic action. Groups consist of seven players, typically teenage to middle age white-men. In local games of *Diplomacy* these players would all play the game in the same room, while in postal *Diplomacy* games consisted of geographically disparate networks of players.

The game and its simulated relationships, however, are far from perfect—the game is quite abstract and thus a far cry from the realistic bureaucratic simulation of *The Cold War Game*. Tokens do not perfectly account for the complex institutional and cultural rules that govern armies, nor does a map adequately simulate the complexity of the terrain in which these armies maneuver. Even the implied sense of totalitarian agency granted to the players rarely simulates the workings of actual military governance, especially as most European countries did not actually have totalitarian rulers during World War I. Furthermore, although World War I is the scenario within which the game

anchors its action, its representation within the world of the game is not altogether accurate. Primarily, the game has been balanced in a way that offers some nations advantages over others—Austria, for example, will always have a more difficult time achieving victory due to the strategic value of their starting location, and their inability to fortify their borders. But aside from these basic starting principles, the game could have been set anywhere. The game abstracts the humanity and internal discourse of nations into three types of explicitly militaristic tokens: factories, armies, and boats.⁵⁹ The game's true connection to World War I, however, is most evident in the press-releases and other paratexts distributed in the fan publications produced by the play-by-mail community, as it is in this space of discourse that players would do the historical research necessary to adequately flesh out an alternative history of World War I.⁶⁰ Although abstract, the game is a clear simulation of the military politics of World War I-era Europe, albeit a simulation that begs the question of the degree to which it is an *accurate* simulation.

Nevertheless, as long as a real referent exists, the scope of a *Diplomacy* game can be understood as a simulation. Armies, countries, and leaders are all things that exist in the real world, and have corresponding parts in the game. It is important to note, however, that the representations in the game structure a narrative of conflict above all else. Leaders control a predetermined set of land useful only for the production of factories, armies, and boats. To this end, *Diplomacy*'s negotiation-heavy mechanics are primarily

⁵⁹ In *Diplomacy*, factories produce boats, and boats produced combat. Thus, the only things in the game that are abstracted are used only for combat or the production of combat units.

⁶⁰ For example, fans would cite and share the *Almanach de Gotha* in order to source the historical flavor they would relate in their writing. See John Boardman, *Fredonia* 9, 2.

geared toward encouraging players to negotiate the politics of conflict with one another. As a game with no actual repercussions for victory or failure, the scenarios played out by imaginative groups tend to be overly dramatic, and possibly more about the fun of posturing than the actual consequences of their extreme actions.

In 1964, *The Avalon Hill General* was a fan zine responsible for helping players locate one another in order to enjoy and partake in play-by-mail games of *Diplomacy*. Unlike games like chess that require only two players and consist of a relatively concise rule-set, *Diplomacy* was considerably more complex, requiring seven players for a balanced match and several pages of rules for the game. For this reason, players formed communities of play that defied traditional geographic sensibilities so as to engage in moments of deep play with other hobbyists who were engaged at a similar level. These communities, from as early as 1963⁶¹ borrowed the postal infrastructure of hobby science-fiction magazines in order to maintain an ethic of community publishing and play. This infrastructure required that players engage in a mode of thrifty economic exchange in order to substantiate their habits of play.

The fundamentals of building a hobby community were not foreign to its participants. In a column for *The Avalon Hill General* entitled “Avalon Hill Philosophy – Part 26,” Len Lakofka explains the integral relationship between print publications, brick and mortar hobby stores, and player communities:

The General was the first step in creating a broadly based permanent market of “hard core” wargamers and a means via which persons, interested in the hobby,

⁶¹ See Appendix A for a chronological chart of *Diplomacy* zine growth.

could contact one another. Of course, I refer to the “opponents wanted” column in this magazine.

It was this unique innovation that began the process of tying together the various segments and factions of wargaming aficionados. The merging of purposes and interests were fostered by the large number of wargaming clubs that sprang up around the country. Their interest, while primarily in Avalon Hill games, also lapsed into the areas of miniatures, game design and military history.⁶²

It was by facilitating a forum for the circulation of postal addresses of players interested in participating and hosting communities of play that *The General* drastically increased the degree to which the hobby was able to manage a sense of dynamic outreach.

Furthermore, because many of these players began participating in amateur publishing networks, their interests and writing were not contingent on the products that Avalon Hill sponsored and published. In this sense, the seeds planted by the “Opponents Wanted” infrastructure flourished in creativity as they were not tied to Avalon Hill’s commercial interests. Lakofka continues the article by describing how this way of publishing could be expanded to encompass the forming of a new mode of community hosted by the IFW (International Federation of Wargamers), a play-by-mail *Diplomacy* group:

It is the informing of this huge faction of potential wargamers that we must address ourselves. To this end, the IFW is starting a project which, it hopes, will accomplish this very task. They wish to make available, first in major metropolitan areas, then on a statewide basis, lists of local clubs, gamers who like

⁶² Len Lakofka, “Avalon Hill Philosophy – Part 26,” *The Avalon Hill General* 7, no. 6, (Baltimore, MD: The Avalon Hill Company, 1971) 2.

to play ftf [face-to-face] games on a regular basis, conventions, and regular wargaming meetings. These lists would be compiled and updated every 3-6 months and made available to local hobby dealers, and any wargamer who would wish them. Thus, when you went to your local hobby store, he could give you a list of persons in your area with whom you could play the game you just bought, or places you could go for AH [Avalon Hill] gaming and miniatures play in your area. The list would give information on how to obtain lists from other locals, so that if you traveled you would know where other wargamers could be found. Such a project benefits everyone! The dealer, when he tries to sell a game or miniatures, is often stymied by the objection "...but I have no one to play the game with." If he starts to play the game he will, very likely, be introduced into other aspects of wargaming by the people he meets. Thus hobby clubs, of all types, will find a new member for their products and magazines – to say nothing of the dealer who can now sell this same person miniatures, other games, and books on all aspects of wargaming and associated fields.

Lakofka proposes here, in 1971, that establishing and embedding player lists into an infrastructure of brick-and-mortar stores is of the utmost importance if the hobby is to be cultivated. These lists would match players with others of similar interests in their locales. Similar to how postal lists cultivated an engagement between players on the national level, Lakofka proposes a way to encourage this in local communities through the infrastructure of brick-and-mortar stores and hobby zines.

From Lakofka's article we can understand two things in particular. First, the necessity of other people and community for the livelihood of the hobby, and second, a

kinship between hobbyist and publisher which situates fans in a relationship that is, in fact, comfortably engaged in a dialogue with publishing companies like Avalon Hill. It is my opinion that the affective bonds produced by interested and engaged hobbyists were not only powerful enough to sustain the publishing costs of magazines like *The Avalon Hill General*, but they were also able to sustain hobby publications that were produced specifically as vehicles of play for isolated and interested hobbyists. The first of these zines, *Graustark* (1963),⁶³ produced by John Boardman, began with an article that outlined the rules and protocols of play-by-mail postal *Diplomacy*.⁶⁴

A number of rules were established for the moderation and implementation of postal Diplomacy, and a handful dealt explicitly with the moderation of game fees. As was stipulated, “The entry fee for a game will be \$1, payable to the Umpire. The Umpire is obligated to report to the player after every move on the outcome of that move.”⁶⁵ This point is followed by another that is less explicit in its economic frame of reference, but that holds economic implications, nonetheless: “All correspondence relating to the game, among players or between players and the Umpire, shall be by first-class mail.”⁶⁶ Finally, Boardman describes the costs of game rules. He suggests that players procure a copy of

⁶³ The first issue of *Graustark* predates the first issue of *The Avalon Hill General* by exactly one year. Published in May 1963, the first issue of *Graustark* was sent to a small contingent of readers (mostly the audience of the science-fiction zine *Knowable*) with the explicit goal of forming a community around *Diplomacy*. Many of the players interested in play-by-mail *Diplomacy* belonged to the East Paterson, NJ *Diplomacy* club. Their addresses, along with the addresses of three other players (one in New York and two in California) formed an early contingent of twelve players. After a considerable amount of time, the subscription base of *Graustark* grew, but it was from this cohort that the wargaming hobby found its humble beginning.

⁶⁴ Not all zines would publish these protocols, but if they were published they would be included in the first issue where a game’s ground rules were established.

⁶⁵ John Boardman, *Graustark 1*, 1963, 1.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

the game at their local department store for about seven dollars and fifty cents, but offers to send photocopies of the rulebook to interested players for one dollar, and copies of maps for four cents apiece. The cost of a game included enough issues of a central newsletter that included player moves and press releases as group correspondence to one another.

By the third issue of *Graustark*, Boardman had changed his fee structure. Instead of charging players on a per-game basis, he switched the model to a ten issue “subscription basis.” Boardman’s reframing of fees as by-issue as opposed to by-game shows how the affective bonds that primed hobbyists to participate on a postal level played an instrumental role in encouraging the community’s development. The shift toward a quantifiable subscription fee explains how the materiality of print became a necessary consideration for the ultimate dissemination and reproduction of the zine. These considerations would ultimately stabilize as a set of learned cultural techniques which circulated around participation in the hobby. To participate in an amateur publishing association meant to acknowledge the importance for publishers to acquire sources of funding. There was also an acknowledgement that particular kinds of labor such as publishing, refereeing, and—in Calhammer’s case—“inventing” the game should be compensated by some means, such as a discount or a free subscription.⁶⁷

Some zines were more transparent in the ways that they presented their publishing models. For instance, *Diplomacy Review*, the flagship publication for the International

⁶⁷ Although most *Graustark* readers were charged to participate in the play-by-mail scene, Alan Calhammer, the inventor of *Diplomacy*, was granted a free subscription. Technically, subscription fees were changed in the second issue where ADD FIRST NAME Boardman included the clause, “The Umpire reserves the right to make further assessments upon the players if the game becomes protracted, for the purposes of covering printing and postal costs.” See John Boardman, *Graustark* 2, 1963, 1.

Diplomacy Association, was particularly upfront about their expenses. The second issue of *Diplomacy Review* was published by Larry Peery⁶⁸ and he was careful to put a summary of all financial matters in the introduction.⁶⁹ He reported that the executive council of the zine had voted to increase funding for the journal by thirty dollars annually, which led to a price hike in subscription fees of two dollars each to cover postage fees. In this column, Peery also requested a further increase in funding to cover the cost of both assembling and copying zines. He noted that having someone on staff, which would incur further costs, would benefit the community at large by helping the zine to produce more articles.

A snapshot of *Diplomacy Review*'s expenses reveals more about the organization's structure and motives (Figure 1.1).⁷⁰ In the next issue, the treasurer's report housed two major columns: income and expenses. Income totaled one hundred and forty dollars and it included dues, advanced dues, contributions from several key members in the scene, and an enigmatic "commemorative stamp money making project."⁷¹ Expenses, on the other hand, totaled ninety-five dollars and included the cost of elections, a "conciliatory notes fund," and a fund for the magazine. This left a remaining balance of fifty-five dollars, which was ostensibly earmarked for funding future projects. From the treasurer's reports we can see that *Diplomacy Review* was published on a bi-monthly basis and its zines totaled about ten pages each. For a year's worth of publishing, then, *Diplomacy Review* would have needed to absorb costs for about sixty pages per subscriber (ten pages an issue, and six issues a year), and they

⁶⁸ For more on Peery, please see chapter four.

⁶⁹ Larry Peery, *Diplomacy Review* 2, 1972, 2.

⁷⁰ Walter Buchanan, "Another Treasurer's Report," *Diplomacy Review* 2, 1972, 8.

⁷¹ Walter Buchanan, "Another Treasurer's Report," *Diplomacy Review* 3, 1972, 6-7.

would have also had to purchase an eight cent stamp for each issue. It can be deduced from this data that the annual publishing costs (estimated at fifty-five dollars a year in the treasurer's report), were used only to make ends meet. It was more important for the organization to sustain itself than to turn a profit.

ANOTHER TREASURER'S REPORT

The financial position of IDA is still improving although membership seems to be leveling off. As of 9 October, we stand financially as follows:

Income

Dues-	\$110.00
Advance Dues-	2.00
Contributions:	
Birsan	5.00
Anonymous	10.00
Buchanan	10.00
Boyer	10.00
Stamp Project-	3.00
	<u>\$140.00</u>

Expenses

Elections (last spring)	\$35.00
<u>Conciliatory Notes Fund</u>	5.00
<u>Diplomacy Review Fund</u>	55.00
	<u>\$95.00</u>

Balance: \$55.00
(cont. next page)

Figure 1.1 - The International Diplomacy Association's Treasurer's report. Walter Buchanan, "Another Treasurer's Report," *Diplomacy Review*, 1972, 8.

Regarding the overall infrastructure of the community at the time, it should be clear that it was one of utility. Given that players had no other opportunities to communicate about their hobby, it was absolutely essential that they work together in an effort to subsidize weighty production fees. This example exemplifies the economic interest hobbyists had in the ludic imagination. At that time, the cost of subscribing to an alternative publishing association was taken for granted in many ways by its participants. Rarely did members of these fan communities make comparisons to more commercial magazines, such as *The Avalon Hill General*. Instead, members submitted their dues, comfortable with the understanding that their work supported an affiliation in which they were personally interested and invested. They recognized that contributing to an alternative publishing association was a semi-commercial venture as it reflected the interests of the community and not a corporation. However, as this dissertation will return to in Chapter 5, these ideals become contested when TSR Hobbies finds popular success with *Dungeons & Dragons*, which is discussed next.

Dungeons & Dragons

Role-playing games at the RAND Corporation and within the play-by-mail *Diplomacy* community show how varied the ways that play and games were imagined throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Despite the variety of perspectives and practices that encompass the ludic imagination, the particulars of ludic subjectivity find their final articulation in the massively influential role-playing game, *Dungeons & Dragons* (1974). Although the company that designed the game, Tactical Studies Rules Hobbies (TSR

Hobbies), also began by publishing a fanzine (*The Domesday Book*), the success of *Dungeons & Dragons* led to a series of shifting company policies that ultimately set them apart from other similar fan publishing syndicates, such as *Graustark* (explained in the prior section). These shifts in policy reflected a politics aligned with the quantitative and oppositional rationality of ludic subjectivity, and concretely related to the company's struggle to define itself as a corporation in contrast to a community, which required that they succumb to a populist politics of representation (including racist, sexist, and homophobic rules), and an oppositional stance on intellectual property. Although I will deal more concretely with these matters in Chapter 6, this section intends to orient readers to how TSR Hobbies is related to the *Diplomacy* fan community. In doing so, it will attempt to explain how TSR Hobbies is implicated within the cultural dissemination of ludic subjectivity as evidenced by *Dungeons & Dragons* commercial success.

It is important to show how TSR Hobbies, the company that originally produced *Dungeons & Dragons*, grew out of the grassroots infrastructure of *Diplomacy* zines. Both communities were affiliated with the International Federation of Wargamers (IFW), a fanzine publishing syndicate responsible for rules and ordinances that would be respected across all play-by-mail communities. TSR Hobbies was engineered by members of a branch of the IFW known as the Castle and Crusades Society, whose newsletter *The Domesday Book* was published in the early 1970s as a means of marketing games such as *Chainmail*, a tactical wargame which was the immediate predecessor of *Dungeons & Dragons*.⁷²

⁷² According to Jon Peterson in his book *Playing at the World*.

The Domesday Book (1970) was a publication with a notably playful tone. The first page contains a list of officers sorted hierarchically by rank in the organization. Rob Kuntz is listed as “King (Chief Executive),” Gary Gygax is listed as “Steward (Asst. Exec.),” Chris Schleicer is the “Chief Scrivener (Ed. / Publ.),” Terry Kuntz is listed as the “Chamberlain (Treasurer),” William Linden is the “Lord Prince of Arms (Heraldry),” Dave Areneson is the “Pursuivant of Arms (Asst. Herald),” Russel Tulp is the “Justicar (PBM Judge),” and finally H. Axel Krigsman, Jr. is listed as the “Sheriff (Game master for ‘Crusadomacy’).”⁷³ Aside from the editorial hierarchy, the publication also featured a membership list on the back that also sorted subscribers (members) according to rank and title. It was from this rife and playful community of the Castle and Crusades Society that *Chainmail*, the precursor to *Dungeons & Dragons*, was developed.

TSR Hobbies grew out of Gygax’s interest in publishing games that he had written with fellow member of the Castle and Crusades Society, Dave Arneson, and was founded in 1973 with another friend, Dan Kaye. After Kaye’s early death in 1975, the company was reorganized when Brian Blume purchased Dan Kaye’s shares. Together, Blume and Gygax founded the company’s newsletter, *The Strategic Review*, which was dedicated to both wargames and role-playing games.

The Strategic Review ran for about a year and consisted of seven issues (1975-1976). In the first issue, Gygax describes the new publication’s ties to the Castle and Crusade Society:

Some readers will harken back to the time when there was a Castle and Crusade Society, originated by the Lake Geneva Tactical Studies Association and jointly

⁷³ Rob Kuntz, *The Domesday Book*, 1970, The Ray Browne Popular Culture Archive, 2.

sponsored by it and the now-defunct IFW. As the LGTSA was instrumental in preparing the final version of CHAINMAIL, it is quite natural that your editor should discuss those rules in his column.⁷⁴

Overall, *The Strategic Review* was somewhat of a hybrid publication between a community published zine and a commercial publication, and consisted of articles that delved into topics that were of interest to its audience of predominantly white, male, hobbyists. In this sense, the magazine functioned very much like a grassroots zine where articles were submitted by readers for other readers. Though the focus of *The Strategic Review* was to provide articles on products that TSR kept in its product line, the magazine was also open to articles that focused on products released by other companies. Aside from the odd piece of short fiction, such as Jim Hayes' "What Price Gold & Glory,"⁷⁵ those who published in *The Strategic Review* published exclusively on topics that were supplementary to products published by TSR Hobbies. Fiction such as Hayes' story was of the "swords and sorcery" genre of fiction and could easily be related to one of TSR Hobbies' fantastic worlds as well.

Following the success of *The Strategic Review*, in April 1976, TSR Hobbies began publishing *The Dragon*, releasing its first issue only two months after *The Strategic Review's* last in June. *The Dragon* intended to do more than just publish articles on products sold by TSR Hobbies. It was intended as a publication that would help to unite a previously fragmented discourse on role-playing, as role-playing had previously been a topic only occasionally taken on by *Diplomacy* zines. From editor Tim Kask's

⁷⁴ Gary Gygax, "Castle & Crusade," *The Strategic Review* 3, 1975, 3. To Read this Article see Appendix D: *The Strategic Review Volume 1, Number 4*.

⁷⁵ Jim Hayes, "What Price Fortune and Glory," *The Strategic Review* 2, no.2, 1976, 9-10. To read this article see Appendix D: *The Strategic Review Volume 2, Number 2*.

introduction, “[Our] mission is to publish the best magazine devoted to Sword & Sorcery, Fantasy, Science Fiction and Role-playing gaming.”⁷⁶ The first issue was considerably more diverse than any issue of *The Strategic Review*. It contained one short story, one article about sword and sorcery pulp novels, an essay on games in the Hyborian Age line, and a plug for a *Diplomacy* tournament hosted in *The Dragon*’s sister publication, *Little Wars*.⁷⁷ This explosion of diversity in content had much to do with *The Dragon*’s greater audience and distribution, but also much to do with TSR Hobbies’ strong reputation in the community at the time. There were also many columns that became regular features of the magazine targeted at people specifically interested in the role-playing hobby, such as reviews of *Dungeons & Dragons* fanzines, articles that reviewed new game releases, and, eventually, articles that delved into role-playing gaming on home computers.⁷⁸

Even though *The Dragon* would undergo many changes over the course of its publication (1976 to present), it ultimately worked to promote the products of TSR Hobbies while simultaneously claiming to be the field’s leading resource on role-playing. In this way, *The Dragon* became an apparatus of gatekeeping that was able to stabilize the hobby much in the same way that *The Avalon Hill General* worked to stabilize hobby *Diplomacy* games. But, unlike *Diplomacy*, *Dungeons & Dragons* proved difficult to play-by-mail, and so there was less of a need for fan publications in its community. In this sense, *The Dragon* proved to have more heft in the community, as there was less competition from independent publishers, thus providing a clearer point of focus for

⁷⁶ Tim Kask, “Dragon Rumbles,” *The Dragon* 3, 1976, 3. To read this article, please see Appendix D: *The Dragon* 3.

⁷⁷ *Little Wars* was the publication that continued the articles on general wargaming after *The Strategic Review*.

⁷⁸ These points are derived from a cursory browse of the articles in the first five issues of *The Dragon* published in 1976 and 1977.

those *Dungeons & Dragons* hobbyists than *The Avalon Hill General* had for *Diplomacy* hobbyists.

Although they served similar purposes, another key distinction between *The Avalon Hill General* and *The Dragon* was that *The Dragon* was published by TSR Hobbies, a unique amateur press association in that it not only produced fanzines, but also published their own games, namely, *Dungeons & Dragons*. *Dungeons & Dragons* was a revision to a fantasy rule-set authored by Gary Gygax and Jeff Perren entitled *Tactics II: Chainmail* (1971). *Dungeons & Dragons* was published through TSR Hobbies⁷⁹ in 1974, and had an initial print run of only 1,000 hand-assembled copies,⁸⁰ but was soon publishing at exponentially increasing rates—by November 1975, 25,000 copies constituted the fourth printing of the game. The success of *Dungeons & Dragons* was unprecedented for a hobby publishing association at the time and the company's prodigious success would leave its mark on the gaming industry for years to come.

Before *Dungeons & Dragons* rose to prominence, however, Gary Gygax was notorious in the IFW in the late 1960s for *Chainmail*, an implementation of both Ancient and Medieval-era rules to the World War II-era game *Tactics II*.⁸¹ Amongst wargamers, *Chainmail* was a controversial game because it strayed from several genre tropes

⁷⁹ As noted on page 45, the “TSR” in TSR Hobbies stands for Tactical Studies Rules. The company was originally owned and founded by Gary Gygax and Don Kaye in 1973, at which point it was named only TSR. After Kaye's death, Gygax partnered with Brian Blume, whose father, Melvin Blume, bought out Kaye's shares of the company. It was at this time that TSR was rechristened TSR Hobbies.

⁸⁰ “Original D&D Set,” *Aceum.com*, accessed January 30, 2015, <http://www.aceum.com/ddindexes/setpages/original.html>.

⁸¹ Jon Peterson, *Playing at the World: A History of Simulating Wars, People, and Fantastic Adventures*, (San Diego, CA: Unreason Press, 2012), 27.

standard in wargames, including *Tactics II*.⁸² Even though it strayed from the genre, *Chainmail* was still a wargame⁸³ at its core. Players simply assumed the role of a general, but at this point, were not expected to stage a performance in character over the course of the game. Player action was also completely limited to the interaction and potential of combat between the miniatures on the board.

The innovation of role-playing—of one player performing the role of a single character—came later in 1971 when Dave Arneson ran a series of *Chainmail* campaigns called “Escape from Castle Blackmoor” where players were expected to take on the roles of nobles, commanding several resources and playing roles which would evolve and change as the campaign progressed. Historian Jon Peterson argues that this was a radical shift from the way that wargames had previously been imagined, where the focus was

⁸² For example, while players were in charge of armies in *Chainmail*, the scale of the units that they commanded increased from the standard military scale—where one unit generally equaled ten armies—as implemented in archetypical games like *Tactics II*. Individual heroes were represented in *Chainmail* through individual units, even though it had previously been taboo in representations of wargames that purported to strive for historical accuracy. Most controversial of all was the inclusion of magic. Some wargamers were uncomfortable with the idea that an entire battalion of troops could be transformed into a legion of frogs with the right spell. For more on this, see Peterson, 45.

⁸³ Wargames have a long history as being used as instruments of officer training in the theater of war. Historian Philipp von Hilger has written a relatively robust chronicle of these games, entitled *War Games: A History of War on Paper*, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2012). Within it he explains how the well-known wargame *Kriegspiel* was developed in 19th century Germany as a way to train officers in military tactics. While the original *Kriegspiel* was played in a sandbox with toy soldiers, it was later modified and sold as a consumer rule-set by H.G. Wells in 1913 with the epithet, “Little Wars: a game for boys from twelve years of age to one hundred and fifty and for that more intelligent sort of girl who likes boys’ games and books.” As this dissertation will later show, even fifty years after Wells’ game, the communities which would play and design these games would still have a considerable amount of trouble untangling their sexist attitudes from a desire to play through an authentic and accurate reproduction of the past.

less on character and more on overall strategy.⁸⁴ In this *Chainmail* campaign, the decisions that players made for their characters had long-lasting and meaningful consequences for the game world. Until this point, wargames—which were typically played with miniature figures—typically ran over a few hours in a single evening. After Arneson’s “Escape From Castle Blackmoor” campaign, however, games began to take place over several evenings, and the game’s narrative would be a continuous thread that pulled the various scenarios together. Game referees began to keep a record of their world’s own histories, histories which players built with their actions from one game to the next. It was at this moment that a somewhat conservative perspective on simulation—that simulations should endeavor to replicate an authentic reality—was modified to reflect more than just the simulation of war within the game. And, although many of *Chainmail*’s mechanics may still ultimately relate to warfare (given the sophistication of standard wargame mechanics in these communities), after *Chainmail* (1971)—as this dissertation will argue—games could be seen in the community discourse as holding the potential to simulate other things as well, including society, culture, and ethics.

After the innovations of *Chainmail*, *Dungeons & Dragons* built freedom and flexibility into its rule-set.⁸⁵ In a game of *Dungeons & Dragons*, players are unrestricted in their actions. For the most part, their characters can do whatever they like, provided that it can be reasonably justified through the game mechanics relating to their physical

⁸⁴ This dissertation will offer a counterpoint to this perspective in chapter three, where it will argue that the play-by-mail *Diplomacy* communities in which Gygax and Arneson participated had been maintaining a limited sense of character and narrative consistency long before Arneson’s “Escape from Castle Blackmoor Campaign.” Peterson, 64.

⁸⁵ This section will focus on the rules of *Dungeons & Dragons*, which have been more or less unaltered since the game’s first edition. Although many of the specific mechanics have changed, the game’s overall flow and iconic structure remain the same.

composition. In the game, a character's physical makeup is governed by a set of six statistics: strength, dexterity, intelligence, wisdom, constitution, and charisma (See Figure 1.2).⁸⁶ The game rules specify a method for how these attributes can be tested and how to govern the limits of player action. In this way, although the game purports to offer players free and unrestricted action, characters are limited by the quantitative rules that are valued as fundamental to the game.

Charisma is a combination of appearance, personality, and so forth. Its primary function is to determine how many hirelings of unusual nature a character can attract. This is not to say that he cannot hire men-at-arms and employ mercenaries, but the charisma function will affect loyalty of even these men. Players will, in all probability, seek to hire Fighting-Men, Magic-Users, and/or Clerics in order to strengthen their roles in the campaign. A player-character can employ only as many as indicated by his charisma score:

<u>Charisma Score</u>	<u>Maximum # Hirelings</u>	<u>Loyalty Base</u>
3-4	1	- 2
5-6	2	- 1
7-9	3	
10-12	4	
13-15	5	+ 1
16-17	6	+ 2
18	12	+ 4

In addition the charisma score is usable to decide such things as whether or not a witch capturing a player will turn him into a swine or keep him enchanted as a lover.

Finally, the charisma will aid a character in attracting various monsters to his service.

Figure 1.2 - Defining Charisma. Taken from Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson, *Men & Magic*, (Lake Geneva, WI: TSR Hobbies, 1978), 11.

After characters have been determined, players quest together in a party that faces a series of encounters devised by the referee. Although the game designers would later

⁸⁶ Each character's statistics are generated by rolling three six-sided dice. The range of these statistics varies from 3 to 18, and there are many charts governing the ways that these statistics should be interpreted and understood (Figure 1.2). Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson, *Men & Magic*, in *Dungeons & Dragons: Rules for Fantastic Medieval Wargames Campaigns Playable with Paper and Pencil and Miniature Figures* 1st Edition, (Lake Geneva, WI: Tactical Studies Rules, 1978/74), 10-11.

sell pre-written adventures, or modules, referees commonly scripted their own.⁸⁷ The rules from the game manuals were iteratively tested and house-ruled by player groups as the community consumed them.⁸⁸ Referees often spent a week or more imagining the scope of the adventure, taking time to map out the spaces, encounters, and denizens of the world.⁸⁹ Although these adventures were scripted, more often than not, they relied on the background information presented in the game system's manuals and modules for environmental cues and ambience. Even though the referee would often attempt to impose some semblance of a plot arc, players were allowed to set their own goals for the adventure. Notably, there is no concrete win condition in *Dungeons & Dragons*, and play often continues on a weekly basis. Characters may live for years at a time, or for less than a day, only to be remade (or *rerolled*, as character statistics are generated by rolling dice) after they are killed within the game. The ability of *Dungeons & Dragons* to modulate between scripted and unscripted adventure creates the illusion that the worlds of the game are more open than they really are. In truth, the choices offered by the open structure of *Dungeons & Dragons* and other role-playing games distract from the game's singular truth—that the supposedly living, breathing, world of the game is simply algorithms and statistics.

⁸⁷ *Greyhawk*, a module in which players explore a dungeon underneath a castle, was the first of these pre-written modules. Gary Gygax and Robert Kuntz, *Greyhawk: Supplement I*, in *Dungeons & Dragons: Rules for Fantastic Medieval Wargames Campaigns Playable with Paper and Pencil and Miniature Figures* 1st Edition, (Lake Geneva, WI: Tactical Studies Rules, 1975).

⁸⁸ These discussions about rules and house rules were frequently held in either TSR Hobbies' publication *The Dragon*, but were also held in many of the community fanzines such as *Alarums & Excursions*, or *The Wild Hunt*.

⁸⁹ Gary L. Fine has presented an excellent account of these practices in his book *Shared Fantasy: Role-Playing Games as Social Worlds*, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 72.

The key mechanics and rules governing character creation, progression, and development have been replicated in both tabletop and computer games since the game's initial release in 1974.⁹⁰ The impact of *Dungeons & Dragons* on and upon popular culture cannot be underestimated. *Dungeons & Dragons* has been prominently featured as a signifier of geek culture in film and television shows such as *The Guild*, *Futurama*, *Freaks and Geeks*, *Big Bang Theory*, *Community*, *Role Models*, and *E.T.* (from the 1980s to the present)—all significant texts within the mass media. *Dungeons & Dragons* is also characterized by the multitude of trans-media products manufactured by TSR Hobbies, and later Wizards of the Coast (who purchased TSR Hobbies in 1997), in an effort to draw publicity to the game. These products included a series of fourteen *Dungeons & Dragons*-branded computer games (1980-2011), several hundred novels (including a handful of *New York Times* bestselling novels), a comic, a television cartoon, a feature-length live action movie (with a national release and distribution), and a feature-length direct-to-video reimagining of one of its bestselling novels. Even in 2015, fifty-one years since its original release, *Dungeons & Dragons* remains a flagship product of Wizards of the Coast, and is prominently listed on the front page of their website. As of 2014, work is being done by The Gary Gygax Memorial Fund to erect a bust of Gygax within a tower in Donian Park at Lake Geneva, WI, a point that epitomizes the game's profound legacy and cultural influence.⁹¹

⁹⁰ For an overview of this disseminatory process, please see Michael Tresca, *The Evolution of Fantasy Role-Playing Games*, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2011).

⁹¹ Chris Schultz "Work on Gygax memorial slowed, but not stopped," *Lakegenevanews.net*, December 12, 2014, <http://www.lakegenevanews.net/Articles-Lake-Geneva-News-i-2014-12-04-255143.114135-Work-on-Gygax-memorial-slowed-but-not-stopped.html>.

We can see in *Dungeons & Dragons* the popularity of game mechanics that quantify and set all facets of life against one another in opposition. The enormous commercial success of *Dungeons & Dragons* exemplifies the social impact of ludic subjectivity. This chapter has argued that role-playing games have held several definitions between the years 1954 and 1984. Some of these definitions saw role-playing games as integral to understanding the emotional and affective states of military strategists (as in the case of *The Cold War Game*), while others construed them as a medium through which gaming communities could relate to one another through the fiction of imaginary worlds (as in the case of *Diplomacy*). Another definition—what this dissertation terms ludic subjectivity—emerges as a result of the valorization of games and game mechanics over forms of play exemplified by the role-playing game *Dungeons & Dragons*. The emergence of ludic subjectivity can be seen by observing how the techniques of role-playing occupy a historically contingent relationship with games and game theory. The genealogical descent of role-playing within the ludic imagination can be tracked across three eras: First, in the 1950s, the experiments in role-playing and game theory at the RAND Corporation show an initial spit between game theory and role-playing. Second, as this relationship develops in the 1960s, *Diplomacy* players negotiate the boundaries of the two concepts. As will be detailed in Chapters 4 and 5, games like play-by-mail *Diplomacy* allowed players the ability to imagine themselves in new networked communities, where they would actively discuss and define the limits of what makes for a fun game. Third, *Dungeons & Dragons*, which develops within the *Diplomacy* community over the course of the 1970s, epitomizes the emergence of ludic subjectivity in how role-playing comes to be defined through a set of dominantly

quantitative and algorithmic mechanics. The next chapter will review literature on digital media, games, and play, to help better articulate the theoretical and social problems for which the ludic imagination has implications.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

For the past twenty years the game studies field has been overwhelmingly concerned with understanding either the mechanics of games or player behavior.⁹² My theory of the ludic imagination provides a framework for understanding the various ways that games are imagined, hence bridging previously separate dialogues about community and code. The ludic imagination intends to intervene in these dialogues by providing a theory for understanding how the mechanics of games produce player subjectivity. It helps to navigate polemical arguments in game studies that read games either as tools for social transformation or leisure activities with questionable cultural value. By examining the discourse of role-playing within the ludic imagination, we can take further steps toward questioning many of the dominant narratives that emerge around the topic within the field of game studies.

This chapter fleshes out a set of theoretical implications to complement the historical background on the ludic imagination that was explained in the prior chapter. Specifically, this chapter contends that ludic subjectivity is a key problematic for game studies scholars to consider in their work because it gives a name to the often unspoken and unrealized ways that military ideology affect player behavior. Whereas Chapter 1 established why game theory stands as a dominant strategy for negotiating the mathematical structures that are key to both games and digital media, this chapter aims to establish a rationale for why such a study will help contribute toward a better

⁹² The scholars participating in these conversations are termed “proceduralists” by play scholar Miguel Sicart in his essay “Against Procedurality.” Here, Sicart suggests that although these conversations have been productive for the field of game studies in many ways, they reduce games and gaming to a problematically rule-based phenomenon. Miguel Sicart, “Against Procedurality,” *Game Studies* 11, no. 3, (2011) paragraph 31.

understanding of the forms of domination that mathematical structures produce. It shows how such a framework could be beneficial to studies that struggle to connect themes of racism, sexism, and homophobia to games and other digital media. This chapter builds on the work done in Chapter 1 to show how the efficient, reliable, and unifying logic of game theory establishes a discourse around rationality that promotes an understanding of bodies as essentially assemblages of numeric values that can be evaluated and compared to one another. I argue here that these quantitative essentialisms are linked to social discrimination (racist, sexist, and homophobic biases that were articulated within the wargaming community—shown here in Chapters 5 and 6) and unstated community politics (the relationship between these communities and the civil rights movements of the Cold War)—and thus I show how my historical work on the ludic imagination helps to better theorize the under-theorized relationship between community and code.

The chapter begins by showing how the ludic imagination is related to academic literature geared toward understanding the relationship between community and code—i.e. between people and the procedures fundamental to both games and computing. It argues that much of this literature struggles to articulate a critique about how the mathematical and logical framework of code helps to produce racist, sexist, and homophobic discourse. After discussing literature in digital media studies around community and code, this chapter reviews literature in game studies that considers games polemically as either tools of social progress or instruments of leisure. It concludes by arguing that we must take a perspective that acknowledges the plurality of worldviews that games may cultivate within their players, including ludic subjectivity. Ultimately, this chapter shows how theorizing the ludic imagination has the potential to stage an

important intervention in both game studies and digital media studies, where the present literature has struggled to show how algorithms and procedures affect player outlooks, bodies, and worldviews.

Community and Code

Game theory is effective because numbers are easy to compare. For example, in video games bodies are abstracted to represent a set of numerical capacities such as health, strength, speed, armor, or stealth. In these games, character bodies are often compared and contrasted with the bodies of other people, creatures, and machines in the game world. These comparisons can take any number of forms, such as a race where a character's speed is tantamount, or combat where a player compares their strength value to another character's defense value to see if they succeed in reducing that character's health value. Because so much of the action in a computer game relates to the statistical capacities of characters, game theory is a particularly efficient tool of game strategy as it can be used to engineer strategies that can account for the complex mathematical facets of a game. These strategies almost infallibly rely on players identifying and maximizing key capacities, whilst simultaneously neglecting capacities that fail to be as effective.

The aim of this section is to show how literature in digital media has struggled to locate a framework for approaching the representational aspects of computer logic and code in a way that reveals the hegemonic and reductive nature of code. In approaching this problem, this section provides examples from some theorists that have identified the discourse surrounding computational technology as racist, but insists that these conclusions be abstracted to problems of sexism and homophobia as well. This section shows how some bodies have been systematically excluded from the discourse around

digital technology, and relates this exclusion to the oppositional and numerical logic of ludic subjectivity. The ludic subject sees all others in opposition to themselves, the production of difference here is further exaggerated, as character attributes can be understood as statistics that can be strategically apprehended through game theory and then modified to suit a dominant strategic avenue.

Players take on the attitudes of ludic subjects when they are compelled to overcome obstacles in a world where game theory is the most efficient form of strategy. The necessity of game theory as an analytic has been coded into the software and design of games and the ludic subject fails to recognize the degree to which these design essentialisms have influenced their own perception of the world—a perspective that does not see the social value of rituals, emotion, and other “non-rational” forms of sociality. They see both the game world and the real world as a singular truth governed by numeric rationality specifically because game theory is an effective strategy for navigating both.

A common argument in game studies, advanced by theorists such as Espen Aarseth, endeavors to set the study of games apart from a traditional analysis of narrative. He argues that players can uncover a plurality of branching paths and semiotic possibilities in games—beyond those within the auspices of narrative analysis.⁹³ While Aarseth’s approach offers a diverse lens for the interpretation of games (by suggesting that players may find several different narratives in games), it also produces a framework that obscures the devious structures of numerical rationality that are fundamental to all coded games. Games may be interpreted in a variety of different ways, I argue that it is important to recognize that some strategies are valued more highly than others.

⁹³ Aarseth, *Cybertext*, 22.

The question of whether games offer diverse avenues of representation or a singular and problematic narrative is not unique to only game studies. Similar questions have been raised about the history of computing by Tara McPherson. In her essay, “Why Are The Digital Humanities So White?” McPherson draws attention to the white supremacist, and I would argue patriarchal, overtones in the history of computing. She shows how America’s politics of civil reformation in the late 1960s are mirrored in the structures of UNIX⁹⁴ code.⁹⁵ McPherson suggests that the very structures of digital computation may, in fact, work to isolate and contain race. Systemic issues of racism that were once visible in the signage (“whites only”) and language (racial slurs) of early twentieth century America were made invisible (though they remain still pervasive) through regulations and policies which outlawed them. Although the systems built around UNIX may seem to typify diversity, transparency, and representation, they mask a singular system logic that remains hidden to all users, yet known only to an elite class of programmers.⁹⁶ Like UNIX, game theory is another singular logic that has, since the 1960s become the dominant strategy for understanding and approaching games.

The abstract world of numbers resists critique due to its polysemic and utilitarian nature. Perhaps more than any technology, mathematics and numbers resists critique because they are ubiquitous, pragmatic, and universally agreed upon. The deep and problematic integration of calculus and computing is itself the invisible kernel of the

⁹⁴ UNIX is a pervasive operating system in all computing. UNIX is the underlying logic for all Apple computers, and PCs running the popular open-source structure, LINUX.

⁹⁵ Tara McPherson, “Why Are the Digital Humanities So White? Or, Rethinking the Histories of Race and Computation,” *Debates in the Digital Humanities*, edited by Matthew K. Gold, (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), paragraph 5-6.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, paragraph 31.

information industry, and its promises of diversity, transparency, and access allow it to evade critique.

Lisa Nakamura notes that the story of the Internet in popular culture can be told as one which, “tracks its continuing discourse of color-blindness in terms of access, user experience, and content.”⁹⁷ Because digital technologies continue to improve and produce happy, contented users, they are often celebrated for being progressive, diverse, and inclusive. These positive discourses around digital technology fundamentally mask the elephant in the room: that the Internet, video games, and many other digital technologies are the offshoots of the American military-industrial complex. Although some game studies theorists, such as MacKenzie Wark, Nick Dyer-Witherford, and Patrick Crogan have endeavored to make the relationship between games and the military clear, their efforts have been largely overshadowed by discourses that consider games as either machines of progress or leisure commodities.

In relating a textual analysis of some core *Dungeons & Dragons* manuals, critical studies scholar, Matthew Chrulow considers the game from the perspective of its designers. He argues, mainly, that the design of *Dungeons & Dragons* reflects the bureaucratic apparatus of late twentieth-century capitalism, which fosters, specifically, a Nietzschean will-to-power within its players through the mechanic of “leveling up.” He says that by mastering the game’s rules, and indeed the game’s “natural” environment, players “level up”—their characters improve—and this improvement allows players to

⁹⁷ Lisa Nakamura, *Digitizing Race: Visual Cultures of the Internet*, (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 4.

experience a sense of in-game agency.⁹⁸ When characters improve in skill, more options become available to players (agency), and this is reflected in an overall mastery, or taming, of the “wilds” or wilderness. Chrulew’s insights, however, have a way of freezing out the human from practices of gaming and play that are actually quite detailed and nuanced. For this reason, we must ask the question: has *Dungeons & Dragons* produced players with related subjectivities?

Jon Peterson’s work offers some important first steps toward answering this question.⁹⁹ The rules of *Dungeons & Dragons* were co-created by both TSR Hobbies and members of what I term the wargaming underground (see Chapter 1). Because these hobby creators were especially prolific in their work, an empirical or historical approach toward understanding these player subjectivities could have been taken. Instead, Chrulew’s analysis is limited to the text of the third edition core *Dungeons & Dragons* rulebooks,¹⁰⁰ which were released in the late 1990s. Though this limitation does not necessarily undermine his greater theoretical points about the subjectivities that *Dungeons & Dragons* is prone to produce (players who seek mastery over their

⁹⁸ Matthew Chrulew, “Masters of the Wild: Animals and the Environment in *Dungeons & Dragons*,” *Concentric: Literary and Cultural Studies* 32, no.1 (2006): 135-68.

⁹⁹ C.f. Peterson, *Playing at the World*.

¹⁰⁰ Many mechanics and rules had changed by the time Wizards of the Coast had introduced their third edition ruleset. The brand *Dungeons & Dragons*, had just been purchased by Wizards of the Coast from TSR Inc. and was amidst a revival devised to broaden the game’s core audience as well as introduce it to a new generation of gamers. Many of the game’s rules had been revised and altered, and many of these decisions reflect a corporate recognition that some old rules regarding the race, class, and gender of characters may have been alienating to some players. For instance, specialized rules regarding the physiology and abilities of female characters had been modified as well as an in game “glass-ceiling” for characters of alternate races. Elves, dwarves, gnomes, and halflings had once been subject to restrictions that prohibited their level progression beyond a certain point.

environments), it does offer a rationale for further research on the earlier cultures and communities of the game.

Another thing to glean from Chrulew's study is that the degree to which players seek to master the game and their environments is symptomatic of the degree to which game theory has pervaded our society. There is a likeness between the mastery of statistics, be them within the imagined and fantastic worlds of a game, or in a simulation designed to reproduce and emulate processes in the real world. Chrulew even notes this likeness, though he doesn't go so far as to explicitly name game theory as a culprit:

FRPs [Fantasy Role Playing Games] give us a unique snapshot of notions of humanity, monstrosity, and animality in contemporary (capitalist and postcolonial) "Western" culture, and also provoke interesting questions regarding environmental and posthumanist theory. In FRPs, the environment and the numerous creatures that inhabit it function similarly to the other cultural materials as fantastic challenges to be overcome by the characters. Moreover, they are defined and quantified according to the game mechanics in methods that reflect and fetishize the technocratic operative modes of late capitalist societies; the same modes by which the "environment" is administered and regulated.¹⁰¹

Chrulew's analysis helps to show how the role-playing genre lies at the boundary of the known and unknown, a fleeting synecdoche, which bespeaks the depth of the cultural system in which its players are embedded. When Chrulew explains how monsters exist in role-playing games, as "wild" obstacles for players to overcome, his analysis applies both to the representational characteristics of the role-playing genre, but also to the sense of

¹⁰¹ Chrulew, "Masters of Wild," 136-7.

action and performance embedded within the rules. No two play-sessions (which are performances between players, in a certain way) of *Dungeons & Dragons* are the same, yet all rely on the same statistical apparatus to function, and in doing so reveal the degree to which the logic of game theory is integrated into the game's strategy. The economic logic which drives some people to maximize their profits and minimize their losses in the real world are replicated and reinscribed within the game mechanics that govern *Dungeons & Dragons*.¹⁰² We must recognize how ludic subjectivity is produced through approaches players must take when playing *Dungeons & Dragons*, and take into account its positive and negative impact upon how we relate to and understand the world. Following this line of argument it is clear that ludic subjectivity has become pervasive due to the efficacy of game theory as an approach to problem solving. But its efficacy has made it a somewhat hegemonic approach to problem solving that is considered both rational and invisible within the communities that are trained to reason with it. The dual pervasiveness and invisibility of ludic subjectivity is related to the discourse around games as leisure. Because games are often considered mere leisure, their manifold affects on individuals and society are ignored.

Ludic Discourse

Games have entered many avenues of discourse in the twentieth century; they are characterized simultaneously as essential and ephemeral, serious and leisurely, and corrupt and creative. These characterizations stem from the discussion that occurs around games in intellectual, amateur, and professional sectors. My goal here is to introduce

three common discourses around games in order to identify a gap in our cultural knowledge of the topic and to justify the present necessity for my theorizing of the ludic imagination. Succinctly put, there is (1) a discourse of games as corruption, (2) a discourse of games as progress, and (3) a discourse of games as leisure, which must be addressed if we are to untangle the pervasiveness of games in twentieth century America. Underlying all of these discourses is one pervasive polemic: that games are either an essential transformative and progressive or that games are inherently ephemeral and meaningless.

Perhaps this polemic stems from the fact that games have been historically entangled within a discourse of creativity and corruption. Where games can inspire new ideas, attitudes, philosophy, and art, they also have the potential to encourage addictive and concerning behavior in individuals. The potential of corruption is why gambling, as noted by sociologist Roger Caillois, is mysteriously absent from Dutch historian Johan Huizinga's classic book, *Homo Ludens (Man the Player)*.¹⁰³ In *Homo Ludens*, Huizinga hoped to disrupt a scientific view of knowledge that viewed rationality as a biological and innate characteristic of people. Huizinga hoped to disrupt this approach to the human by juxtaposing the rational society against the playful society. He argued that without play, society would lack the fundamental ingredients for both myth and ritual, practices that he saw as fundamental to the development of civilization.¹⁰⁴ In his words:

Archaic society, we would say, plays as the child or animal plays. Such playing contains at the outset all the elements proper to play: order, tension, movement, change, solemnity, rhythm, rapture. Only in a later phase of society is play

¹⁰³ Roger Caillois, 4.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 5.

associated with the idea of something to be expressed in and by it, namely, what we would call “life” or “nature”. Then, what was wordless play assumes poetic form. In the form and function of play, itself an independent entity that is senseless and irrational, man’s consciousness that he is imbedded in a sacred order of things finds its first, highest, and holiest expression. Gradually the significance of a sacred act permeates the playing. Ritual grafts itself upon it; but the primary thing is and remains play.¹⁰⁵

In this definition, play is the preconscious act fundamental to ritual, the sacred, or the natural. When unspoken, and therefore unlabeled, play is manifest as a series of behavior patterns common to both humans and animals, listed above as “order, tension, movement, change, solemnity, rhythm, rapture.”¹⁰⁶ For Huizinga, there is fundamental organizing function to play-behavior for cultures and societies. And, while efforts to explain these organizing principles are often cast as ritual or myth, these labels are secondary to the ontological positioning of play, because, according to Huizinga, at least, play is the preconscious driver of ritual activity, which exists at the margins of everyday life; moments of play are fleeting and temporary; they are but a finite trace of play’s significance in organizing subjectivities in our society.

What Huizinga’s approach to play is missing, however, is a theory of games. It follows that if play is a preconscious driver of creativity, then we might inquire as to which forms of creativity have been inspired by games. Caillois has argued that the omission of games was deliberately strategic on Huizinga’s part, because their inclusion

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 17-18.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. 17.

would threaten Huizinga's larger argument about the civility of play.¹⁰⁷ It would call into question those instances in which play is arguably at its most transformative, although potentially hazardous, the moments in which gambling allows for the individual transcendence of the economic order.

Caillois' critique of Huizinga's work led him to organize a set of ideas around play that deal more concretely with its myriad social forms. To start, Caillois includes games in his definition of play as a cultural practice: play is free, separate, uncertain, unproductive, and governed by rules and make-believe.¹⁰⁸ Second, Caillois distinguishes between *paidia*, and *ludus* in order to account for the absence of games in prior definitions. *Paidia* is the play of uncontrolled fantasy, "common to diversion, turbulence, free improvisation, and carefree gaiety."¹⁰⁹ Conversely, *ludus* is controlled-play requiring the exertion of "effort, patience, skill, [and] ingenuity."¹¹⁰ Finally, Caillois proposes a rubric for the classification of games along these poles. He divides games into four categories: competition, chance, simulation, and vertigo. Working within these four categories, he attributes the creative dimensions proposed by Huizinga to competition and simulation only. In contrast, Caillois situates the destructive aspects of play within games of chance and vertigo.¹¹¹

For Caillois, one further distinction must be made in the classification of games. Although unregulated play (*paidia*) lacks the orderly trappings of the game (*ludus*), this does not automatically make play "bad," or dangerous. The danger of both games and

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 5.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 9.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 13.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 13.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 78.

play, for Caillois, lies in practices that are displayed in the most extreme forms of both. Each type of game carries with it a corrupted form as well. In competitive games, corruption is evident when players turn toward violence and trickery; in the games of chance or lottery, a turn to superstition is evidence of corruption; in simulations, corruption takes the form of alienation and split personality; and the highs of vertigo, experienced typically through activities such as skiing and tightrope walking or drinking games, have as their corrupted form the abuse and addiction to drugs and alcohol.

Having gone over the first of the three discourses—corruption—I will now move to the discourse of progress in games. Just as corruption implies a radical transformation of the self, its corollary is progress. Game studies theorists such as Jane McGonigal, Gonzalo Frasca and James Paul Gee have argued that games can be powerfully evocative and potentially life-changing experiences for players.

According to Jane McGonigal, games can save the world from pressing issues like poverty and climate change.¹¹² She argues that if the five million gamers who spend forty-five hours a week playing games instead channeled their energy into games designed to tackle global crises, together they could solve most of the world's problems.¹¹³ Her solution involves encouraging dedicated teams of engineers to produce games that more directly address social issues, as well as convincing players to play these specialized games instead of those generally on the mass market. McGonigal's work inverts the discourse of games as leisure by presenting time spent playing games as

¹¹² Jane McGonigal, *Reality is Broken: Why Games Make Us Better, and How They Can Change the World*, (New York: Penguin, 2011), 14.

¹¹³ McGonigal, 4.

potentially productive, not just time wasted. McGonigal's work typifies much of the enthusiasm around games within socially aware sectors of the industry.

Others in the field of game studies, such as game designer Gonzalo Frasca have argued for the potentials of games to reveal new narratives and branching potentials in stories. Put simply he claims, "you never step in the same game twice,"¹¹⁴ as an explanation for how games differ radically from traditionally linear texts, such as books. User feedback is an integral part of game design and because of this he claims that players can take on increased agency in producing narrative. This, for Frasca, is because games require a different mode of interaction from traditional narrative technologies, and likewise hold different potentials for those who would like to encode and transmit messages in games. Frasca considers "advergimes" (games embedded as advertisements on websites) key to understanding the potentials of games because they are constructed to specifically constructed to help fulfill a need.¹¹⁵ Whereas Frasca is optimistic about the potential for games to carry messages, others such as James Paul Gee extend this thinking to the practical application of games in the classroom.

One of the key texts on games and learning is James Paul Gee's *What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy*, which explores how games have the potential to educate as well as entertain.¹¹⁶ Gee is optimistic about the potentials of games to allow players to better understand concepts within real-world contextual and cultural milieus. David Williamson Shaffer has continued the work of Gee and developed

¹¹⁴ Gonzalo Frasca, "Simulation Versus Narrative: Introduction to Ludology," *The Video Game Theory Reader*, Edited by Mark J. P. Wolf and Bernard Perron, (New York: Routledge, 2003), 227.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 226.

¹¹⁶ James Paul Gee, *What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 10.

a more focused approach to learning that involves developing “epistemic games,” or games that encourage innovative thought.¹¹⁷ He argues that because games model real-world systems so well, they can be used to train students to innovate within these systems.

Game studies scholar Ian Bogost refers to the ability of games to model complex systems as procedural rhetoric, and comes to conclusions similar to those of Frasca, Schaffer and Gee. He claims that games are often discounted as tools of learning because they are wrapped up in a discourse of leisure. He writes:

Play and learning have been segregated from one another in contemporary schooling, further cementing their perceived disparity. Children learn while seated in desks, listening attentively to a teacher or reading from a book. This sort of valid learning is interrupted by recess, where children are allowed to play. Understood in this way, play is a distraction useful only to let off the necessary steam to allow kids (or adults) to get back to the serious business of learning (or working).¹¹⁸

Bogost points toward the cultural connotations surrounding games and play. Because play is read as leisure—purportedly the opposite of work and seriousness—the counter-discourse of games as progress shows why such connotations might be problematic. In this sense, Bogost leads us to the third and most pervasive discourse around games—games as leisure.

¹¹⁷ David Williamson Shaffer, *How Computer Games Help Children Learn*, (New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), 10.

¹¹⁸ Ian Bogost, “The Rhetoric of Video Games,” *The Ecology of Games: Connecting Youth, Games, and Learning*, edited by Katie Salen, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008) 120.

The fact that games are seen as leisurely activities is no secret, but it is perhaps most obviously articulated in the histories that surround games in the twentieth century. Tristan Donovan's book, *Replay: The History of Video Games*, chronicles the history of videogames through over 140 interviews with key figures in the industry. It begins with experiments in military computing, but quickly turns to *Spacewar* and the MIT Tech Model Railroad Club.¹¹⁹ After these two key moments—the military development of computers in the 1950s, and the amateurs who tinkered and developed software for these computers in the 1960s—the book turns back to the realm of the commercial and charts how corporate interests from names such as Atari, Magnavox, Nintendo, Sega, Sony, and Microsoft developed systems and games for a market obsessed with them in the later half of the twentieth century. The focus on the interests of business in this history highlights a sense that it is the work of business toward developing instruments of leisure that is fundamental to understanding the history of video games.

Steven L. Kent's earlier history, *The Ultimate History of Video Games: From Pong to Pokémon and Beyond*, is no different than Donovan's later work. Compiling information from over 500 interviews from key figures in the industry, Kent also focuses on the world of business. Drawing a similar trajectory of development to Donovan's, Kent begins his inquiry in a slightly different place: 1940s pinball machines in boardwalk arcades.¹²⁰ This alternate origin does nothing to budge the business-centric narrative

¹¹⁹ The Tech Model Railroad Club is an infamous institution in the history of games. This extracurricular undergraduate club at MIT secretly developed the first computer game, *Spacewar*, by breaking into laboratories of MIT and tinkering with the computers there. Donovan, *Replay*, 8-11.

¹²⁰ Kent, 2.

around video games. In fact, it possibly strengthens it by justifying consumer interests in games prior to *Spacewar* in the 1960s.

Finally, Jon Peterson's *Playing at the World* does tremendous work in connecting the history of video games to the history of board and role-playing games. By focusing on the communities that developed *Dungeons & Dragons*, Peterson compiles an impressive and thoroughgoing chronicle of how communities of players managed to develop games in the amateur hobby space of the American Wargaming underground. But, because Peterson's focus is also on the production of games, it also situates games as a leisurely commodity that is of particular worth to business.

The single-minded focus of these histories on the individuals and businesses which produced the industry behind games as we know it today has led to some odd twists in its narrative. For instance, before Peterson's work, there was no history that helped to contextualize the development of videogames within the simultaneous histories of board and role-playing games. Furthermore, the extant narratives often avoided discussing games that were developed for more serious purposes, like the edutainment games discussed in Mizuko Ito's book *Engineering Play*.¹²¹ Finally, the typical histories of games (epitomized by Kent, Donovan, and Peterson) focused primarily on the interests and activities of the developers of games that have succeeded in the commercial sector. This has produced a somewhat racist, classist, and sexist narrative that deals mostly with the development of games from the standpoint of wealthy white men. Put another way, we can consider Kent, Donovan, and Peterson's in light of what is absent. This approach

¹²¹ Mizuko Ito, *Engineering Play*, is a history of the developers who have engineered software designed to bridge both the markets of education and entertainment (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009).

reveals the maneuvers of patriarchy and white supremacy, given that these histories deal primarily with the work of wealthy, white, businessmen. They read games as neutral artifacts when really they are imbued with the politics of their designers.

The ludic imagination prompts us to intervene within these narratives in two ways. First it demands that historical work contend with bodies that have been absent from the typical discourse of digital technology. Second, it offers a critical approach to games and play that avoids essentializing games as either plain progress or mere leisure. Games have been historically constructed as neutral artifacts because the discourse around digital technology and procedural mechanics has been both patriarchal and white supremacist. This construction relies upon a stance that reads mathematics as essentially apolitical despite its instrumentality in producing metrics for the digitization of height, weight, skin tone, voice timbre, hair color, and more. We must locate the voices and opinions of women, people of color, and lower-class individuals in the history of games.

Understanding how bodies are apprehended and digitized through this mathematical logic of difference helps to relate the value of the ludic imagination's second intervention: that games are neither pure progress nor simple leisure. These essentialist approaches to understanding games miss the richness that has been lost, in understanding the richness of the intersection between games and play. The point that all gameplay can be understood as a strategies and tactics for approaching numbers, and therefore mathematical representations of bodies, has been missed. Approaches within the purview of the ludic imagination such as ludic subjectivity prompt a consideration of how game structures produce game strategy, and questions what implications these strategic perspectives hold for our selves and society.

Nick Dyer-Witheford and Grieg de Peuter offer in their canonical text, *Games of Empire*, an alternative to what I have termed the ludic subject. For Dyer-Witheford and de Peuter, the danger of games lies not in the ways that players come to strategize about them—and also the world—but instead in the ways that games have a tendency to produce what Antonio Hardt and Michael Negri term the machinic subject.¹²² They explain, “the multitude not only uses machines to produce, but also becomes increasingly machinic itself, as the means of production are increasingly integrated into the minds and bodies of the multitude.”¹²³ The machines which Dyer-Witheford and de Peuter call into question are games. The forms of affective and immaterial labor that characterize games like *Grand Theft Auto*, *America’s Army*, and *World of Warcraft* epitomize the new modes of labor required by capital in the new millennium. For Hardt and Negri, this is both positive and negative. Positive because there is a coalescence of solidarity and unity around games, yet negative because this solidarity has the singularity of the market as its focus. As games are played, players become increasingly machinic, adapting to the cybernetics of the games logic.

Ludic subjectivity, in contrast, speaks instead to the sense of polarization and difference produced by games. Instead of the utopic note to which Dyer-Witheford and de Peuter allude—where games stand in as dubious machines of community and solidarity—the unifying characteristic of games is the degree to which players will spend their time plotting against and around the system. Instead of accepting the machinic logics of immaterial, bureaucratic, labor, players set themselves at against these arduous

¹²² Dyer-Witheford and de Peuter, 93.

¹²³ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 406.

systems and develop ways to efficiently navigate the tedium of play. As de Certeau had articulated in differentiating strategy from tactics, individuals find ways to make due with the often imperious conditions in which they are embedded. For instance, de Certeau offers *la perruque* (working for oneself while on the bosses clock), as an example of the myriad tactics that workers take when making due with the capitalist system.¹²⁴ While de Certeau lauded tactical thinking as a key form of social resistance, this dissertation problematizes this notion by suggesting that game theory occupies this tactical space in a singular way. The ludic subject finds ways to interpolate all of everyday into numbers so that they can gain a tactical advantage. In this sense, game theory is the basic strategic knowledge necessary for players to take on a stance of tactical resistance. Without understanding the strategic horizons of game theory, failure becomes iterated within play.

While Dyer-Witheford and de Peuter should be applauded for the ways that their theory allows for both a positive and negative reading of machinic subjectivity—negative since their concept of machinic subjectivity sees the transformation of bodies into machines which needlessly pollute and ravage the Earth, positive since there is a sense of unity and togetherness within the subjectivity—it should be noted that there are positive aspects to ludic subjectivity as well as negative. The ludic subject, in one sense, is the hyper-rational, scientifically minded subject of the late-twentieth century. Although the ludic subject shares some attitudes with the neoliberal subject, such as a belief in the stability of a market driven by competition, they also value the empiricism of scientific inquiry (this is because many scientific methods are premised on mathematics). In this sense, the ludic subject, values the exact tropes which imbue late twentieth century

¹²⁴ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, (Minneapolis, MN: The University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 26.

America with a sense of coherency and consistency. They believe in John Nash's M.A.D. (Mutually Assured Destruction) doctrine—which uses game theory to show that a nuclear war is in neither Russia nor the United State's best interest—just as much as they believe that competition is a stabilizing measure in market dynamics. These belief structures depart from the fundamentals of the neoliberal subject, as defined by Hardt and Negri, due to its focus on numeric empiricism as a mode of strategy and being.

In relating this theory, I have chosen a set of historical examples that exemplify this problematic in both the top-down contexts of the military and the grassroots contexts of popular culture. I will show how alternatives to game theory were dismissed in the RAND Corporation (Chapter 3), how game theory was adopted by influential thinkers in the American wargaming underground (Chapter 5), and how the representational matrices of *Dungeons & Dragons* exemplify the quantitative and oppositional politics of ludic subjectivity (Chapter 6).

Chapter 3: Political Games, Role-Playing, and RAND

This chapter charts the rise and fall of role-playing games as an analytic tool at the RAND Corporation in the 1950s. It tells the story of how role-playing failed to produce efficient analytics for understanding and predicting conflict. Because the computer simulations that used game theory at RAND were able to more quickly analyze military and logistics scenarios, the experiments in role-playing at RAND were short lived. Here, I argue that the variety of approaches toward games and play taken at RAND in the 1950s exemplify definitions distinct from those which were used within the *Diplomacy* fan community (in the 1960s) and the communities of play that enjoyed *Dungeons & Dragons* (in the 1970s)—the three forms that are presented in this dissertation. The interest that analysts took in role-playing games at RAND is evidence of an initial sense of ambiguity given to definitions of games and play at RAND in the 1950s. Few relevant details could be used to identify differences between role-playing games that were essentially free and open play (*The Cold War Game*), and computer simulations that used very concrete rule-sets. Considering the ambiguity around games and play at RAND, I posit that the coterminous success of game theory and failure of role-playing to succeed as a dominant military analytic are evidence that supports the emergence of ludic subjectivity within the ludic imagination within the 1950s.

By exploring the history of role-playing at RAND, this chapter aims to do the following: 1) compare the playful aspects of simulations that focused on role-playing to the game-oriented simulations used by game theory; 2) align role-playing's focus on play with a discourse around the "non-rational," and likewise align game theory's focus on mathematics with a discourse of the "rational"; 3) show the economic reasons that

prevented role-playing games from becoming a dominant military analytic; and 4) link the game mechanics within role-playing games such as *The Cold War Game* to the games which would follow—*Diplomacy* and *Dungeons & Dragons*.

The RAND Corporation was a government funded non-profit think-tank that was intended to supply research on future weapon development. It was established to conduct research on topics that government sanctions might forbid. Amongst these tasks was nuclear deterrence (averting nuclear war), for which the RAND Corporation established a social sciences division, in 1948, in order to instigate research in psychological warfare. The Social Sciences Division sought to develop sociological and psychological techniques to avert warfare. In addition to that, they were also encouraged to develop metrics that would allow social behavior to be analyzed by those in RAND's more quantitatively minded departments, such as Physics and Economics. As explained in Chapter 1, in the 1950s political scientists believed that game theory was an accurate predictor of rational behavior. They were also concerned with its ability to account for what they defined as "non-rational" shifts in individual behavior and mood. According to this ideology, concerned with the strategy of nuclear deterrence, in which the lives of thousands were at stake, necessitated new apparatuses for measuring the behaviors of individuals and the masses. As this chapter will show, role-playing games emerged from this environment as a means of diversifying the data provided by wargames. Role-playing were developed to help better understand the emotional states of others, and in so doing better predict their military and political actions. Although the social sciences division at RAND judged these early experiments in role-playing to be an economic and critical failure, this chapter argues that they did yield techniques for the management and

understanding of affect that became widely used by RAND officials interested in developing a strategy of nuclear deterrence.

This chapter considers the work of Herbert Goldhamer and Paul Kecskemeti in particular, the two social scientists primarily responsible for the development and analysis of *The Cold War Game*, as detailed in Chapter 2. Working in the Social Sciences Division of RAND for Hans Speier, two staff members of that division, Herbert Goldhamer and Paul Kecskemeti were responsible for the cross-hybridization of games and social psychology at the RAND Corporation. They were chiefly affiliated with a set of experiments that ran under the broad moniker of political gaming, which unlike the majority of wargaming, which also occurred at the RAND Corporation in the 1950s and 1960s, focused specifically on the intersection between games and the non-rational and social dimensions of decision making. Players would be analyzed not only on the logistical insights gleaned through these exercises, but also their psychological outlook. These games took place over the course of months in conference rooms and via memorandums. Although these political games were able to help their participants develop knowledge, the role-playing techniques these games used failed to provide the scientists at RAND useful quantitative metrics.

The discontinuation of role-playing experiments at RAND coincides with the success of game theory at RAND. This chapter explores this division in order to provide evidence that as the military sought to develop both to improve their intelligence, only games and game theory were ultimately valued in that process. Meanwhile the effects of play and role-playing on the psychological states of players were abandoned by RAND and would be further developed by Lincoln Bloomfield at MIT throughout the 1960s.

This chapter explores the military discursive rupture between games and play in an effort to better understand why games have been more valuable to key figures in the military than play. It begins by describing the playtesting and development of *The Cold War Game*. Then, after explaining *The Cold War Game*'s development, the chapter considers the intellectual mission of its developer Herbert Goldhamer in relation to the game. Next, it considers some of the critiques leveled on the game by Paul Kecskemeti. Finally, the chapter concludes by arguing that although the experiments in role-playing at RAND were successful in helping researchers understand and manipulate the affects of players, the RAND Corporation ultimately dismissed them because they provided qualitative data and not quantitative data about these phenomena. This point ultimately supports one of principle arguments of this dissertation—that despite its scientific value, understanding play has become less valuable than understanding games since the mid-twentieth century.

Experiments in Role-Playing

Goldhamer's essay "Toward a Cold War Game" begins with this question: "Why a cold war game?"¹²⁵ Indeed, justifying his project's value would be the single greatest issue Goldhamer struggled with during the course of his experiments. The game's financial feasibility was tenuous at best, as it was a resource intensive exercise in collective intelligence and collaboration (but not in generating quantitative data). Goldhamer believed that the game had key strategic value, however, as it encouraged players from wildly different scientific and analytical backgrounds to simulate future military crises.

¹²⁵ Herbert Goldhamer, "Toward a Cold War Game," 1954, RAND Corporation Archive, D(L)-2603, 1.

At the start of the game's experiments in 1954 and at RAND's Santa Monica, California, research lab, Goldhamer wrote:

In principle an analyst can probably do everything that a cold war game can do. In practice a game is likely to provide motivations and facilities that are unavailable to a single analyst or to two or three analysts collaboratively writing papers. The analysis of complex political problems on a world scale is a burdensome and paralyzingly difficult job. Although descriptive and diagnostic analyses lend themselves to a conventional division of labor, strategic and tactical planning do not readily do so. In this area gaming procedures may permit a more effective collaboration, one which does not divide up the problem in a manner which obscures the issues. Also, a game situation may provide a useful stimulus for creative thinking in the tactical and strategic field.¹²⁶

The Cold War Game was developed in response to this goal. It was strangely positioned as an exercise in free-play that could (if not for the deliberate inclusion of experts) be mistaken for make-believe within the institutional structure of RAND that sought hard quantitative analytics. Despite this strange developmental context it stands as an important case study for the intersection of play and game design during the Cold War period.

From 1954 to 1956, there were four experiments in role-playing held at RAND. The first was held in 1954, the next two in 1955, and the fourth was held in 1956. And, while the earliest experiments were staged mostly a handful of Goldhamer's colleagues at RAND, by the time the fourth experiment was initialized, the number of participants had

¹²⁶ Ibid., 1.

increased in number to over twenty, including several members from the Department of the State including Jeffrey C. Kitchen, Edward Page, Jr., and Albert B. Franklin.

Goldhamer's work had also gained in prominence due to its presentation at several conferences across the country. Similar experiments in political gaming were taking place in colleges across the country, including MIT, Harvard, and Northwestern Universities. And though these experiments in political gaming had allowed, ostensibly, for very few practical niches to be filled they remained a curiosity within circles of political and military intelligence as evinced by their relative obscurity in historical texts.¹²⁷

Goldhamer would later admit in his write-up, "Some Observations on Political Gaming," that the utility of *The Cold War Game* was predominantly educational. He wrote, "[T]he political game was primarily envisaged as a means for securing a more effective collaboration of the specialized skills involved in political-military analysis. The political game provided an easily and sharply defined division of labor for the participants, and it gave them a more systematic means of adjudicating the conflicting claims of different lines of argument."¹²⁸ The game was a machine of collective intelligence and collaboration. And, although this intelligence held some potential for producing a socio-military forecast of the future, it did this by producing specialized and focused lines of collaboration between its constituents. This came in the form not only of a specialized form of military knowledge but also in an emotional sensibility which allowed for participants to inhabit the subjectivities of other researchers (thus yielding a

¹²⁷ Notable exceptions include Sharon Ghamari-Tabrizi's *The Worlds of Herman Kahn* and Ron Theodore Robin's *The Making of the Cold War Enemy: Culture and Politics in the Military-Intellectual Complex*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

¹²⁸ Herbert Goldhamer and Hans Speier, "Some Observations on Political Gaming," 1958, RAND Corporation Archive, P-1679-RC, 13.

superior sense of collaboration) and other nations (aiding in a sensibility to negotiating high-stakes moments of political conflict).

Goldhamer's experiments can be divided, roughly, into two chronological groups. The first and second experiments, which functioned primarily as sites of game design and playtesting, and the third and fourth experiments, which were more focused on the game's application as a military tool for understanding the psyches of key actors in a variety of nation states. An analysis of these experiments shows how role-playing at RAND was intended to model "non-rational," emotional player states, and how this differed from other simulations being explored simultaneously. Furthermore, an analysis can show how the key mechanics underlying role-playing games at RAND are similar to mechanics used in later-role playing games.

Experiments One and Two: Design and Playtesting

The experiments in role-playing at RAND were instigated as a safeguard against nuclear war. As such, they are inextricably linked to they are inextricably linked to political anxieties around the rationality of other nations, and the potentiality of an unpredictable nuclear strike. These anxieties were theorized in the professional notes of Herbert Goldhamer as the "non-rational," a psychic state that might cause a key official to initiate an unpredicted nuclear strike. *The Cold War Game* was the game specifically devised at RAND in an effort to quantify the "non-rational."

The Cold War Game was first run in 1954, after substantial discussion between Herbert Goldhamer, and his colleagues in the RAND Social Science Division Hans Speier, Joseph Goldsen, and Paul Kecskemeti. Modeling their purpose on an internal

document by A. W. Marshall and H. A. DeWeerd entitled “Weapons Limitations, Nuclear Sharing, and Graduated Deterrence,” in 1954 Goldhamer’s initial goals involved the political regulation of nuclear weapons.¹²⁹ And, in response to the decisions by the committee, Goldhamer had drafted an essay entitled “Toward a Cold War Game” which had outlined the original rules of *The Cold War Game*. Of course, as the next section of this chapter will show, many of these rules would later be modified after the game had been played through once or twice, but they are instructive in so far as they both demonstrate the design affordances and rationale of the game itself, as well as some of the design hurdles Goldhamer faced as he designed what was, probably, the first game of this type.

Goldhamer’s innovation, as noted earlier, was that a game could be an effective pathway toward creative thinking and collective intelligence. In fact, Goldhamer draws upon the rudimentary elements of simulation to further explain that, in his opinion, “The plan of the game encourages the introduction of many real life details that an analyst might not deal with.”¹³⁰ Simulation provides a rich context of experimentation in so far as it can introduce unpredictable variance into the system. This engagement would be produced by the epistemic cultures grounding the game itself, insofar as the knowledge that experts in foreign policy and politics come to the game with establishes the potentialities of the game. But, just as this knowledge has the potential to predict the

¹²⁹ A. W. Marshall and H. A. DeWeerd, “Weapons Limitations, Nuclear Sharing, and Graduated Deterrence—A Report on a trip to Washington SAFE, USAFE, and the United Kingdom, October 29 – November 29, 1956,” 1956, RAND Corporation Archive, D(L)-4037-PR.

¹³⁰ Herbert Goldhamer, “Toward a Cold War Game,” 1.

future, it is also limited by the cultural and disciplinary limitations that have shaped the knowledge of these experts.

The final, and perhaps most critical, point that Goldhamer introduces in the essay is the necessity for the players and staff to be knowledgeable about the matters that they are deliberating on—an unknowledgeable set of players would produce misinformation by playing the game as they wouldn't be able to build upon their expertise relating to the topic. Here, Goldhamer remarks, "It should be added, however, that a cold war game, if it is not to be trivial, presupposes the existence of a considerable body of relevant factual material and analysis already available to the players. Otherwise the game is not likely to be of much interest."¹³¹ The requirement that the game be played by experts concerned some, like Paul Kecskemeti, who questioned how *The Cold War Game* game differed from a summit or conference, where information is also collectively shared and built upon. He insisted that it would be more cost efficient to simply hire several analysts to discuss policy around a table for a number of months.¹³²

Did *The Cold War Game* help to produce a more useful form of knowledge than a conference? The answer is ambiguous. *The Cold War Game* would certainly produce some discussions that allowed for Goldhamer to develop a poignant sense of policy analysis. But, as RAND social scientist Joseph Goldsen would later remark in his write-up, these moments of policy analysis were nonetheless marred by a sense of risk.¹³³ The stakes of nuclear war were totalizing, and although *The Cold War Game* allowed for a

¹³¹ Ibid., 2.

¹³² Paul Kecskemeti, "Summary of Cold War Game Activities in the Social Science Division – May Experiment."

¹³³ Joseph Goldsen, "The Political Exercise: An Assessment of the Fourth Round," 1958, RAND Corporation Archive, D-3640-RC, 56-58.

sense of control over the war's psychological elements it was, if anything, less precise than the concrete quantitative metrics yielded by traditional Game Theory analysis. In 1958, analysis of *The Cold War Game* concluded at RAND with Goldhamer and Speier's final essay, "Some Observations on Political Gaming." And although the game's time at RAND was cut short (the experiments continued for only two years), it did manage to inspire similar experiments at other military think tanks such as The Hudson Institute, as well as classrooms of International Policy in Northwestern University and MIT.¹³⁴

If we are to understand what the game-form of *The Cold War Game* was responsible for producing, then we must consider, fundamentally, the context of its development. As the next section will show, although the game was designed to produce quantitative metrics of non-rational player states, it succeeded, actually, in offering a qualitative apparatus for understanding and managing affects. These insights help us to consider what other similarly designed role-playing games produced within communities lacking the knowledge of RAND's experts. This comparison allows us to understand how the mechanics of role-playing are productive of games which manipulate, control, and reveal the affects of players participating in their games. In Chapters 4 and 5 the dissemination, play, and discussion of a similar game, *Diplomacy*, within the American war-game underground in the 1960s, will help to contextualize *The Cold War Game*'s legacy.

Ruling the Cold War

¹³⁴ Herbert Goldhamer and Hans Speier, 19.

Before analyzing the third and fourth experiments of *The Cold War Game*, we must first take a close look at the game's mechanics so that we can understand the ways that the game was changed over time. *The Cold War Game*, as Jon Petersen has argued, is an important precursor to modern role-playing games.¹³⁵ The elements of play invoked by the game are shared by both *Diplomacy* and *Dungeons & Dragons*. Importantly, the playful and immersive mechanics which these games all share are often juxtaposed against a set of quantitative logics that are used to establish a realistic game world. *The Cold War Game* with its emphasis on play-acting, and collaborative narrative defines ludic subjectivity paradoxically through its failure. Because the game was not received successfully within the RAND Corporation, it reveals where the military's interests in strategic development are located—games, not play. This section elaborates on both the game-like and playful dynamics of *The Cold War Game* in order to produce a critical frame for understanding its impact.

There are many types of role-playing games. Although the example of *The Cold War Game* was more make-believe than rule-based play, some general principles can be applied to all role-playing games, be they fantastic or mundane. Role-playing is free-play and performance that occurs within the auspices of a set of rules that all agree on. The referee helps to refine the nature of the world and resolve disputes between players. *The Cold War Game* uses such a structure. Players took on the role of nations such as Russia, The United States, and Germany and would confer with others on their teams and decide together how their country would act given the state of affairs being simulated in a scenario. There were no dice or maps, necessarily, the game was mostly played through

¹³⁵ Jon Peterson, *Playing at the World*, 287.

discussions in conference rooms and memos circulated to other players on a daily basis and for weeks at a time at the RAND corporation. Turns were generally resolved on a day to day basis, as players would respond to press releases and memorandums issued by other nations with their own decisions, declarations, and policies. In this way, the game sometimes moved at a pace that was slower than real life, as players slowly explained to the referees what their nations did, the referees processed these statements and made decisions about what the likely results would be, and players were presented with new memos reflecting the world's state of affairs the next day. In this sense, the game was simply a walk-through of the ways that experts would navigate real space and conversation as the referees posed the circumstances of future problems.

Goldhamer limited the roles that players could take on, "The personnel of the proposed game fall into three groups: (1) players who represent governments; (2) persons who represent (nongovernmental) Nature; (3) referees."¹³⁶ Although players do not yet represent individuals, as they would in later games such as *Dungeons & Dragons*, *The Cold War Game* features players taking the role of entire governments, as they later would in the board game *Diplomacy*.¹³⁷

By the third playtest of *The Cold War Game* in 1955, referees would take on the role of nature, telling players what world events to expect while they moderated their teams. This initial setup, however, between players and roles, and referees and rules is

¹³⁶ Herbert Goldhamer, "Toward a Cold War Game," 3.

¹³⁷ *Diplomacy* was first published in 1958. This configuration has been noted by Peterson in *Playing at the World* as one of the fundamental ways that *The Cold War Game* holds a similar structure to staples of the role-playing game genre such as *Dungeons & Dragons*, 377. It should be noted, however, that Peterson's depiction draws on Goldhamer and Speier's essay, "Some Observations on Political Gaming," where the referees represent Nature and also maintain the game's rules. Clearly, the practice of allowing players to take on the role of nature was short lived, as referees came to take on that role.

one that will later become the genre standard for role-playing as popularized by *Dungeons & Dragons*.

At the time of this writing, role-playing games as typified by *Dungeons & Dragons*, represent the actions of “nature” through a set of tables in the rule-books that players consult after rolling dice. For instance, a referee rolls two six sided dice when determining the weather conditions for the players. After rolling an eight, the referee consulting the “Weather” table in a rulebook might find that an eight means, “slightly cloudy.” In this way, if a role-playing game is played properly, the referee will roll dice and relate the myriad statistics of nature to the player as the many charts embedded into the game’s manuals suggest. This form of play is, in a way, a magical yet numerological ordered understanding of nature, which suggests that although nature can often be predicted, it can, in fact, never be controlled. And yet, the rulebook maintains a regulated approach to weather that is activated by chance—a throw of the dice. The referee who must consult the tables at play is one observing the process of the game, but not the rules themselves.¹³⁸ Importantly, at RAND, it is clear that nature itself was considered a discipline that also required the expertise of a staff member. In fact, Goldhamer implies that nature itself is the “nongovernmental,” which also encompasses, for lack of a better word, the masses. The resistances, rebellions, immigrations, emigrations, and entrepreneurial innovations of those who could not be fully controlled by government were controlled by a separate player, or referee, at RAND, so as to help create a more accurate and immersive play experience for all involved. In *The Cold War Game* these

¹³⁸ Referees do frequently “break the rules,” in role-playing games. They adjust encounters and charts to fit the story as opposed to playing by the rules offered by the rulebook in a dogmatic fashion. Such decisions, however, are matters of the individual play styles of the group.

“nongovernmental” forces would simply be imagined by the referee as the game played out through a scenarios and not the tables that would later become the genre staple in *Dungeons & Dragons*.

Much like the Goldhamers theory of the non-rational (which this chapter will address later), Goldhamer’s implementation of the “nongovernmental” in *The Cold War Game* implies, also, the problems taken up by those working within the sociology of knowledge like psychological warfare. When casting the various players in the first playthrough of *The Cold War Game*, Goldhamer would place Hans Speier and Paul Kecskemeti (in the second iteration, Speier and Kecskemeti would be joined by Goldhamer, M. Ruggles, and J. Goldsen all of whom served on national teams as well) on the team which represented nature, both specialists in the sociology of knowledge.¹³⁹ And, as noted earlier, both were interested in matters of psychological warfare, and thus the ways in which psychological drives pull people together and produce factions within nations. The “nongovernmental” team had very few rules governing their actions in the game, they, like any other team, would meet and discuss the events in the world that they felt were likely to happen in a month of game time, and then write up a series of reports to be issued to other players explaining these events. It would be up to the referees to judge the impact of these events on these nations.

Goldhamer’s design decisions helped to facilitate a sense of collaborative intelligence between players of the game. In his notes pertaining to how governments should be represented in *The Cold War Game*, Goldhamer explains that governments should be run through small teams, as a deliberating group is more useful, and relevant

¹³⁹ Herbert Goldhamer, “Summary of Cold-War Game Activities in the Social Science Division,” 15.

for the analysis than a number of autonomously connected people, each representing a single nation.¹⁴⁰ Unlike *Diplomacy*, where one nation is directly represented by the actions of one player, *The Cold War Game* encouraged players to reconcile differences between members of their team before their nation could act. This design decision shrewdly introduced a sense of collaboration and deliberation between members of the various team, forcing them to reconcile their various opinions, feelings, and ideas before acting on behalf of the nations they were playing. In this way, *The Cold War Game* prompted a game state focused more on reconciliation than conflict. Just like in real life, nations had to deliberate internally to reach a policy stance that would then work toward advancing one of their goals. Only after some form of internal consensus is realized would nations be allowed to deliberate within the simulated political world of the game. As these games simulated the pressing issues of high-stakes atomic warfare, the early experiments showed players taking careful steps not to take drastic actions which would unbalance and jeopardize the global balance of power.

The high-stakes, and highly deliberative nature of *The Cold War Game*, in fact, led to at least two notable criticisms amongst its early play testers.¹⁴¹ The first criticism was that the game itself was, “dull and uninteresting.” The gameplay mechanisms led to very little substantial action amongst its participants. For example, players would send numerous memos to one another deliberating over what course of action to take over the course of a day. The second criticism which emerged in Kecskemeti’s debrief report regarded how the game’s the slow-paced and highly deliberative nature was, “too close to

¹⁴⁰ Goldhamer, “Toward a Cold War Game,” 2-3.

¹⁴¹ Paul Kecskemeti, “Summary of Cold War Game Activities in the Social Science Division – May Experiment,” 31.

reality,” to provide an incentive for players to take on alternative and experimental lines of play.¹⁴² Players found themselves negotiating a tension between the world of play and real-life, and, in reconciling this tension, they tended to choose strategies which were more conservative, overall. The United States team found the game to be extremely suffocated, saying that they felt that they had no choice but to keep to the United States’ dominant policies in most situations:

According to H. Dinerstein [a player on the US team], the moves submitted by the U.S. team in particular were of a routine character; they reflected no novel approach to the major policy problems facing the U.S. Interesting political insights could be developed by the players either individually or in grip discussion, but when it came to boiling down the discussions to actual moves, the results reflected no high-level thinking. It appeared pointless to discuss imaginary moves that were, if anything, less incisive and momentous than the actual policies pursued by the State Department.¹⁴³

The game, in other words, adapted a sense of moderation to the often radical thinking practiced by conventional military tactics at the time. This is particularly interesting in light of the socio-economic scene constructed by The Cold War because it shows how the social and infrastructural “peace-time” battlefield rewarded deference as opposed to aggression.

One player, Joseph Goldsen had wanted players in *The Cold War Game* to have the ability to take more risks than they felt they were allowed in the game’s initial

¹⁴² Ibid., 33.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 31.

makeup.¹⁴⁴ In other words, the game's initial focus on full player immersion limited the agency of the players. Because the game utilized a set of rules that focused on the minutia of small, incremental gains and developments in Cold War policy, the game was too mundane to be interesting—it was perceived as boring and somewhat limited. The game's ruleset, which allowed players to do anything imaginable (within the auspices of documentable correspondance and policy) was seen more as a limitation than affordance, even though Goldhamer saw it, if anything, as a site of heuristic experimentation for policy decisions, "Perhaps freedom and realism will be purchased at the cost of introducing time-consuming irrelevant actions and events. This, however, is not necessarily a defect. The purpose of the game is to permit the participants to learn something about the consequences of certain types of actions taken in conjunction with a variety of events."¹⁴⁵ In other words, despite the critiques about the slow, mundane¹⁴⁶ nature of the game, which were manifest in Kecskemeti's debriefings, Goldhamer persisted that the game was meant to help players learn more about the political state of world affairs, and that this understanding necessitated a form of learning focused on observing the complex interplay of a variety of key political actors.

Despite his best intentions, Goldhamer's notes on design reveal a fundamental paradox regarding the design of *The Cold War Game*. Although the game has been designed to produce and allow for a structured mode of freedom and play, it, in fact, became a highly structured experience for its constituents. One that, if we are to believe the playtest reports, was fundamental as a mode of training and learning but was not

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 29.

¹⁴⁵ Herbert Goldhamer, "Toward a Cold War Game," 6.

¹⁴⁶ The game was often criticized for how it too accurately reflected the minutia of political communication and thus had trouble bringing big-picture problems into focus.

particularly productive as a site of experimentation.¹⁴⁷ There was an inevitable bleed between the real world and the game-world. The fact that the players taking on the role of the United States felt that they were limited in their available actions (even though they were free to make any decisions they could imagine) shows the degree to which they had a difficult time uncoupling the events of the game from the political reality of the world itself.

While I have suggested above that political games such as *The Cold War Game* served as a simulacrum of sorts wherein the players were caught up in simulating a reality based already upon their expertise and impressions of reality, as opposed to the political events of the world itself, it is interesting to note that within this simulacrum there was a sense of gravity and realism, produced, perhaps by the degree to which the simulation relied on the concrete knowledge of policy specialists outside of the game. This specialized knowledge, in this case expert knowledge on foreign cultures and policy, constituted the realism and materiality of the game itself. Participants in *The Cold War Game* were, if anything, producing a reality contingent upon and co-constitutive of an actual and experienced reality for its players. In this sense, Goldhamer's intuition about casting the roles in his game with well-educated specialists produced a game-world with a material culture that was robustly emulated.

One of Goldhamer's goals was to provoke discussion amongst members of the games play-group.¹⁴⁸ This discussion was intended to be a knowledge building exercise where outcomes would be discussed by opposing teams, and mutually amenable stances and events would eventually become points of design within the game world itself. "As

¹⁴⁷ Joseph Goldsen, 56-58.

¹⁴⁸ Herbert Goldhamer, "Toward a Cold War Game," 7.

time goes on and more and more of the issues about which there is a conflict of opinion are resolved or at least made explicit,” Goldhamer explains:

...increasing attention can be paid to the actual outcome of the individual moves and of the total game. If attention is paid only to the success or failure of moves or of a total game strategy and the serious differences of opinion on which this outcome is based are ignored, one of the principle values of the game will be lost. Winning and losing only become meaningful as the game progressively becomes more ‘fair’ from the standpoint of political, economic, and military expertise. For this reason it is important that the referees and the members of the Committee on Nature make explicit the basis on which their decisions are made. The need to make ‘intuitive’ decisions on many concrete political matters and to defend them should stimulate the formulation of more coherent and rigorous propositions about those aspects of political life involved in cold war [sic] activity.¹⁴⁹

This quote shows how winning, though not an explicit goal of the game itself, was part of the motivational discourse of the teams involved with the play of the game. *The Cold War Game*, in this sense, harkens to later design decisions that would define commercial role playing games: players cannot win, but instead participate in the creation of a narrative about a coherent fantasy world. These design decisions very explicitly show how *The Cold War Game* differs from work being done on simulation within the field of game theory. Where the approach of game theory produced a ludic subject through the efficiency of numbers, *The Cold War Game* provided a set of analytics that were quite different in scope—far from the quantitative analytics necessitated by all wargames, *The*

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 8.

Cold War Game required that players act, take on roles, and generally play in a more embodied manner.

The game, based purely around the occupation of a variety of national roles, and the discussion around them, offers very little that a trained analyst could not. Goldhamer offers some utopic notes regarding the streamlining of game design after multiple iterations, and suggests that eventually many of the conditions which are up for deliberation in early games could be taken for granted for later points of implementation, thus allowing for speedier play.

Even though the game itself was only tested a limited number of times at RAND, it should be noted that Goldhamer revealed the potential of allowing for a refined collective intelligence not yet achieved by the RAND Corporation at that time. “Gaming thus becomes a technique for more effectively exploiting available basic knowledge. . . But the game in itself is not likely to increase basic knowledge and this deficiency will prevent the game from doing for us what gaming procedures can legitimately be expected to do in those areas where it can exploit more solidly established basic propositions.”¹⁵⁰ The game itself was regarded here as a tool which helped its participants to exploit the knowledge that they had previously cultivated through their work. Intriguingly, the emphasis here is on the play of the game, and not the game itself. This point shows a historical moment where the concepts of play and game were considered more or less equivalent, and thus supports the argument that gradually, since the mid-twentieth century, games have come to be considered more valuable than play.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 10.

The next section details the experiments with *The Cold War Game* as they continued in 1956. Here, the game play periods would increase from two weeks to six months, and the game would be utilized by Goldhamer, Speier, and their collages at RAND in scenarios of increasing. And, as the game was refined, the context of warfare would move increasingly from the intersection of several conflicting policies, to the intersection of several conflicting national subjectivities. It will be discussed in the next section how the game would dabble more within the collective psychologies of nations as its utility and design were refined.

Experiments Three and Four: Military Applications

This section shows how the third and fourth rounds (1956) of *The Cold War Game* became the game's most successful incarnations at RAND because of the ways in which role-playing, as a technique, has been useful for military personnel. In contrast to the ways in which the first and second rounds served to help test the game's mechanics, the third and fourth rounds provoked a more valuable dialogue about the game's military utility. In particular, the third and fourth rounds show skepticism around *The Cold War Game* as an efficient analytic project. This skepticism, however, is tempered by an optimism around the game's effectiveness as method of diplomatic training.

By the fourth time *The Cold War Game* ran in 1958, it was comprised of no less than five teams, with nineteen players, and one assistant. The players included Albert B. Franklin, Jeffery C. Kitchen, and Edward Page Jr. from the US Department of State; Hans Speier, Joseph M. Goldsen, Victor M. Hunt, Robert C. Tucker, Harvey DeWeerd, Paul Kecskemeti, Nathan Leites, Lewis Bohn, and Abraham Halpern from the RAND

Social Science Division; Andrew W. Marshall, Malcolm W. Hoag, Oleg Hoeffding, and Charles Wolf, Jr. from the RAND Economics Division; and Herman Kahn and Arnold Kramish, from the RAND Physics Division. Finally, Ewald Schnitzer took on the role of “special assistant,” and was the point person responsible for assisting in a variety of odd tasks. The players from the Department of State were senior Foreign Service officers interested in the game’s utility as a diplomatic orientation and training tool. The fourth game was officiated, run, and assessed by Joseph Goldsen, another researcher in the RAND Social Science Division, who had participated in talks about *The Cold War Game* at both Yale and Princeton in the years prior to the fourth round’s launch in 1956.¹⁵¹

Within the W.P. Davidson’s write-up on political gaming, four outcomes were tested by the experiments at the RAND Corporation. These were a) “Developing and testing alternative national strategies,” b) “Suggesting new tactical moves and contingency plans,” c) “Discovering areas where research was most needed,” and d) “Training personnel in international relations.”¹⁵² Though Davidson was forced to use qualitative metrics to feel out these various goals, he does go on to explain how well these experiments on political gaming served to further this set of goals.

To the first point, the development of alternate strategies, Davidson reported that *The Cold War Game* was more time consuming and expensive than conventional analysis. Furthermore, these experiments in role-playing were also reported to be particularly contingent on the players themselves. This point must have been troubling to the organizers of the game, as they had hoped that the game would be productive of

¹⁵¹ W. P. Davidson, “A Summary of Experimental Research on ‘Political Gaming,’” 1958, RAND Corporation Archive, D-5695-C, 9.

¹⁵² W. P. Davidson, 6.

strategies as opposed to tactics. Davidson concludes his analysis on this topic by writing, “In spite of these observations all participants in the game agreed that they had learned a substantial amount about the probability effects of various political strategies.”¹⁵³ Key here is that the strategies referred to in this quote were not the “alternate strategies” that the organizers had hoped to impart knowledge about; instead they were the dominant military strategies the organizers had hoped to move away from with the experiment. Despite these fuzzy results, it is important to recognize here the discourse of the non-rational within this game. And, while game theory offered a very particular and quantitative sense of insight into this element, it is interesting that these experiments of role-playing yielded a similar set of results, even if it was expensive and not particularly strategic. Again, we can observe an equivalence in tactical value being weighed against a difference in economic value between the techniques of game theory and role-playing.

Where *The Cold War Game* failed in strategy, it thrived in tactical insight. On numerous occasions during the fourth round the State Department paused to contact their superiors in Washington regarding the various tactical contingencies that they realized through play of the game. Davidson was quick to note after reporting this finding that this could have also occurred within instances of conventional analysis.

Even though the strategic and tactical military values of *The Cold War Game* were constantly questioned at RAND, it is important to recognize that the game was instrumental in directing researchers to new areas that they had not previously considered. The twisting and configurable thought experiments of this exercise keyed researchers at

¹⁵³ Ibid., 6.

RAND in to elements that necessitated more work. Davidson does not qualify this benefit, either; it is clear that he regards it as a concrete boon provided by the game.

Finally, the game was also notable as a method through which the training of international relations personnel could thrive. As Davidson reports, “One of the State Department participants in the fourth round was so impressed with the training potentialities of the technique that he began to investigate the possibility of using it in the educational program of the Foreign Service Institute of the State Department.”¹⁵⁴ The educational aspects of the game were then explained as having three components: first, the game was notable for helping to facilitate teamwork between players; second, it alerted players to the kinds of specialized knowledge that they lacked and needed - it was one thing to provide diplomats with a curriculum, it was another to see them self-reporting on their intellectual weaknesses; third, and perhaps most fascinatingly, was the emotional insight that *The Cold War Game* provided its participants.

As Davidson notes here, players had a sense of consequence, and more importantly, pressure while playing *The Cold War Game*: “A third educational effect of the game was to give the players a rather unusual insight into the pressures, uncertainties, and moral and intellectual difficulties which have to be faced and resolved when foreign policy decisions are made.”¹⁵⁵ And while these were certainly factors that pertained to military planning in the real world, they were not necessarily the by-products of simulation or conventional military analysis. In fact, as Davidson continues his report, it becomes clearer that anxieties of nuclear annihilation were a prominent factor in Cold War analysis:

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 7.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 8.

But most of all, the players quickly gained a sense of the awful consequences that might result from an ill-advised move. In the game, as in the real world, international relations were conducted under the shadow of the terrible destructiveness of modern weapons. Participants acquired a sense of crushing responsibility, and for this reason the game was sometimes exhausting. As a result of this sense of responsibility, players often tended to be extremely cautious. Those who in the classroom, or in publications may have advocated ‘bold, imaginative policies’ and criticized free-world leaders for timidity usually found themselves behaving with equal caution when they assumed the burden of policy-making in the game. Participants thus tended to judge foreign policy decisions in the real world differently after the game than they had done before it.¹⁵⁶

The game had a cooling effect upon its participants. Instead of advocating for radical policy change, they were forced to recognize the tactical landscape of foreign policy as a field of eggshells, where foul policy decision would yield substantial (and possibly apocalyptic) effects. Perhaps this sensibility was evocative of the subjectivities of actual diplomats as opposed to those of nation-states—this is one consequence of the acting required by the game. Either way, the production of what we would now call “emotional intelligence” through game-like simulations is a key facet for the historical significance of simulations and the role-playing game. Strategic decisions are not only analytic, they are also emotional, and any real analysis must take into account the moods produced by war in addition its geographies and technologies.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 8.

Finally, the immersive aspects of these games were noted as well. Though this aspect is noted with a nod to some of the experiments done in the classrooms of MIT (based on the templates of RAND), it is interesting that this immersiveness reflects practices of what is known as “bleed” in today’s role-playing communities. Bleed, according to *The Nordic larp Wiki* can be defined as “Bleed is experienced by a player when her thoughts and feelings are influenced by those of her character, or vice versa. With increasing bleed, the border between player and character becomes more and more transparent. It makes sense to think of the degree of bleed as a measure of how separated different levels of play (actual/inner/meta) are.”¹⁵⁷ Though in discussion around role-playing games bleed and immersion are tied, mostly to character, it is important to note that immersion in *The Cold War Game*, were also tied to the abstract world of policy, and policy analytics. Davidson explains:

When formal gaming came to an end, due to the limitations on the amount of seminar time available, students¹⁵⁸ continued the game at lunch and at several other gatherings. Several of them became so deeply identified with their roles that they had difficulty stepping out of them. A related benefit was the increased sophistication with which students approached their research problems later in the year. In part as a result of the gaming experience, they were acutely conscious of the interdependence of various geographical areas and also of the constraints on foreign policy makers. The game seems to have made foreign policy problems

¹⁵⁷ For more information on the phenomenon of bleed, please see this helpful article in the Nordic larp wiki. <http://nordiclarp.org/wiki/Bleed>

¹⁵⁸ The participants here were unspecified graduate students at RAND.

more real to them, and to have given them a greater personal investment in international affairs.¹⁵⁹

By identifying with their characters, players were able to identify better with their surroundings. This sense of identification translated into investment and curiosity, which then, yielded dividends as a learning heuristic. Though bleed and immersion in this context can be seen in a very concrete way, this early work stands in opposition to the perspectives on the topic advocated by Gary L. Fine, author of the early ethnography of *Dungeons & Dragons* players, *Shared Fantasy*.

Fine, perhaps in response to many of the media panics around *Dungeons & Dragons*, itself, perceived bleed as something of a myth, a distinction of fantasy that didn't truly exist within role-playing games.¹⁶⁰ This, however, is problematic when considered in juxtaposition to Goldhamer and Goldman's work on *The Cold War Game*, which focused, explicitly, on producing affects of bleed within the individual players so that they could better inhabit the subjectivities of other nation states and diplomats. Bleed, can be controversial because it does address phenomena that seek to manipulate the psychic and mental states of players, but this does not mean that it is not a tangible phenomena, and as *The Cold War Game* shows, it was also a desired outcome of play itself.

The third and fourth rounds of the game helped the researchers at RAND to solidify what the game's tangible outcomes were. They also served as a threshold, which saw the game's dissemination to America's political (The Office of Foreign Affairs, Department of State; The Hudson Institute) and educational infrastructure (Northwestern,

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 11.

¹⁶⁰ Fine, *Shared Fantasy*, 44.

Yale, Princeton, MIT). But, after these preliminary experiments on political gaming, *The Cold War Game* would cease experimentation at RAND only to emerge later, in the fanzine, *Peerinialis a Diplomacy* fanzine published by Larry Peery in 1971, which was interested in delving into experiments in real military simulations.

Ideological Conflicts in Game Design

This rupture between “Political Games” and “Game Theory” is a fascinating ideological split. Did Game Theory, with its economic and rational call to minimize loss and maximize gain, epitomize the cold and rational cultural climate of The Cold War, or did it produce it? Documentarians such as Adam Curtis relate game theory to the paranoia of The Cold War, but the very existence of *The Cold War Game*, an experiment in role-playing and inhabiting the subjectivities of other nations, shows that the scientists working in the shadow of nuclear war at RAND were not content with the ways that game theory sought to understand only the rational aspects of our decision making processes.¹⁶¹

Organizationally, RAND was structured like a university with a spectrum of departments ranging from those in the social sciences to those in the hard sciences. Unlike most universities, however, there were no humanistic divisions at RAND. Ultimately all of the departments in the corporation worked together toward a goal of United States policy analysis and development, even though they all employed different methods toward this end.

¹⁶¹ Adam Curtis, *The Trap*, DVD, (London, UK: BBC, 2007).

The harder sciences at RAND, such as Mathematics and Physics, were well known for their work in Game Theory. Their work had a tremendous national impact, being satirized in films like Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove* (1964), as it yielded policy doctrines such as MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction). John von Neumann, the founder of Game Theory, was employed in the 1950s as a mathematician at RAND. Von Neumann argued that the prime deterrent to a nuclear war was the fact that such a conflict would result in the destruction of all nations, and possibly most life on the planet. Because of the rational plausibility of the work in the RAND hard sciences, there was a motive within the organization to provide fiscal and intellectual support to those working in the hard sciences. This was the motive that led to the establishment of a social sciences division at RAND.

The social sciences division at RAND saw the world very differently than some of the other divisions of the corporation, particularly those who worked in the "harder" arts and sciences, such as Physics and Mathematics. The social sciences and economics divisions of RAND had been formed in response to a need by the Mathematics Divisions to acquire more accurate values for their prisoner's dilemma matrices. For Game Theory to function as an accurate means of social, military, economic, or logistical analysis, the data that it yielded would have to be more accurate. The social sciences held the promise of bridging this problematic for Mathematics, as Fred Kaplan explains, "if game theory were to grow and have true relevance to economics problems or international conflict, and if RAND were to lead the way in this intellectual movement, then RAND would have to hire social scientists and economists who could study the 'utility functions' of

consumers and the actual behavior and values of various nations.”¹⁶² In other words, RAND hired economists and social scientists to help translate patterns of political and social behavior into a set of numbers that could be used by the mathematicians at RAND developing work in game theory. This distinction, however, of the orderly world of numbers competing and conflicting with the haphazard world of people, would prove to be an institutional tension with specific consequences for the projects undertaken by the scientists at RAND. As I will explain later, projects within the social science division such as Goldhamer’s *The Cold War Game* were financial disasters because they failed to adequately interpolate the behavior of nations into a set of useful numbers for game theorists.

The hydrogen bomb, referred to in the corridors of the RAND Corporation as “Operation ‘Ivy,’” epitomized the analytic rationality of the Physics Division. Once the bomb itself had been developed, it posed a problem of utility to the physicists at The RAND Corporation. If a weapon with such a terrifyingly destructive potential were to prove useful as a tactical military device, it would require a set of rational applications, which would not ultimately result in thermonuclear war. Juxtaposed against the games taking place in the Social Science Division, operations at the RAND Corporation were disparate and varied, indeed. The Physics Division at the RAND Corporation had no use for the material produced by those in the social sciences, and the social scientists viewed the Physics Division as somewhat pretentious.¹⁶³ This gulf between the rational military operations which guided many of the projects for which the RAND Corporation became

¹⁶² Fred Kaplan, 67.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 76.

famous and the wily psychological experiments of the social science division are even evident in the distinct difference of approach to game design held by the various divisions.

The strategists at the RAND Corporation were quite deliberate in their assessment of the experiments being done in and around gaming at the corporation. For instance, one key document that I located in the RAND Corporation archive was William H. McGlothlin's logistics report "The Simulation Laboratory as a Developmental Tool."¹⁶⁴ In this paper, McGlothlin sketches a chart of many of the experiments in gaming and simulation hosted at the RAND Corporation (Table 3.1), so that the company could evaluate their utility when moving forward. And, while Goldhamer's *The Cold War Game* is only tangentially listed within the chart, as a "Developmental (Observation Type)" game, it is clear from the report the degree to which rationality and computers factored in to the games hosted at RAND. Games like Herman Kahn's "Monte Carlo," are listed as requiring a high degree of computer use in play, whereas heuristic games like *BASELOGS* (a logistics game) and developmental games like *The Cold War Game* required no computers. The spread, as indicated on the chart is fairly even, showcasing many cases where computers were not used for the play of games. Interestingly, the applications where computers and game theory played a strong tend to have more specific applications than the instances where games provide players with a more immersive environment (such as a role-play, or diorama). These instances of strong immersion were considered stronger simulations, though less useful to quantitatively minded divisions at RAND who sought metrics for controlling populations in the face of atomic catastrophe.

¹⁶⁴ W. H. McGlothlin, "The Simulation Laboratory as a Development Tool," 1958, RAND Corporation Archive, P-1454, 14.

Characteristics	Objective					
	<i>Heuristic Games</i>	<i>Estimate Quantitative Solution</i>	<i>Developmental (Participation Type)</i>	<i>Developmental (Observation Type)</i>	<i>Prototype or Demonstration</i>	<i>Training</i>
<i>Examples</i>	Baselogs	Monte Carlo	War Games	Systems Research Laboratory	LP-1	Air Defense Simulations
<i>Computer Use / Preparation Play</i>	Low / None	None / High	Low / Low	Medium / None	Medium / Medium	High / None
<i>Simulation of Reality</i>	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium	High
<i>Degree of Manual Participation</i>	High	None	High	High	Low to Medium	High
<i>Specification of Decision Rules</i>	Low	Complete	Low	Medium	High	Medium
<i>Participation of Outside Arbitrator</i>	Low	None	Medium	Low	Low	Low
<i>Need for Embedding Organizations</i>	Low	None	High	High	High	Medium to High
<i>Time Compression</i>	High	Very High	Medium	Low	Medium	Low
<i>Flexibility</i>	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low	Medium

Table 3.1 - Characteristics of Various forms of Simulation. W. H. McGlothlin, “The Simulation Laboratory as a Development Tool,” 14.

Simulations were expensive, and for this reason, it was not feasible for RAND to sustain an intellectual interest in some of the more expensive types of simulation. The tension here was between more playful forms of simulation, such as role-play, and more procedural forms that used computers to understand complex phenomena. Computers were relatively inexpensive and provided quantitatively verifiable evidence for policy analysts, while role-playing required a substantial degree of time and money. The results of these experiments were often heuristic and knowledge-based, helping participants to better understand complex phenomena. They did not provide the hard statistics generally preferred by policy analysts. McGlothlin took care to relate these concerns in his analysis of simulation tools:

The problem of obtaining empirical parameters for use in models is usually an expensive and time-consuming process. One of the advantages of simulating, is that the data-collection effort can be much better organized than when individual research into various phases¹⁶⁵ proceeds relatively independently.¹⁶⁶

The basic data required for simulations, required a tremendous expenditure of resources. This reasoning has been affirmed in an early study at RAND by Paul Kecskemeti which explained that the single biggest drawback of *The Cold War Game* was the considerable amount of time and resources that were applied to its coordination.¹⁶⁷ In fact, in Joseph Goldsen's analysis of the fourth iteration of *The Cold War Game* he wrote:

Several months, at the minimum, would be required to run through and analyze one strategic alternative for any one assumed time period. The participants in the past four experiments generally have found that even the short periods of game activity elicit a considerable drain on their intellectual capital and resources. It would be difficult to draw upon the same roster of participants for successive rounds, or to make political gaming a year round activity.¹⁶⁸

Although the immersive aspects of the simulations experimented with in the RAND Social Science Division did provide insights into decision-making spaces to which the means of game theory lacked access, there was a considerable cost and learning curve required to produce this effect. In contrast, the computerized and mathematical work

¹⁶⁵ "Phases" refers to the various units involved in a simulation. This could be anything from supply chain logistics to the calculations necessary to understand loss in actual combat scenarios.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 11-12.

¹⁶⁷ Paul Kecskemeti, "Summary of Cold War Game Activities in the Social Science Division – May Experiment," 31.

¹⁶⁸ Joseph Goldsen, 33.

being done in game theory was far more economical. For this reason, the experiments at RAND on role-playing eventually lost their institutional momentum and were cut-off as a project at RAND. Their impact, however, was notable as they had attracted the interest of Lincoln Bloomfield in the MIT Center for International Politics as well as some key political actors from the Pentagon. Despite this sense of ideological success, the RAND experiments in role-playing read as a footnote to the larger work being done at the time on Game Theory at RAND.

Early players of the *The Cold War Game* felt that the game was too boring because it simulated both the highs and lows of warfare. This apparent limitation yielded tremendous insight toward understanding the non-rational behavioral states of players:

But the exploration of political behavior in non-climactic situations (“deep freeze” cold war) also had its utility, and it would be wrong to dismiss an exercise because it produced nothing more than this. We had every reason to distill from the game experience whatever insight it produced regarding political behavior, including the formulation of research needs.

F. W. Schnitzer agreed with this point of view. He found this discipline imposed by the play in going through policy decisions step by step highly valuable. Other players (H. Dinerstein, P. Kecskemeti) found less merit in the close portrayal of day-to-day diplomatic moves imposed by the game. The richness of detail involved in diplomatic action, they held, could not be reproduced in the game, since the players lacked the information available to the

operating diplomat. According to these players, the game imposed too
 ‘microscopic’ a perspective to be really productive.¹⁶⁹

This write-up shows how players were split in their understanding of *The Cold War Game*’s utility as a game and simulation. Where some players felt that it was a helpful exercise in better understanding the process through which policy decisions were made, others felt that the game’s scope was too limited and that it didn’t encompass the nuance of a true diplomatic crisis. Although it is clear that the game produced a set of interesting behavioral implications, it is also clear that there was some degree of contestation regarding its utility. The discussion about the game’s utility can be attributed to a set of conflicting philosophies between Paul Kecskemeti and Herbert Goldhamer, two of the projects lead organizers. By looking more closely at their work and ideas, we can better understand the intersection of ideology and game design. They help us to understand the philosophical currents embedded within the discourse of simulation and role-playing.

Herbert Goldhamer

This section aims to better structure the contrast between *The Cold War Game* and game theory. It does this by showing how Goldhamer’s work compared to the work of other colleagues at RAND, such as Herman Kahn. By staging these comparisons we can see how *The Cold War Game* was intended as a supplement for experiments in game theory at RAND that were intended to predict “rational” behavior. This articulation makes clear how the “rational” and ludic aspects of game theory can be contrasted against the “non-

¹⁶⁹ Paul Kecskemeti, “Summary of Cold War Game Activities in the Social Science Division – May Experiment,” 32.

rational” and playful aspects of role-playing. Specifically, it compares the affective aspects of *The Cold War Game* to the quantitative aspects of game theory.

RAND was famous for the ways that they approached nuclear war. Much of this work was taken up by the Physics Department, notably projects which regarded the rational application of military weaponry such as the atomic bomb. This work is best epitomized by Herman Kahn’s bestselling 1962 publication, *On Thermonuclear War*.¹⁷⁰ Kahn’s work exemplified the quantitative rationality of the physics department in so far as it attempted to predict and rationalize the implications and consequences of all-out nuclear war. Kahn used statistics to show through a number of charts how America should prepare for the probable contingency of nuclear war. The question for Kahn was not whether or not nuclear would occur, but instead, when it inevitably did occur, what provisions would be necessary to reconstruct society? What areas would be prime for the establishment of underground colonies? What segments of the population should be rationed contaminated food? Could new uses for rocks be found? In other words, Kahn reduced nuclear preparations to a set of statistics and made a set of policy suggestions regarding.¹⁷¹ But, while Kahn epitomized the rational aesthetics of the RAND corporation, Herbert Goldhamer epitomized work being done toward understanding the non-rational, or affective space of decision making.

Herbert Goldhamer had long been concerned with understanding the psychologies of nations in times of war. And, unlike Kahn, who considered nuclear war a statistical inevitability, Goldhamer believed that nuclear catastrophe could be averted if social

¹⁷⁰ Herman Kahn, *On Thermonuclear War*, (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2007/1962).

¹⁷¹ Gahmari-Tabrizi, 28.

scientists were able to reach a greater degree of control over the non-rational spaces of our consciousness. It is important to investigate Goldhamer's beliefs about international politics so that we can better understand the ideological stance which contributed to the development of *The Cold War Game*. One of Goldhamer's charges at RAND was to consider the ways in which total war could be averted, and in his notes, he breaks down factors of escalation into categories of the "rational" and the "non-rational." This section is labeled "Deterrence of Preventive War" and it lists several factors that the military would need to consider if their aim was to deter future warfare.

Amongst the factors which Goldhamer lists as "Rational," there are internal difficulties, loss/gain expectation (the game theory approach), and the threat (or lack thereof) of the Soviet union's military rollback, which has implications for the loss of military superiority and therefore survival. Internal difficulties here represented logistical and policy challenges, challenges such as the deployment of the supply chains necessary to support troops abroad fell into this category. Loss/gain expectations have a lot to do with tactical acquisitions and trade regulations. Since wars are fought both through economic sanctions and military power, it was important to consider also the ways in which economic war would be waged. And finally, it was of great tactical consequence to RAND to consider whether the Soviet Union's gradual demilitarization in Eastern Europe was devised in order to alleviate the economic strain that a global military infrastructure produced. Recognizing the need for Soviet Russia to maintain a strong posture that would indicate to their population that they were capable of clothing and feeding their population, much of the thought on global policy done at RAND considered strategies which would force the Soviet Union to continue the occupancy of Eastern Germany. This

strategy aimed to corrupt Russia's morale from within, military spending corrupting their domestic infrastructure.¹⁷²

The "Non-Rational" factors which Goldhamer lists in his notes include motives that evade, primarily, the calculated and controlled spaces produced by game theory. These included political actions such as the expansionist effort and the destruction of capitalism by communist nations.¹⁷³ Because military rationality, at this point, was so closely tethered to the maxims of game theory which famously advocated that the best choice in any given scenario was the one which maximized gains and minimized losses,¹⁷⁴ a theory also closely related to free-market economics, it was difficult for thinkers like Goldhamer to understand either a rationality of military expansion which did not provide sustained economic gain, or that of Communism with its supposedly egalitarian mindset. Supporting this point was that Communism was listed as a non-rational factor in Goldhamer's notes. In this way, Goldamer related the rational mind to those holding a free-market mindset, and was concerned that other ideological perspectives were dangerous in so far as they are non-rational and uncontrollable.

Goldhamer's notes on nuclear deterrence help us to better understand him as a philosophical thinker but also as a political elite. A social psychologist like Speier, Goldhamer was also interested in psychological warfare and the ways in which psychological space could be apprehended and controlled by interested government

¹⁷² This is one of the issues that was played out in *The Cold War Game*.

¹⁷³ Herbert Goldhamer, loose-leaf entitled "Constraints," RAND Corporation Archive. Goldhamer – Box 49, n.d..

¹⁷⁴ For a good explanation of the history and impact of John von Neumann's Minimax theorem see Tinne Hoff Kjelden's essay "John von Neumann's Conception of the Minimax Theorem: A Journey Through Different Mathematical Contexts," *History of the Exact Sciences* 56 (2001), 39-68.

parties. He was an adherent to the traditional concepts that governed the social sciences since the mid 1920s. Goldhamer took an approach common to social scientists trained within the tradition of Harold Lasswell, which privileged the views of an educated elite and opposed tactics which would encourage an ethic of autonomous state governance. Goldhamer, Lasswell, and even Lincoln Bloomfield at MIT (whom this dissertation will discuss at a later point) all comprised a network of thinkers who sought to understand the behaviors of the “mass” population.¹⁷⁵ These thinkers attempted to ascertain statistical data intended to define the “masses” in an effort to implement thoroughgoing policies for the control of the population.

So what did Goldhamer mean by the non-rational? A reading of his lecture notes helps to show what he meant with these terms. Goldhamer’s non-rational was the space of affect and anxiety which defined the collective infrastructure. It was the contingency that measures of rational control might be somehow flawed, and problematic. The non-rational was, in other words, the nightmare space which threatened apocalypse within the culture of the Cold War, a hybrid offspring of sociological and psychological theory.

Within his lecture notes on the psychological theory of society, Goldhamer explains that the great problem which social psychologists have been made to deal was “how is the moral harmony of nations achieved? What holds society together?”¹⁷⁶ In response to these questions, Goldhamer moves to a theory of egoism which posits that the conflicting wills of man perpetually hold society in jeopardy, as society relies on

¹⁷⁵ There was, in fact, a letter from Harold Lasswell to Herbert Goldhamer, dated November 4, 1976, in Goldhamer’s file (box 49, “miscellaneous documents”) where Lasswell provides Goldhamer with some feedback on his recently drafted book, *The Advisor*.

¹⁷⁶ Herbert Goldhamer, “Notes on the Pre-History of Sociology,” n.d., RAND Corporation Archive, Goldhamer – Box 49, 10.

cooperation. Drawing on Elie Halevy's work on Philosophical Radicalism, three theories of egoism are posited in specific: one of a productive fusion of interests, another drawn from Adam Smith's postulates of capitalism, and a final one which draws mostly on Bentham which suggests that authority is necessary to resolving this clash of egoisms. Within this note, Goldhamer immediately gestures toward modes of psychological thought along these lines. The herding principle and inclination to association, imitation, commerce, and the division of labor are all listed as psychological impulses that can be motivated to reconcile the clash of egos. Although they were not explicitly formulated as such, these theories hold a fundamental similarity to theories of learning and play that were being developed at the time.

These notes on psychological impulse hold a fascinating symmetry to Jean Piaget's work on mimicry. For Piaget, imitation is a fundamental mode of learning, as it is through the associative and assimilative characteristics of mimicry that learning takes place. It is in this way that play is a fundamental tenant to most educational endeavors, if we are to learn, we must somehow play.¹⁷⁷ Considered next to the work of Goldhamer, if the state is at all able to balance and moderate the clash of wills latent in a natural state of egoism, the state must resort to measures that can be used to shepherd populations. If populations can learn to respect the authority of exchange, a multitude of egos can be balanced and the social order can be maintained. In this sense, it is important to recognize the ways that Goldhamer was tacitly developing a theory of play as social control. And, although it would not be articulated in this manner, the corpus of Goldhamer's work shows

¹⁷⁷ Piaget, 147-168.

the degree to which these theories of social control were manifest in a playful and technical mode.

To this point in particular, Goldhamer continues in a section of his notes titled “Technology and the Modern World” to explain that technology must be taken into account in these discussions of state control because it has shifted the spirit of modern society. He writes specifically that:

One major consequence of the above transformation of society into a capitalistic economy has been that men have in an immeasurably greater degree become instruments (tools).

Capitalism broke through barriers of traditionalism and substituted planned, rational behavior in pursuit of maximum profits. (This does not mean that the ultimate ends of behavior are profits, but that in so far as these ends are pursued within a capitalistic concern the immediate end must be maximum profits). The rationalization of industry has therefore necessarily extended itself to the labor force itself. Patriarchal relations have been displaced by impersonal relations; the laborer is equated with abstract motive power, although it is recognized he cannot be treated simply as a machine.

Such a change could not occur without causing further far-reaching changes in the psychic constitution of society.¹⁷⁸

Goldhamer notes, quite poignantly here, that the transformation to late capitalism has become a problem for the collective psychology of man. He follows this by explaining that within this shift within the psychic order of society has been a transformation and

¹⁷⁸ Herbert Goldhamer, “Technology and the Modern World,” n.d., RAND Corporation Archive, Goldhamer – Box 49, 1-2.

reorientation of man's life-rhythms. Specifically, he continues, "Psychic significance of these rhythms of life and separation of the indvl [sic] from means of production lies in the dissociation of imdvl [sic] from his envt. esp. his immediate milieu." Because, work loses its significance, Goldhamer argues, the individual is kept in a state of precocity wherein stability is lost to the momentary. And, within this shift from the stability to capitalism, to the mode of ruptures in stability with which Goldhamer is concerned he writes, "The economy imparts no continuity, stability to life. Life has no 'unity'. Work loses in meaning (disjunction between work and play). The workshop and tools are no longer source of livelihood [sic]; he is needed, but not as an indvl [sic]. All the elements of production become deprived of meaning and concreteness. Ceases to be identified with his work. (Contract artisan, professional, bureaucrat)."¹⁷⁹ The problems that Goldhamer grapples with in this portion of his notes question how stability could be re-integrated into the livelihood of man. Given the precarity of psychic and labor conditions of the time, Goldhamer could recognize the need to understand the population's non-rational practices, as they were the glue that was hard at work in maintaining the social structure. Play, as I will argue, was the practice through which Goldhamer sought to apprehend the material and psychic state of the non-rational.

Just as capitalism epitomized the rational for Goldhamer, play is the construct that epitomizes the precarious worker, without place, and without means of identification. It is interesting, for this reason in particular, that Goldhamer's *The Cold War Game* would eschew many of the trappings of game in favor of role-play as a mode of understanding the subjectivities of other nations. With *The Cold War Game* in particular, Goldhamer

¹⁷⁹ Herbert Goldhamer, "Technology and the Modern World," n.d., RAND Corporation Archive, Goldhamer – Box 49, 2.

sought to innovate a mode of play that could be useful in providing tools that would provide some insight in to the collective affects of key individuals making decisions in other nations. For, as noted earlier, this was perceived by Goldhamer and many of the other scientists at RAND to be the one aspect of nuclear war that could not be predicted, analyzed and countered.

Finally, in his notes, Goldhamer touches upon the notion that social conservatism could be stabilizing factor reintroduced in an effort to help manage the collective psychological malaise of society. After exploring the modes of the conservative ethos which Goldhamer considered common to both “primitive” and contemporary society (the family and religious groups, notably) he moves to explore modes of conservatism that were effective in sustaining other cultures. Interestingly, he writes “kismet” or fatalism as a key factor of “oriental” stability and resistance to social change. Within Caillois' typology of play, fatalism is considered a factor that has much to do with chance and is therefore well aligned with gambling and modes of play, which seem to offer an escape from the social order.¹⁸⁰ Perhaps what Goldhamer referred to in his notes as “kismet” was important to him because it epitomized the environmental factors that provoke a need for social action. To this extent, the unpredictable (chance-like) aspects of nature were always looming within the context of play. These aspects could provoke political actors to move either through their rational or non-rational capabilities.

Goldhamer's work at RAND can be understood as work toward a science of play as divination. The somewhat occult aspects of this practice are perhaps the reason why Roger Caillois viewed such practices with suspicion. For Caillois, the combination of

¹⁸⁰ Caillois, 36.

mimicry and chance (alea) to be a forbidden, or problematic, combination of play aspects. His point is that the deceptive elements of simulation, or mimicry, conflict with the fatalism of chance. The sacred cannot persist if an individual is able to take agency over it. Role-play in a laboratory setting, then, with “nature” as a controlled chance element, as *The Cold War Game* established, is sacrilegious in that in that it implies controlling the uncontrollable. Game theory, as operationalized at RAND in wargames is, likewise, an instance where simulation and chance intersect. In this circumstance, game theory is the engine of simulation that sets an order to the natural. It is an apparatus of control. Despite the attempts of these experiments to control and mitigate chance, it persists and can scarcely be mitigated. As Caillois explains:

It makes no sense to try to deceive chance. The player asks for a decision that assures him the unconditional favor of destiny. At the moment of entreaty he would not wish to appear in the guise of a stranger, nor would he believe or pretend that he was anyone other than himself. Besides, no simulation can deceive destiny, by definition. Alea presupposes full and total abandon to the whims of chance, submission to which is incompatible with disguise or subterfuge.

Otherwise, one enters the domain of magic, the object of which is to coerce destiny.¹⁸¹

For Caillois, problematically, mimicry implies deception and this deception undermines the function of chance as a game mechanic. Where in a real war situation the sudden loss of rations would be a problem directly related to fortune and chance, in a simulated supply chain such an event is planned, and, as such, removes the sense of chance from

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 73.

the play-space. Players may not be able to anticipate the event, but the designers who instantiate it are undermining the sense of the sacred invoked by a true sense of *alea* (or chance). Though this is an understandable reading and rationale of the problem, it must be noted that in Goldhamer's experiments, the goal was not to deceive destiny through simulation as much as it was to understand and change the course of destiny.

Goldhamer's work at the RAND Corporation aimed to predict the decisions of other nation states so that the United States could make decisions that were in their best interests in the global-political stage. Doing this meant recognizing the rational and non-rational states of other nations, and understanding how these states would determine the world's politics. Then, by anticipating these decisions, Goldhamer's work would allow the United States to act in a manner which would alter this predetermined set of outcomes in a way that met their key interests.

For Caillois, magic is the social concept that most clearly implies the coercion of destiny. In this sense, as they sought to manifest the will of the United States on the global-political stage, the experiments in games at The Corporation are very much in the tradition of this sort of magic. An exception that must be made if the RAND Corporation is to be seen as having harnessed some form of magic through their experiments is that the thinkers at the RAND Corporation were fundamentally opposed to principles such as chance and destiny. The entire premise of the RAND Corporation's Social Science Division, as noted earlier, was to establish an empirical method for understanding unknown variables in the mathematical equations of Game Theory. The world, then, was a rational place where everything could be understood and interpolated into a statistic through the scientific method. The statistical construction of the world, which was the

project of the RAND Corporation's Social Science Division, would later become the exact methodology for world building in role-playing games.

Goldhamer's experiments, in contrast to the RAND Corporation's work on game theory, strayed from these statistical formulae, and tried to use games as a way of understanding political spaces and interpersonal relationships. Because of Goldhamer's interests in the psyches of the masses, and the ways in which simulation could be used as a way to predict their behavior, it is important to recognize the degree to which his experiments were groundbreaking work toward a science of divination. *The Cold War Game* sought to coerce destiny, and it did this by understanding the affective states of key actors in various nations. And, given the game's reliance on qualitative data and interpretation, it the critics would repeat over and over again in the debrief notes, that it was unclear if *The Cold War Game* could be trusted to provide a true insight into matters of strategic intelligence.¹⁸²

Paul Kecskemeti

The experiments in role-playing at ended in 1956 as optimism around the project wore thin and funding ran dry. As this section will show, because the infrastructure (players, time, and space) of *The Cold War Game* was costly, the game was discontinued. This section explores the economic factors that led to the end of role-playing at RAND.

In a 1958 summary of the RAND experiments on political gaming, W.P. Davison summarized the economic reasons that *The Cold War Game* experiments was dismantled. He writes, "This experiment was abandoned when it became clear that the

¹⁸² W. P. Davison, 1.

oversimplification of the situation that was necessary in order to permit quantification of political variables made the game of doubtful value for the assessment of political strategies and tactics in the real world.”¹⁸³ Just as this chapter began by positing that *The Cold War Game* existed as a site of experimentation because those who were working on issues of game theory at RAND needed to find modes for translating the non-rational into quantifiable terms,¹⁸⁴ it is important to recognize that the game never quite succeeded in that goal. But while the game was successful, on the one hand, in producing a dialogue that took seriously the social affordances of international politics, it failed to provide a concise method for theorizing the non-rational for quantitative analysis. Additionally, the game prompted a notable critique by Paul Kecskemeti, a RAND social sciences researcher who, like Herbert Goldhamer and Hans Speier, also specialized in the sociology of knowledge.

Paul Kecskemeti, like Hans Speier, was also interested in propaganda studies and psychological warfare, publishing essays with titles like: “Totalitarian Communications as a Means of Control: A Note on the Sociology of Propaganda,”¹⁸⁵ “The ‘Policy Sciences’: Aspiration and Outlook,”¹⁸⁶ and “Sociological Aspects of the Information Process.”¹⁸⁷ From these papers it is clear that Kecskemeti was interested in discussions

¹⁸³ Ibid., 1.

¹⁸⁴ As noted earlier, the political and economic structure of the Social Sciences division at RAND was contingent upon them providing quantitative data on “non-rational” states to those working on the simulations that used game theory.

¹⁸⁵ Paul Kecskemeti, “Totalitarian Communications as a Means of Control: A Note on the Sociology of Propaganda,” 1950, RAND Corporation Archive, P-150.

¹⁸⁶ Paul Kecskemeti, “The ‘Policy Sciences’ Aspiration and Outlook, 1952, RAND Corporation Archive, P-287.

¹⁸⁷ Paul Kecskemeti, “Sociological Aspects of The Information Process,” 1953, RAND Corporation Archive, P-430.

which surrounded issues of truth, the imposition of interpretation upon measurement,¹⁸⁸ for instance, the emotional impacts of propaganda on the individual,¹⁸⁹ and the production of cultural knowledge, be it true or false.¹⁹⁰ Kecskemeti drew directly on Harold Lasswell's school of the social sciences, which was concerned with the apprehension, measurement, and social control over the public sphere.¹⁹¹ But Kecskemeti broke from Lasswell by arguing that a strictly quantitative science was impossible for behavior was inherently not probabilistic.¹⁹² For the time within this particular scientific community, these were fairly radical ideas, that a comprehensive theory of behavior must encompass methods beyond those in the traditional domain of statistical analysis.

Kecskemeti wrote:

If the theory of social reality that will ultimately emerge is not going to be "Newtonian" and deterministic, it does not follow that it will inevitably be probabilistic. For the disjunction of these two terms is not exhaustive. There may be logical forms, as yet undeveloped, which differ both from the model of 'differential equations' and from that of 'distributional functions.' It seems to me very likely that social theory can be systematized only in terms of logical forms that are neither deterministic nor probabilistic.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁸ Paul Kecskemeti, "The 'Policy Sciences' Aspiration and Outlook, 15.

¹⁸⁹ Paul Kecskemeti, "Totalitarian Communications as a Means of Control: A Note on the Sociology of Propaganda," 9-10.

¹⁹⁰ Paul Kecskemeti, "Sociological Aspects of The Information Process," 1.

¹⁹¹ Armand Mattelart and Michèle Mattelart, *Theories of Communication: A Short Introduction*, translated by Susan Gruenheck Taponier, (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2004/1995).

¹⁹² Paul Kecskemeti, "The 'Policy Sciences' Aspiration and Outlook," 20.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 21.

Intriguingly, Kecskemeti's dilemma, the search for a logical form which was neither deterministic nor probabilistic led him to eventually argue that the true problem of the rational society was the gulf between practical and common knowledge and expertise. The populous, for Kecskemeti, lacked the expert knowledge of the scientist, and as such, they often made decisions that ran counter to their best interests. Ideally he hoped for a reconciliation of an expert and populous worldview. His writing in 1952 reflects a sensibility about how role-playing affects could be an effective bridge between these worldviews, even though he was unable to articulate it in such terms.

We can infer from his writing that that Kecskemeti viewed what would come to be known as role-playing as a form of praxis with the potential to enlighten the masses, with the potential of granting common intuition to the expert and expert knowledge to the commoner. Explicitly, he acknowledged the relationship between scientific knowledge and social roles:

My point is merely that a fruitful application of scientific knowledge to problems of policy is not possible if the separation between the 'expert' and the 'practical man' remains compete — if their roles are as completely differentiated as they are in the realm of technological knowledge. When science is to be applied to 'policy,' the practical man must 'know' something, and the expert must 'desire' and 'value' something. The gap between the unenlightened 'wish' and the goal-neutral 'information' must be filled. Curiously enough, this conclusion points in the same direction as our methodological analysis did: towards a certain fusion of the roles of the active and knowing subject.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 25.

The explicit language used here, regarding a method for the fusion of social roles of “practical man” and “expert man,” is, indeed, the sort of knowledge produced by role-playing exercises. By embodying the subjectivity of another, one gains an insight toward the forms of knowledge required by others. These potentialities—of knowledge sharing and empathy—are two of the many dimensions of the ludic imagination. Role-playing is defined here by Kecskemeti as a space of potentiality that helps to cultivate a practical and emotional knowledge for navigating everyday life.

Despite this somewhat optimistic perspective about the transformative potentials of role-playing games, Kecskemeti’s critiques were more pointed than any other. His writing makes clear how *The Cold War Game* disappointed others at RAND. Although role-play may have appeared to Kecskemeti as a mode of enlightenment at one point, it would be clear by the conclusion of his work that his utopian vision of the technique would never come to be at RAND.

By reading the critiques of *The Cold War Game*, we can better understand the games impact on both a micro and macro scale. Though the game only persisted over the course of four years (1954-1958) at RAND, the game’s failure allows us to understand the complex historical intersection of qualitative methodologies, game design, and knowledge. Although it was generally reported that the game had many positive aspects, it was, overall, too risky to be implemented as a policy analytic at this point. Key amongst the game’s most outspoken defenders and critics was Paul Kecskemeti.

Kecskemeti's critique was at its most notable in his paper "Summary of Cold War Game Activities in the Social Science Division — May Experiment."¹⁹⁵ In summarizing the feedback of several players (W. P. Davison, J. M. Goldsen, P. Kecskemeti, F. M. Sallagar, E. W. Schnitzer, and E. Willenz) Kecskemeti divided the critiques between two extremes. W. P. Davison offered one of the two extreme views, claiming that the game was patently unscientific, as it held no relationship to the scientific method. At the other extreme was Hans Speier, who at this early stage still perceived some utility in its use as a heuristic tool, "It permitted [us] to pierce the curtain of the future; it exposed the analyst to direct challenge by an opponent; it thus made possible to set up situations correcting the errors inherent in self-centered speculation."¹⁹⁶ In other words, the game allowed for players and analysts to perceive a holistic model of the situation that extended beyond their individual subjectivities and worldviews. Despite Speier's optimism, however, it was noted, "the majority of the participants seemed disappointed by the present exercise." The second experiment yielded a sense of disappointment from its players; even Goldhamer admitted that productive discussions were rare.¹⁹⁷

Critiques of the game addressed it practically. If *The Cold War Game* could not provide insights relevant to either policy analysis or political theory, it was of limited practical use to RAND, which sought to encourage experimentation that could deliver hard analytics to policy makers. Overall the critiques around the game itself surrounded issues of the time, novelty, scope, and utility of the game.¹⁹⁸ Although these experiments

¹⁹⁵ Paul Kecskemeti, "Summary of Cold War Game Activities in the Social Science Division – May Experiment," 27.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 27.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 29.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 30-33.

were discontinued specifically because of these critiques, it is important to return to these critiques because they provide a sense of how role-playing has historically been evaluated.

Notably, the role-playing experiments at the RAND Corporation lacked the efficiency of other analytics. The critique of time was that the pacing of the game was too slow. The early games moved almost at real time, with documents being prepared and submitted for each move. Even though this was a fine technique for simulating the contexts and consequences of real world problems, it was ultimately found to be frustrating by players of the game. According to F. Sallagar, an objective analysis of the game was particularly difficult due to the elements of pressure the game introduced to the players.¹⁹⁹ Players became so immersed in the game that they forgot themselves, and were unable to sort through the analytical insights the game offered over the course of play. This pressure can be regarded as an affective disposition produced by the game, in so far as players were forced to occupy the emotional states generated by the game's immersive design.

To this point, the inhabitation of emotional states, the game's novelty was critiqued by its players as well. Kecskemeti noted, "One of the main criticisms made against the exercise was that as a whole it was dull and uninteresting," this boredom led to a general problematic relative to the quality of the work contingent on the game, itself. He continued, "Interesting political insights could be developed by the players either individually or in group discussion, but when it came to boiling down the discussions to actual moves, the results reflected no high-level thinking. It appeared pointless to discuss imaginary moves that were, if anything, less incisive and momentous than the actual

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 33.

policies pursued by the State Department.”²⁰⁰ Some other players, such as F. Sallagar, did note that despite the game’s boring nature, the knowledge it produced was, in fact, interesting due to the sedentary and “tame” nature of the Cold War.

Despite the fact that the game reflected the plodding strategies of The Cold War, its focus on the reproducing the day-to-day documentation of key politicians in a variety of nations, left many more questions about the game’s efficiency. True to the political designs of the real world, participants in *The Cold War Game* were also made to commit their moves via press-release style doctrines and documents which acknowledged on a so-called world stage what the intentions of that particular nation-state were. Additionally, further documentation which provided a justification for the decisions made by participants in *The Cold War Game* was necessitated, perhaps mirroring the bureaucratic infrastructure of the real world. This microscopic scope of the turns of the game was considered “pointless” by some participants. Many, after the second round remained skeptical about the game’s utility and purpose.

Critiques of the game would also lead Kecskemeti to draft a fascinating article entitled, “War Games and Political Games.”²⁰¹ A methodological manifesto, this essay delved into what factors were at stake with the transformation from war-game to war-play. Kecskemeti writes:

What happens when we play for real instead of nominal stakes? Does this difference reflect itself in the strategies employed, and, if so, do these shifts in strategy have a merely psychological relevance or should the theoretical analysis

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 31.

²⁰¹ Paul Kecskemeti, “War Games and Political Games,” 1955, RAND Corporation Archive, D-2849.

of the game concern itself with them? Interesting as these problems are, however, I do not want to discuss them. Rather, I would like to look at the inverse problem which is crucial to war games: the transformation of a [serious] game into a [playful] game.²⁰²

Through Kecskemeti's analysis he systematically discusses the relevant differences between what he terms "S-Games," and "P-Games" (or serious games and playful games). It is clear in this read that Kecskemeti was particularly interested in the whole of gaming at RAND, shifting his focus from matters of game theory to Goldhamer's work in *The Cold War Game* and then back again. Again, like his critiques of the second exercise in political gaming, Kecskemeti remained skeptical about the utility of gaming, even as an instrument of education and training.

The strategic use of gaming, for Kecskemeti, lay in its ability to produce exploits for complex situations, not in its ability to train better diplomats and politicians. In his words, "Any attempt to represent the political universe in terms of simple inputs will so degrade it that the manipulation of the inputs will have no bearing on upon the practical tasks before us, or, of that matter, upon our theoretical understanding of the process."²⁰³ To be sure, Kecskemeti refers here to the RAND school of game theory, not Goldhamer's political games. In fact, Kecskemeti refers to Goldhamer's work fondly, and uses his preexisting writing on *The Cold War Game* to further critique game theory's ability to produce exploits, instead asserting that it succeeds in generating new basic knowledge, but not for providing exploits to existing basic knowledge, which, at the time, was one of the perceived benefits of gaming.

²⁰² Ibid., 2.

²⁰³ Ibid., 11.

But, just as Kecskemeti was skeptical to the ability of game theory to prove a robust set of exploits for political strategy, he was also skeptical about the ability of political gaming to do much more than generate strong discussion, “What [*The Cold War Game*] may to is to clarify an existing situation and lay bare some promising strategic opportunities inherent in it. This is what the expression ‘useful discussion and some good ideas’ means. But this is just the ‘payoff’ that any ‘political’ game may produce at best . . . the political S-game universe is different from the military S-game universe and the conditions of P-gameability are different.”²⁰⁴ The point here is that Game Theory and *The Cold War Game* were incomparable. Political games deal with politics, which require discussion and role-playing as opposed to military games that have, since the *Kriegsspiel*, been the domain of quantitative analytics.

Ominously, however, Kecskemeti’s critiques and comparisons were staged as an intervention in the funding decisions made by the Ford Foundation (which funded *The Cold War Game*) and RAND. As there was a ontological gap in the methodological approaches taken by those in the hard sciences and the social sciences at RAND, funding for the expenses incurred by *The Cold War Game* were constantly questioned, and Kecskemeti worked hard to manage the game’s critiques analytically so as to provide a justification for the games continued experimentation. Experiments in role-playing would formally cease in 1958, but in those five years of experimentation the game had found purchase in many other organizations apart from the cloistered beachside walls of the RAND Corporation. Most important of all, these experiments would built upon by social scientists like Lincoln Bloomfield at MIT, and wargamers like Larry Peery in the years to

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 13.

come. Although they never caught on at the RAND Corporation, due to the political makeup of the company's various departments, these experiments in role-playing would be influential for individuals in several different strata of society.

The Non-Rational

The single theme that dominates in the experiments at RAND is the question of what Goldhamer would term the “non-rational,” and its utility in political and military analysis. Concretely, the experiments in role-playing at RAND stemmed from a memorandum by Nathan Leites and Hans Speier entitled, “Possibilities of Research on the Subject: Soviet Behavior in the Case of an Increase in Soviet Military Capability,” (1959) which focused on the political strategies the US should adopt in the case that the Soviet Union was to increase its nuclear capabilities.²⁰⁵ Here the inclination was for the US to adopt a hard posture so as to maintain global dominance and atomic capability.

For Leites and Speier, after the development of atomic weapons, the affective and emotional states of a populous had to be taken into account. And, given that the Cold War was as much a war of ideas as it was a war of military capability and might, they were concerned that the psychologies of the public would be manipulated by the Soviets in an effort to both coerce the United States to slow down their technological development (which were anathema to the theories regarding military technology the Jerry Pournelle

²⁰⁵ Nathan Leites and Hans Speier, “Possibilities of Research on the Subject: Soviet Behavior in the Case of an Increase in Soviet Military Capability,” 1959, RAND Corporation Archive, D-514.

would later develop and publish²⁰⁶) while simultaneously seducing the populous to the potentialities of Communism. They would write:

As Western populations (and, to some extent, governments) become increasingly anxious about his new and decisive menace from the Soviet Union, they will tend to be impressed by the mere fact that the Soviet Union is taking an initiative toward what it alleges to be a reduction of this intolerable threat. Western governments may then find it difficult to react to Soviet proposals in a way which prevents the Politiboro from scoring a moral, in addition to a strength, point. Politiboro opportunities to use this technique may be particularly great with regard to BW where it can allege parity, if not a lead.²⁰⁷

This fear of social coercion and seduction would later be summarized in Goldhamer's write-up of the first game, "Summary of Cold-War Game Activities in the Social Science Division," where he enumerated the strategic rationale for The Cold War Game. For Goldhamer, the game would address both "Intimidation by Communist-bloc governments of non-Communist governments in matters affecting the interests and objectives of the U.S" and, "Seduction of non-Communist governments by Communist governments," amongst other things.²⁰⁸ Just as a new global and political military stage was established by the innovation of atomic weapons, a cultural sense of collective psychology moved to the mainstream and became the object of intellectual discussion. This involved a personification of governments and an appeal to their emotional states. Governments

²⁰⁶ Stefan Possony and Jerry Pournelle, *The Strategy of Technology: Winning the Decisive War*, (Cambridge, UK: The University Press of Cambridge, 1970).

²⁰⁷ Nathan Leites and Hans Speier, 10.

²⁰⁸ Herbert Goldhamer, "Summary of Cold-War Game Activities in the Social Science Division," 6.

could be seduced, swayed, and coerced into gambits that might not be in their best rational interests. This new mode of collective psychology offers a specific case for the utility of the experiments in role-playing at RAND, as they lent an insight toward the non-rational and emotional states of collectives.

This chapter points toward the ways in which role-playing as a military technique, was devised, in part, as a way of managing and inhabiting alternate subjectivities. While much of the military analysis at RAND focused on finding quantitative and objective solutions to issues of mass psychology, role-playing, allowed researchers to understand something different. It allowed researchers to understand and embody the experience of an other, as opposed to measuring it. *The Cold War Game* provided participants with a technique for improving their tacit diplomatic knowledge, and also helped to provide researchers with a holistic strategic view of a possible future. In this sense, Goldhamer's sense of the "non-rational," was effectively a model for understanding subjective experiences. This, however, led to much consternation and divisiveness over its efficacy as a technique within the corporation's sects, which were pragmatically driven and concerned with hard, quantifiable, means. And, while it can only be inferred from the reports on the experiments and the academic interests of Goldhamer, Kecskemeti, and Speier, that was of particular interest due to its ability to make the inaccessible, non-rational, aspects of the other's psychology, tangible, evidence supporting this inference is particularly strong, and is particularly relevant to Nordic experiments in role-playing occurring today.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁹ Jakko Stenros and Markus Montola, *Nordic larp*, (Denmark: Fëa Livia, 2010).

Quite unlike the experiments of Game Theory, which typify our knowledge of the intersection of simulations and gaming, *The Cold War Game* allows us to understand how simulations can be used to understand affective and emotional behavior as well as rational activity. Additionally, the work at RAND furthers the idea of role-playing as a form of simulation which fosters a sense of collective intelligence amongst its constituents, and therefore, as a mode of producing what Bernard Stiegler would refer to as psycho-power. Psycho-power, which differs from psychological warfare, only in so far as it is a broader mode of construing discourse (both positive and negative) around the maintenance and management of the psyche.²¹⁰ Just as Fuller and Goffey, point to the ways in which role-playing operates, as a mode of capitalist self-optimization and excellence, so to was its perceived utility at RAND.²¹¹ As Goldsen notes, RAND's experiments in role-playing were exacting in the ways they succeeded in training diplomats, and as such priming bodies for actual diplomatic service.²¹² Role-playing taps into the core potentialities of psycho-power by allowing players to approach one another from radically new perspectives—to foster new affinities with one another.

While these potentially therapeutic uses of role-playing as a form of soft-power were able to better mold and acclimate psyches toward diplomatic conversation and understanding may have been lost, it is interesting how the psychic production of affective states would carry on within the technique's dissemination. For instance, strong

²¹⁰ Bernard Stiegler describes in an interview with Patrick Crogan his definition of psycho-power. For Stiegler, psychic power develops from the libidinal attachments people form with media: the power of advertising, for example, to encourage consumer purchases or the power of social media to produce new social bonds. Patrick Crogan, "Knowledge, Care, and Trans-Individuation: An Interview with Bernard Stiegler," *Cultural Politics* 6, no.2, (2010) 158-159.

²¹¹ Fuller and Goffey, 153-159.

²¹² Joseph Goldsen, 4.

communities of practice would be built around role-playing games in the existing wargaming underground, and players in at least some of today's Nordic role-playing experiments have reported social changes as extreme as the change of sexual preference.²¹³ And while *The Cold War Game* would require that policy experts take on the roles of the various nations in the game, fantasy role-playing games like *Dungeons & Dragons*, would require, instead, an expertise in fictional fantasy worlds. As role-playing would develop into a technique best suited for the inhabitation of imaginary subjectivities, the materiality of the experience would become attuned to the values of the authors who have defined these worlds in their writing.

This chapter has shown how role-playing and game theory were situated in a hierarchical relationship at the RAND Corporation. It presents evidence that shows how role-playing games provided a potentially transformative avenue of research around emotive and affective states for Herbert Goldhamer and Paul Kecskementi, yet failed to secure continued funding due to their prohibitive costs and slow development. The next chapter turns towards better defining the culture of the American wargaming underground to better understand the grassroots development of role-playing games.

²¹³ Tova Gerge and Gabriel Widing, "The Character, the Player, and Their Shared Body," *Role, Play, Art*, edited by Thorbiörn Fritzson and Tobias Wrigstad, (Stockholm: Föreningen Knutpunkt., 2012), 47-56.

Chapter 4: Understanding the Culture of Play-By-Mail *Diplomacy*

This section details the politics of the fan communities through which the cultural technique of role-playing circulated after its development at RAND and the MIT Center for International Studies. This chapter presents an analysis of the archive of fanzines written and distributed through grassroots publishing networks maintained by *Diplomacy* fans in the 1960s and 70s. By first presenting a macroanalysis of the content produced in this timeframe across the country, and then focusing in on a microanalysis of the dynamics of the New York region in the early 1970s, I aim to arrive at a sense of the breadth, depth, and scope of *Diplomacy* fan communities at large, which played a significant role in the history of role-playing games. If we are to understand the persistent replication of violent, misogynist, racist, and homophobic tropes in games in the twenty-first century, we must turn to their historical predecessors, such as *Diplomacy*, to better understand their genealogical connection to the military context of the Cold War. The chapter begins with a series of visualizations I created for this study that show the geographic growth of the *Diplomacy* fan community over time. These charts aim to show how the community operated as network, and provide concrete evidence of the far reach of their communications, and thus their cultural influence. The chapter then concludes with a discussion of the politics of The New York Conspiracy (a grassroots publishing network), and the ways in which the politics of race, sexuality, and gender were an explicit matter of discussion within the hobby community. This is exemplified by two primary dialogues: First, debate over the censorship of hate speech within the publications, as was advocated for by Penelope Naughton Dickens, an editor of *The Pouch*. And second, the prevalence of racist tropes in discussions of Nixon's

impeachment that appeared in the various publications of *The New York Conspiracy*.²¹⁴

Together, this macroanalysis of the trends in the community at large and the microanalysis of particular discussions within it, point to the various ways play and games were imagined in the 1960s.

Situating Penelope Naughton Dickens' narrative within the context of the *Diplomacy* player community circa 1973 helps to support a focus on the ways in which these imagined game worlds are escapes from the affects of fear (e.g. fear of nuclear Armageddon, and fear of racial protest) as produced through the mass media in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In this case, the social anxiety surrounding new approaches to and organizations of race and gender as produced by various civil rights movements relates to an odd sense of racism and homophobia borne from nostalgia in these *Diplomacy* fanzines. These instances of hateful colloquialisms in *Diplomacy* fanzines will be read as a sort of vertiginous text, in that they help to produce an precarious space of play that questions boundaries and social paradigms. Not only are the players entering into some manner of vertigo by taking on the roles of kings and queens in the early twentieth century (an anachronism that undermines the social order of class and the metaphysical order of time), they are also engaging in a form of edge play with one another where vulgarity serves as a way to definite the limits of the play-space. Because vertigo has the potential to transform the player for the better or the worse, it is important to consider this case as a genealogy of limits in role-playing technique, as well as an analysis of which limits help to a cultivate a healthy sense of community and which serve to poison it.

²¹⁴ A sample of some key publications in this discourse can be found in Appendix B.

Visualizing the Network

By understanding the scope of the grassroots publishing network that sprung up around *Diplomacy*, we can understand how widespread was the distribution of ideas within it. In particular, a sense of the network's size and reach helps to reveal the grassroots and networked structures that through discussion, debate, correspondence, and publication, define aspects of the ludic imagination. Therefore, if we are to understand the discursive impact of the ludic imagination more broadly, we must begin by understanding the network's makeup—one that crisscrosses through communities of adolescents, veterans, military elites, and academics. In order to do this, I turn to an analysis of the 750 *Diplomacy* fanzines that had publication runs between 1963 and 1991. From this large swath of fanzines, it was somewhat difficult to ascertain which fanzines were fundamental to the network, and whether or not these key hubs found popularity due to the happenstance of their geographic locales or the dense network ties that their player bases worked to build. (Some fanzines were published for only a brief period of time, totaling somewhere between one and five issues.) Understanding the scope and distribution of these many fanzines is extremely difficult to pin down in practice. In order to work through this problem I coded and interpreted a set of data visualizations of the *Diplomacy* fanzine network. In what follows, I will first describe my source material for this visual analysis, *Meinel's Encyclopedia of Postal Diplomacy Zines*, and then describe my methods for producing the charts. Finally, I will conclude with an analysis of what the charts show and the implications for this research.

Diplomacy zine editors would solicit articles from contributors, who were generally participants in the games that were played within that particular zine. Then,

depending on their particular policy they would either reprint these submissions with no changes or they would edit and retype the submissions themselves. Unedited submissions were often directly taped into the hard copy of the issue during photocopying or mimeographing, which makes them fairly easy to identify since the sudden change in font-type and formatting indicates a clear change in author and suggests that the material has not yet been edited (Figure 4.1). After an adequate amount of articles had been acquired—about eight pages’ worth in the average zine—editors would use mimeograph to run off twenty to fifty copies of the issue. They would then fold, address, and mail these copies to the twenty to fifty subscribers in their network. Postage was pre-paid through subscription fees, and editors would often offer a “treasurer’s report” for the subscribers’ benefit (depending on the zine’s size) that would outline the zine’s savings, expenditures, and profits. All of these tasks required a lot of time and effort on the part of the publisher, expenditures that were completely distinct from and often unaccounted for by the zines’ profits generated. Very rarely did the proceeds accrued by these hobbyists go toward labor costs. Instead, the treasurer’s reports show that the money was saved, primarily with the intention of helping to maintain the infrastructure of the community.²¹⁵

²¹⁵ Hobbyists in the community endeavored to make ends meet so that they could continue publishing. This was considered to be in the best interests of their fanzines, but also the greater community.

THE VIEWS OF A WARGAMER - A REBUTTAL TO NICK'S COLUMN IN ISSUE 32

Nick's column in issue 32 infuriated several people who play wargames including me. I've been a player of wargames for four years, and I'd like to contest several points that Nick made.

First of all, the purposes of wargaming are to provide intellectual stimulation (which, personally I cannot get from mathematical problems because they tend to drive me crazy and also I cannot get from chess because of its limitations, i.e. limited number of pieces, no terrain differences, etc.) and to portray the horrors of war, so that we may strive to stop such occurrences in real life. In a game, I have no compunctions about eliminating an opponent's division, plane, or individual man, because all I'm doing is taking a $\frac{1}{2}$ " by $\frac{1}{2}$ " cardboard counter off a board. In real life however, I doubt that I could do any of the above mentioned things.

PRESS RELEASES:

45 page thirteen

73-8 (THE HALFBACK OF NOTRE DAME)

(ANKARA TIMES) 1902

Baron Paul von Neumann, the famous oil baron here in Ankara, has announced that his sister, Countess Dracula von Neumann, will be visiting him.....
A mass murderer has been loose in Ankara this whole week. The man, who could only be criminally insane, goes around the streets late at night and impales his victims. Historians agree that this man must be suffering from a "Vlad Dracul" Complex. Vlad Dracul is the historical Dracula who is accredited with killing 250 000 peasants by impaling them in Rumania in the late 1400's.....

Figure 4.1 - Differences in font between two articles in a single issue.

It is useful to consider these aspects of production through the lens of labor because they help to highlight how affective bonds are key to the organization of this community. The players and publishers in this example did not spend their spare time publishing articles about *Diplomacy* because they hoped to turn a quick buck; instead they produced articles for the love of the game and an interest in corresponding with others who shared their interests. The result of these correspondences was a massive network of fans who were all highly invested in communicating, tinkering, and publishing with one another.

In visualizing the fanzine network publication data, I used data from the hobby publication, *Meinel's Encyclopedia of Postal Diplomacy Zines (North American*

Release).²¹⁶ The *Encyclopedia of Postal Diplomacy Zines* is a fan document from 1992 that was written with the intent of offering a comprehensive list of all *Diplomacy* fanzines published in North America. From the *Encyclopedia*'s introduction:

In December 1983, Jim Meinel discussed the concept of a listing of every postal Diplomacy zine ever published with Larry Peery at Beethoven Con in San Diego. A grand idea, it was agreed, but a monumental task to even start. It was put on a back burner and forgotten. Now, nine years later on the eve of the hobby's 30th anniversary, a first attempt at a compilation of all postal zines has been published.²¹⁷

Meinel's Encyclopedia encompasses 768 entries detailing the titles, publishers, locations, years published, last known issues, and general trivia of all the *Diplomacy* zines published between the years 1961 to 1992. Meinel admits in the introduction that the increasing accessibility of online bulletin board forums led to a lack of what he refers to as "top flight" zines in the late 1980s, a point that is also used to justify the *Encyclopedia*'s seemingly arbitrary thirty-year scope. Nonetheless, many of the zines that began their runs toward the end of the *Encyclopedia*'s timeline continued for a good deal of time after its publication. The *Encyclopedia* continues to be a valuable resource today, as much of the bibliographic data used by The Ray Browne Popular Culture Archive, which houses The Hoosier Collection of Diplomacy Fanzines, was pieced together by cross-referencing their collection with the information provided in *Meinel's Encyclopedia*.

²¹⁶ Jim Meinel, *Meinel's Encyclopedia of Postal Diplomacy Zines (North American Release)*, (Great White North Publications: USA), <http://diplom.org/Postal/Zines/TAP/Encyclo.pdf>.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, v.

Working from this resource, I transcribed its entries into a spreadsheet, which I then imported into the data visualization software, CartoDb. Because the information provided by Meinel is not exhaustive, and because the CartoDb software has some constraints, I encountered a couple of limitations. First, some of the dates offered by Meinel were somewhat inspecific, only offering a year of publication but no month. In these cases, I took an educated guess as to the month that the publication either ended or began based upon the number of known issues. I rounded to the most likely month based on a formula that assumed that most hobby publications were publishing at a rate of one issue per month. Of the 768 issues documented in the *Encyclopedia*, I needed to make these estimations for 110 issues. One further limitation when translating Meinel's entries into my spreadsheet for CartoDb, was that I was not able to translate the movement of zines which were reported to have been published in several different locations over time. In my work, therefore, these have been visualized only at their original location in order to preserve the congruency of several records and keep the database manageable. That said, it would be interesting to track this geographical and longitudinal dimension in future research, especially because some key individuals, such as Rod Walker lived in several states (including California, New York, and Nebraska) and influenced the adoption and institution of new grassroots publications amongst the residents of these various regions.

The final step of my process in developing this spreadsheet was to find a correspondence between the cities where these zines were published and their zip codes in order to produce data that could be input in the algorithm for the visualization. I cross-referenced the city names listed in the *Encyclopedia* with their zip codes and then was

able to use these zip codes to geolocate the cities where these zines were published in the CartoDb software. From this geodata, I was able to structure two separate visualizations. These dynamic visualizations can be found at my website, aarontrammell.com.

One is a straightforward reference tool that shows a point on a map of The United States of America for each fanzine published (Figure 4.2). Clicking on these points allows the user to see the zine that was published in that area and refer to all of the metadata about it provided in *Meinel's Encyclopedia*. The second visualization I created is a cumulative visualization that shows the density and growth of fanzines over time. These two visualizations convey the scope and geography of *Diplomacy* fanzines and show how they developed over time.²¹⁸ It is important to understand the geography of this network so that we can better understand later examples in this dissertation that explain how a grassroots and networked structure of hobbyists continually redefined games and play within the definition space of the ludic imagination—including some explicitly quantitative and oppositional definitions that I argue were inherited from military think tanks like the RAND Corporation.

²¹⁸ Because this visualization only shows the scope and geography of fanzines as they accumulate over time, but doesn't show how fanzines enter and exit this discourse, it cannot be relied on to show how things changed geographically over time. A more accurate reflection of this dynamic would show clusters that thinned out more over time in urban areas and occasionally flickered on and off in rural areas. That being said, I prefer this cumulative visualization more than I would have preferred the alternative because I feel like it visually represents the impact and growth of ideas geographically.

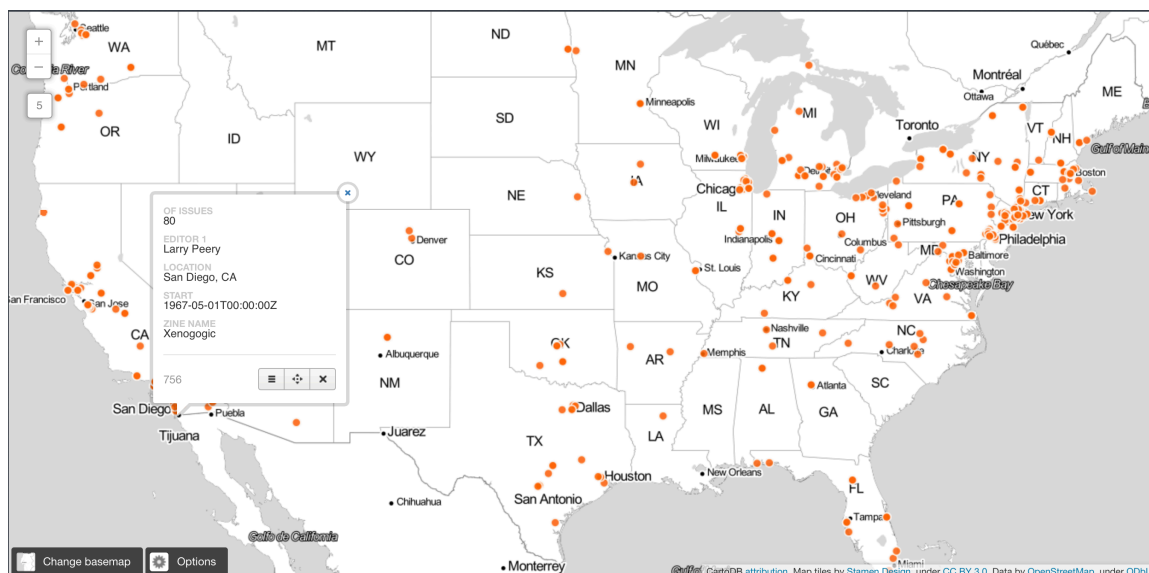


Figure 4.2 - An example of the *Diplomacy* Visualization I constructed with CartoDb. Used here to display metadata for *Xenogonic*.

Figure 4.2 shows the geographic clusters where hobby publishing becomes popular. Unlike in the cumulative map (Appendix A), this map features a mark for every instance of a *Diplomacy* fanzine in North America. We can also infer, therefore, where the phenomenon fails to catch on, i.e. Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, South Dakota, and South Carolina. This suggests that even though the impact of postal *Diplomacy* was large insofar as it had a substantial impact around the framing and context of the hobby, there were specific geographic regions and cultures that did not have the opportunity to participate in the hobby's discourse. Residents of the northern Rocky Mountain region did not publish any *Diplomacy* fanzines, and this is why their voices are not reflected in the greater discourse around game design of the time.

Appendix A shows how the postal community of *Diplomacy* game players expanded over time, indicating the changing spatial configurations of players over time. As evidenced in this visualization, it is clear that many *Diplomacy* fanzines were established around the year 1972, especially in the northeast. (Indeed, 1972 was known as the “Golden Age” of *Diplomacy* fanzines.) Another trend that can be spotted is that many

Diplomacy zines were published in rural areas, although urban areas yielded substantially more publications, specifically Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Washington, DC, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. This challenges the idea that fan publishers in the 1960s were isolated or lonely. Although it is clear from this map that many smaller cities and rural areas eventually did yield their own *Diplomacy* publications, discourse on the topic nonetheless occurred primarily in urban centers. Fan publications first cropped up in the early 1960s, and then become a national phenomenon around 1974. The clustering of discourse in urban centers has much to do with access to the resources required for the publication of a fanzine, and access to the startup capital required to distribute the initial copies of these zines. Because mimeograph technology was not so common that every teenager and twenty-something had access to it, areas with more material resources were able to produce a greater set of zines, a point that is evidenced in these charts.

These two sets of visualizations show the geographic reach of the network of hobby publications and thus the extent of their impact in America. They provide evidence that the hobby networks that published *Diplomacy* fanzines had a national distribution network by about 1970, a point that was seemingly unknown to the network's own participants as well, who viewed it as a niche endeavor:

Who might have guessed that a relatively unknown board game such as Diplomacy (invented by Allan Calhamer in 1958 and first sold commercially in 1960) would have spurred a following of players to continue an organized hobby through the mails for thirty years?²¹⁹

²¹⁹ Jim Meinel, *Meinel's Encyclopedia of Postal Diplomacy Zines (North American Release)*, v.

The scope of information provided in *Meinel's Encyclopedia* helps to show that the hobby had substantially more impact than even the players at the time may have considered, especially given the growth and breadth of the visualizations. They show that the discussions taking place in an unassuming network of hobbyists were actually far from innocuous, and had a remarkable impact on the history of games.

Finally, these charts show that there was a widespread and intergenerational interest in publications on postal *Diplomacy*. Over time, as more players became interested in hobby publishing, the techniques of production (such as Xerox copying instead of mimeograph and online bulletin boards instead of Xeroxing) became more efficient and accessible. And while these strides forward in the ease of production here is evident, as the zines got easier to produce, this also lowered the barrier to entry and allowed more people to participate in a community discourse that had previously been occupied by only a select few. Thus, the benefits of efficient production drove hobbyists to reconfigure their communities and practices around whatever techniques were most efficient, a theme that appears throughout this dissertation. As will be addressed in the second half of this chapter—zooming in and providing a discourse analysis of one region's publications—as the *Diplomacy* network expanded and diversified, political discourse became more common within the fanzines themselves.

Community, Play Spaces, and Affects of Fear

This section pertains to a set of fanzines edited by members of The New York Conspiracy, which was a cluster of fanzines published throughout the 1970s by players in the New York, NY area. Although this region, in this context, extends as far as Easton,

Pennsylvania (in the case of Robert Lipton's *The Mixumaxu Gazette*), this particular constellation of players identified themselves as The New York Conspiracy. The zines involved were *The Pouch* and *The Mixumaxu Gazette*, which this section reviews, and *The Conglomerate*, *Diplomacy Handbook*, *LILAF*, and *Urf Durfal*, *Grandson of the Pouch* which are not reviewed here.²²⁰ Notably, these zines were unlike most other *Diplomacy* fanzines as they published some columns that were superfluous to the game itself. These include social and political perspectives, as well as commentary on their own player communities. And although the individual political perspectives expressed in these columns cannot be generalized to the entirety of the *Diplomacy* player community, I argue that the ideological discourse around racism, homophobia, and censorship, generally speaking, can be. Because racist, sexist, and homophobic language is not unique to any one zine's community, there is a clear sense that there is a dominant cultural belief within these player communities that this sort of colloquial speech was acceptable. Specifically, I will be addressing two primary conversations in this community—the furor around editor Penelope Naughton Dickens's demands for censorship of hate speech, and the prevalence of columns about the Watergate scandal in *The Pouch* and *The Mixumaxu Gazette*—in order to show how the politics of the *Diplomacy* community and the politics of everyday life became entangled.

The editors of the New York Conspiracy zines were generally very keen to put real world political debate in its own section, separate from the press releases, which were mostly fictional. Penelope Naughton Dickens, in this sense, was guilty for transgressing the unspoken contract between players that yields a space of play. Her call

²²⁰ As listed in Meinel's (1992) *Encyclopedia of Postal Diplomacy Zines*.

for censorship within the community was received with controversy and distain precisely because she brought her real world political beliefs—that racism and homophobia are not safe topics of discourse—into a space that was supposedly unencumbered by the political tethers of the real world.

This point is useful to my study because it showcases an aesthetic dimension to the technique of role-playing that is explicitly political. There is an invisible ideological contour in all spaces of role-playing that is presumed to be one of the fundamental unspoken elements of the game. The limits of what is and is not appropriate expression within the context of the game are wholly dictated by the dominant cultural beliefs of the game group. As it will be shown here, the publishers of these the New York Conspiracy zines were not politically agnostic. Rather, they were all clearly affected by the global politics of the time. This is made clear by community members expressing their opinions on the Watergate scandal and its treatment by the news media (*The New York Times*, and nightly television news). Thus, through a discourse analysis of these two dialogues within the postal *Diplomacy* community in the 1970s, this section will consider the ways in which politics and role-playing games are entwined.

Vertiginous Language: Performing Racism, Sexism and Homophobia

In the early 1970s, this relationship between politics and role-playing came explicitly into question through the pronouncements of *Pouch* editor Penelope Naughton Dickens and the ensuing debate. An analysis of this dialogue is relevant to the ludic imagination (as a theoretical construct introduced in this study) and the history of games, because points of conflict can help to better apprehend the ideological contours of a network. The site of conflict examined here explores hate speech which was published in

a *Diplomacy* press release. In an article on page nine of *Pouch* #31²²¹ entitled “Censorship and the Press Release,” Dickens advocates that *Diplomacy* fanzine editors consider censoring press releases with racist and homophobic language. Noting how fellow players Conrad von Metzke and Duncan Smith had used the terms “wop” and “queen” in a derogatory manner in their press releases,²²² Dickens queries: “Yet these attacks, although not offensive to Edi Birsan or Evan Jones [to whom they were directed], could easily offend an Italian or a homosexual. What does an editor do in this case?” For Dickens, the answer was for editors to censor offensive articles, but this suggestion was the subject of controversy to other members in the community.²²³

Dickens’ admonishment was in response to two press release’s in particular. To start, von Metzke’s press release is specifically about the fun of *Diplomacy*. In it, he sarcastically opposes fun to slander, libel, and viciousness within the community. To this point, he sardonically equivocates the fun of *Diplomacy* to its most “rational and pleasurable aspects,” for instance, “brotherly interchange, mature reasoning, sensible toleration, and overall moderation.” All this was, of course, before using the term “wop” to refer to fellow player Edi Birsan, which punctuated the sarcasm, and therefore the effect of von Metzke’s joke. The second example to which Dickens refers was in this same issue of *The Pouch*. In justifying an aggressive in-game action toward Turkey,

²²¹ Penelope Naughton Dickens, “Censorship and the Press Release,” *The Pouch* 31, 1973, The Ray Browne Popular Culture Archive, 9. Republished in Appendix B: *The Pouch* 31.

²²² For examples of this see Appendix B: *The Pouch* 11, *The Pouch* 23.

²²³ Although this issue would later be discussed in other zines, at first it was confined only to discussion within *The Pouch*, most likely due to the fact that *The Pouch* was one of the few zines that would publish editorial content, such as political columns, with no connection to the game itself. Eventually, however, the discussion spread to other zines, such as *The Mixumaxu Gazette*, in which other political perspectives were debated.

player Duncan Smith published a mock interview with a fictional Montenegrin officer who had just born witness to a Turkish occupation. Within this press release, Smith continues the narrative of a press release previously published by player Evan Jones where the officer being interrogated, Colonel Nikoplat Poponov, was being grilled for having smuggled Eau de Saber Tooth Neiger (an allusion to game master Gil Neiger²²⁴) into the country. Smith also resorts to colloquial name-calling in this press release, and refers to Evan Jones as “Queen Evan.”

As Dickens has articulated, even though Evan Jones and Edi Birsan, the parties being mocked in these press releases, did not mind being teased with these colloquialisms, other readers may have taken offense to some of this language. In this sense, Dickens was speaking for a largely invisible portion of this community when she criticized the careless use of such slurs.

In addition to this, the ideological contour of economic rationality is also made evident by the discussion about censorship. When von Metzke jokingly suggests that the real fun of the game is in its rational and strategic aspects, and not the tongue-in-cheek racism to which many players have stooped when slandering their opponents, it is, of course, contradicted entirely by von Metzke’s actions, and seems, in fact, intended to be part of a playful show of rationality that punctuates the playful use of racism in his language. This joke articulates precisely the ways in which vertiginous language can be utilized as a technique of play. By playing with the distinction between rational strategy and glib name-calling, von Metzke and Smith manipulate the boundaries of the play space. They marry a discourse around the topic of fun to a dark sense of racist and

²²⁴ Gil Neiger would eventually inherit the position of Editor-In-Chief of *The Pouch* from Nicholas Ulanov after Ulanov graduated from high school.

homophobic humor within their language. They harness the transformative aspects of vertigo to generate a play space that yields to their interests and needs. These episodes highlight a celebration of the juvenile ribbing which is common within this community. This should come as no surprise, considering many of those participating in the these fanzine communities were teens themselves.

Other New York Conspiracy fanzine editors, such as Robert Bryan Lipton who published the *Mixumaxu Gazette*, also weighed in on this controversy. His opinions support the dominant perspective in this dialogue, i.e. that press releases should go uncensored, for to censor them is to reduce the game to something that is far from playful. In an article entitled “The Care and Feeding of Press Releases,”²²⁵ Lipton takes a view favoring a politics of free speech by supporting von Metzke’s earlier position that the cost of “fun” is allowing for a diversity of perspectives within press releases. In fact, the discourse around fun is, for Lipton, one of the key things which separates the game from a true military simulation: “I assume that’s why we’re playing the game: to enjoy ourselves. Anyone who takes press releases seriously probably agonizes over the board when there is a conflict, thinking we’re actually fighting WWI. . . and what’s more, doesn’t enjoy himself. I pity them. But I won’t change what I do for such.” Here the binary between the rational and the lighthearted is again refined. Just as von Metzke had used vertiginous speech to highlight the ways in which play should be juxtaposed against a calculating strategic perspective, Lipton takes the same tact and even implies that the

²²⁵ Robert Lipton, “The Care and Feeding of Press Releases,” *The Mixumaxu Gazette* 6, 1973, The Ray Browne Popular Culture Archive, 8. For a reprint of the article, see Appendix B: *The Mixumaxu Gazette* 6.

game itself is fun because it has very little to do with the serious space of military strategy.

This point, that the play of fun is distinct from the serious connotations of the game, emerges at a specific point wherein the topic of censorship enters the discourse from a marginal voice.²²⁶ In this sense, rationality implies both military strategy and censorship, which are opposed to fun. And, as articulated by Conrad von Metzke and Robert Lipton, the goal of play is to have fun. This ideological formation suggests both the political boundaries of the community, as well as a type of gatekeeping utilized by some members to determine who should and should not participate in the game, as well as the kinds of player participation encouraged by the community. Most importantly, however, is a policing of the game space itself, where rational military and bureaucratic practices are suspended by the player community in favor of a libertarian sense of discourse that is deliberately opposed to the rational paranoia of the Cold War. But, this point begs the question, what are the real world politics of these key members of The New York Conspiracy?

These examples of discourse and debate, if nothing else, go to show the conflict between the uncontrolled (in this case uncensored), animate, and destructive sense of play in its pre-rational sense, and the social categories of rationality innate in the idea of a rule-based game. Censorship, after all, is a rule, and although players like Robert Lipton, to whom Dickens was responding, saw it as a move to politicize a space that was fundamentally apolitical, Dickens saw it as a decisive commentary on the uncontested and invisible identity politics of role-playing. And, while both Lipton and Dickens clearly

²²⁶ For more on the struggles Dickens faced editing *The Pouch* as a woman, please see the interview with her included in Appendix B: *The Pouch* 36.

held separate ideals of play, these ideals pulled them into conversation with one another, where together they comprised key nodes in a community and network. In order to understand this phenomenon in a more holistic way, it is important to address the ways that the key players in this conflict were regarding politics on the national stage. Were these press releases related to America's political landscape, or are real world politics a non sequitur in the context of role-playing in postal *Diplomacy*?

The Pouch and Politics: American Constitutionalism

To be sure, *The Pouch* regularly featured political commentary in its pages. Geographically centered in New York, NY, its contributors were more politically radical and outspoken than many others in the *Diplomacy* fanzine community. Simultaneous to much of the correspondence regarding the censorship of hate speech within other fan publications, the editorial board of *The Pouch*—at the time, Penelope Naughton Dickens, Duncan K. Smith, and Nicholas A. Ulanov—published a series of articles regarding the impeachment of President Richard Nixon. In *Pouch* #33 (1973), the editors issued a statement that evinced their ultimate support for the impeachment of Richard Nixon. Following that statement are a number of details listing best practices for getting in touch with local congressmen and taking an active role in petitioning for Nixon's removal from office. While this statement certainly does not indicate a strong sense of partisanship on the part of the zine's editorial board (by October 1973, most Americans were unified in their dislike of Nixon), it does showcase *The Pouch's* unique propensity toward activism and political commentary. This politicism was absent in many other *Diplomacy* fanzines

such as *Graustark*, *Fredonia*, and *Ruritania* which focused on the game only, and represented the standard outside of The New York Conspiracy.

In the next issue of *The Pouch*, however, the editors were far more explicit in their rationale for Nixon's impeachment. First off, they reprinted a two and a half page advertisement from the American Civil Liberties Union petitioning for cash support toward Nixon's impeachment. This advertisement was useful in providing clarity as to where civil rights groups stood on the issue of Nixon's impeachment: wire tapping, espionage, perjury, burglary, dragnet arrests, and the three-year secret bombing of Cambodia (a politically neutral country at the time). Given *The Pouch's* relatively sizable distribution²²⁷ and the absence of contestation within its letters section, it is safe to say that these points reflected the beliefs of many of its subscribers as well.

One editor of *The Pouch*, Nicholas A. Ulanov, supplemented this advertisement with an editorial entitled, "WHY I'M FOR IMPEACHMENT." In this editorial, Ulanov reveals that he worked for Senator McGovern's 1972 campaign against Nixon, which suggests that he was likely a Democrat. Ulanov also alludes several times to both the chaos of anarchy and the virtues of the American political system. Although Ulanov was liberal minded, he evinces a true belief in the potential of America. Additionally, he draws frequently on the impeachment of Andrew Johnson to make his points. This is fascinating in light of the ways that *Diplomacy* players would often draw on historical documents to justify the roles that they play. *Diplomacy* players like Ulanov, as explained in these examples, took traditional historical storytelling very seriously. This sense of

²²⁷ As of November 1973, *The Pouch* had subscribers in twenty-four states, two territories of Canada, Belgium, and England. Anonymous. "Introduction." *The Pouch* 36, 1973, The Ray Browne Popular Culture Archive, p.2.

historical diligence was common practice in these communities. Books like *The Almanach de Gotha* have been cited by some in the community as essential background reading for the role-play. Even though von Metzke and Smith had considered strategic rationality anathema to fun, it is important to note that a sense of historical authenticity was essential nonetheless.

In discussing the Nixon's presidency, Ulanov makes frequent use of terms like "evil" and "chaos," perhaps representing his fear of the ways in which the social order is being undermined. Ulanov elaborates here on the discord that would follow President Nixon's impeachment:

I also felt that the country would be put through total governmental chaos, and that at the current moment in history, this country had to avoid such chaos at all cost. I based this belief that process would be extremely dirty on the events which followed President Johnson's impeachment. In addition I was afraid that perhaps I and many of my friends were being too harsh on President Nixon and in the event of impeachment would be judged in the way the Radical Republicans were after the Johnson fiasco. It is now generally felt that the Johnson matter was totally unwarranted and a great miscarriage of justice. Johnson was acquitted by only one vote in the Senate, and this heroic Senator, Edmund G. Ross, never held political office again, after voting the way his conscience and not his constituents dictated.²²⁸

Apparent here is a clear stance on the value of historical narratives in the interpretation of political affairs, as well as Ulanov's constitutionalism. He relates several times in this

²²⁸ Nicholas Ulanov, "Why I'm For Impeachment," *The Pouch* 35, 1973, The Ray Browne Popular Culture Library, p.3.

example that the key problems in American politics relate to corruption in its participants rather than a general failure of the system itself. Additionally, Ulanov alludes to a general unease with the structural chaos that stems from a leaderless nation. These points would all be taken for granted within the smooth military simulation of *Diplomacy*, where the gametic action writes social unrest and partisan politics out of the diplomatic equation, focusing instead on diplomatic spaces relative only to a nation's military industrial positionality. *Diplomacy*, in this context, allowed players to escape to a world with orderly nations where the dramatic action of the military theater was firmly within their control.

Fear of disorder is brought up again at the end of Ulanov's editorial. In the final paragraph, Ulanov reiterates the strength of American Constitutionalism. Then, using President Truman's firing of General MacArthur as an example, he explains that this sense of democratic deliberation is, in fact, the American system's saving grace and suggests that it had helped America prevent World War III. He writes, "Truman's firing of McArthur. McArthur wanted to attach [sic] China which might well have caused World War III."²²⁹ According to Ulanov, not only did American constitutionalism help prevent World War III, but if the same episode had occurred in a parliamentary system, McArthur's removal from office would have led to the systemic collapse of government. These points are made in light of Nixon's impeachment, which itself has been described by Baudrillard as evidence of the simulacrum.

As Baudrillard (1998) argues about Watergate's media exposure, the publicization of Nixon and Deep Throat evokes a spectacle of corruption in order to fool the mass

²²⁹ Ibid., p.4.

public into believing that something like a pure and uncorrupt state exists. However, this is a problematic position, he argues, because it leads to the exchange and duplication of ideologies that are not necessarily related to the realities of the world. For Ulanov, this is manifest in zealotry for American constitutionalism, which is then an ideological stance that is exchanged with other zine authors within *The Pouch's* network. Furthermore, other ideologies are embedded within Ulanov's constitutional advocacy. As emerged in the case of the Penelope Naughton Dickens' censorship controversy, on such ideology is the peculiarly American constitutional sensibility of free speech, which censors hate speech.

The other key perspective that Ulanov disseminates via his history of impeachment is the perspective that American constitutionalism is, and should be, responsible for maintaining the juridical world order. This is particularly clear as Ulanov evokes World War III and parliamentary policy in his examples, as if a wrong move by Truman would have spelled disaster for everyone across the world. This precarious state of diplomatic war, as pointed out earlier, was not taken so seriously in games of *Diplomacy*, where it has been noted that the goal of fun is a result of role-playing and not careful strategy. In fact, the whole idea of vertiginous language, and its implications on the production of play-space, runs counter to the social paranoia around real-world politics at the time, where politicians needed to take extreme care in their every statement. But, although these ideological threads are apparent and consistent within *The Pouch*, to stage a greater commentary about these hobby networks, evidence must be located in other nodes, like *The Mixumaxu Gazette*, which related the political anxieties and views of a slightly different network of participants.

A Libertarian Perspective: Other Stances on Watergate

Although Ulanov was decidedly anti-Nixon, some of his contemporaries, like Robert Lipton,²³⁰ publisher of *The Mixumaxu Gazette*, were not as clear in their politics. This reflects the politics of the status quo practiced by many in this community, where the game space was to be kept separate from “real” spaces of politics. To start, *The Mixumaxu Gazette* was never as clearly and explicitly political as *The Pouch*. In fact, within the community, it was known for its somewhat satirical tone. First published on June 15, 1973, *The Mixumaxu Gazette* was published with several lighthearted slogans on the paper’s header, playing on the idea of quality, objective journalism. The magazine ran as a “quantity publication,” and “All the Press Unfit to Print.” Lipton, clearly, did not take himself too seriously as a publisher or editor, and only occasionally inserted political commentary into the zine.

Notably, the first issue ran a quick blurb about Watergate at its very end, which notes the ways that Lipton had grown bored with the discussion of Watergate in the news. Unlike Ulanov, who had tried to rally his distribution network around the issue, Lipton even evinces a paranoia that Nixon had taken control of the news media: “But perhaps this was planned, the overinterest gradually fading off to ennui this is what Nixon wants. A frightening idea. But we’re growing tired of being frightened, aren’t we?”²³¹ Significantly, in this one candid moment, Lipton makes note of a general affect of fear that he feels within the community. Echoes of Baudrillard’s point about Watergate are again apparent, as Lipton is particularly nostalgic in the above quote for a government

²³⁰ Lipton was nineteen years old when he began publishing *The Mixumaxu Gazette*.

²³¹ Robert Lipton, *The Mixumaxu Gazette 1*, 1973, The Ray Browne Popular Culture Archive, p.5.

without corruption. Additionally, he stages a commentary here of the news media, which he also views, quite romantically, as a true and objective gauge of the public interests, rather than something which might be privy to corruption.

Watergate and Nixon appear again in issue eight of *The Mixumaxu Gazette*, published December 8, 1973, in an article entitled, “If You Love Harpo, Honk Your Horn.” In this satirical article, Robert Lipton calls for the formation of the “Marxist Party of America,” and nominates Harpo Marx for president. In listing Marx’s virtues, Lipton glibly extols that candidates should “never have said anything with which anyone could disagree,” and “should be dead.”²³² Marx, the deceased star of comedic silent films, fit the bill. Particularly offensive here is the rant Lipton embarks on when describing why he desires a dead candidate. In it, he leaves a few clues—punctuated with the kind of vulgar language that would have perturbed Penelope Dickens—relating to the affects of fear surrounding the civil rights movements of the 1960s:

[The candidate] should be dead. Think of how despised politicians became noble statesmen as soon as they’re in their graves. Didn’t you despise the Kennedy Brothers until they were killed? Wasn’t Martin Luther King a pushy nigger until 1968? Didn’t the New York Times, which hated Johnson while he lived, give him a beautiful obituary? Wasn’t Lincoln, who couldn’t control his congress, and told jokes at the worst possible time, elected to godhood? (*The Mixumaxu Gazette*, issue 8, page 5.)

While there is no excuse for the hate speech Lipton used here to refer to Martin Luther King, Jr., when considered in light of Lipton’s anxiety about Watergate, it only supports

²³² Lipton refers to the nomination of Millard Fillmore in 1972 as a comedic example of this idea’s legitimacy.

the point that the civil rights movement was also frightening to Lipton, who was writing from the isolation of Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania. Additionally, Lipton's personal fears about the news media are evidenced here, as news outlets are described as two-faced and slanderous.. Clearly Lipton had a conservative bent, but he also relates some key anxieties about the era's political turbulence that he shared with Nicholas Ulanov.

Although Lipton did not always write overtly political pieces himself, he would frequently retype excerpts from interesting news articles as filler at the end of pages. In issue three of *The Mixumaxu Gazette*, he published two articles at the end of the "Letters" section: one relating to corrupt police officers, and the other to civil turmoil in Oklahoma. "McAlester, Okla, Aug. 2 - - Sharpshooters with rifles stood on rooftops," Lipton transcribed, " at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary with orders to kill if necessary to prevent further bloodshed. Support Peach or I'll kill you" (New York Times 2 August 1973). Lipton was transcribing frightening events from the newspaper, evincing the fear with which he reacted to the social turmoil of the 1970s. Regardless of his political affiliation, Lipton was clearly disturbed by the civil disorder in America at the time. *The Mixumaxu Gazette* was stuffed with articles related to a chaotic and turbulent Cold War America.

Thus we can infer from the micro analysis of The New York Conspiracy and the macro analysis provided by the graphic visualizations that the American wargaming underground was rife with political contestation. Far from an apolitical body of players, the players in these networks of discourse were forced to confront several voices negotiating developments in civil rights, presidential politics, war and more in the news.

In this sense, the culture of the American wargaming underground was informed by and also informing the greater political climate of the United States. Next, this dissertation turns to a set of examples that show how these communities were very concretely informed by the military discourse described in Chapter 3.

Chapter 5: Military Discourse in the Wargaming Underground

This chapter focuses on the politics of the fan communities and the techniques of role-playing and game theory in these communities circulated after their development at the RAND Corporation. Having established in Chapter 4 that these fan communities formed a national communication network—the American wargaming underground—that was responsible for innovating many elements of game design (statistical damage tables, science fiction and fantasy themes, realism in simulation) that have become the fundamental building blocks for modern games, this chapter intends to highlight moments of discourse between this community and the military. In that context, the contributions of two key individuals—Larry Peery and Jerry Pournelle—to the fanzines of the American wargaming underground is particularly relevant. This chapter provides examples of actual links between members of that fan community and the military ideologies developed in the RAND Corporation. It tells the story of how the analytic rationality of game theory became the dominant framework of gameplay and game design, while the more playful mechanics of role-playing were adjusted to the analytic and ludic space of statistics.

TTT Publications

This section focuses on revealing the historic link between the wargaming communities in the 1970s and military think tanks such as the RAND Corporation and the MIT Center for International Studies. The implementation of role-playing as a military technique has been explored in depth by Sharon Ghamari-Tabrizi,²³³ who

²³³ Ghamari-Tabrizi, *The Worlds of Herman Kahn*.

chronicled the nature of the role-playing games played at the RAND Corporation. She did not note their empirical connection to mass-market publications. Likewise, Jon Peterson, has considered the work done at the RAND Corporation a precursor to *Dungeons & Dragons*, yet does not analyze its influence.²³⁴ Tracking the dissemination of these often cloistered political ideas between think tanks like the RAND Corporation and the American wargaming underground allows us to understand the ideas that define the discourse of the role-playing game, as well as those that disappeared.

TTT Publications was an Alternative Publishing Association based in San Diego, and founded by Larry Peery.²³⁵ Its name was derived from a column Peery had written in his 1962 high-school newspaper entitled “Trivial, Trite, Trash.”²³⁶ The flagship zine for TTT publications was *Xenogogic*, it was a zine that hosted a number of *Diplomacy* games that Peery ran. In the first issue of *Xenogogic*, Peery began, “The sole purpose of XENOGOGIC is to add to the debate, conflict, frustration, chaos, and heartbreak that already abounds in the world of postal *Diplomacy*.”²³⁷ With this quote, Peery sarcastically explains that his zine will be no different than any of the others, full of conflict, debate, and controversy. As this section will show, TTT Publications and Larry Peery exemplify a moment of ideological dissemination where a fan publication participated in a politics that reached far beyond the page and staged experiments that can be linked to both Herbert Goldhamer’s work at the RAND Corporation and Lincoln Bloomfield’s work at MIT.

²³⁴ Peterson, *Playing at the World*, 377.

²³⁵ For examples of publications by Peery that are discussed here, please see Appendix C.

²³⁶ Larry Peery, *Xenogogic* 4, no. 4, 1968, The Ray Browne Popular Culture Archive, 9.

²³⁷ Larry Peery, *Xenogogic* 1, 1967, The Ray Browne Popular Culture Archive, 1.

The establishment of military experimentation in the TTT fan community came with an announcement in *Xenogogic* 4, no. 4.5. Here Peery announced to his constituents that he was going to be devoting a new zine entitled *Peerinalis* to the study of war gaming, in specific.²³⁸ The launching of another zine was not a particularly strange decision for an editor like Larry Peery, who has housed many spin-offs to TTT Publications, including zines such as *Peeri Uber Alles*, *Peericomo*, *Peericon*, *Peerigogic*, *Peerilandra*, *Peerilytic*, *Peerimania*, *Peeriphanalia*, *Peeriphobia*, *Peerisitis*, *Peeristerics*, *Peerithisandpeerithat*, *Perryara*, and *Xenogogic*. Convinced that military wargames would be extremely popular in the postal *Diplomacy* scene, Peery worked to bridge the ideas housed in games from the RAND Corporation, The MIT Institute for Foreign Policy, The Hudson Institute, Stanford Research Institute, and Northwestern University with the communities that enjoyed postal gaming.²³⁹ Through Peery's efforts, there was a concrete exchange of ideas that never quite took off around the idea of role-playing in the postal *Diplomacy* community. His efforts in publishing mixed the strategic minds of the hobby wargame community with the forms and structures of games used by the military think tanks that played games professionally—they show the top down influence of role-playing games on the American wargaming underground.

What were Peery's aims with this project? In a late issue of *Xenogogic*, Peery describes his rationale:

An understanding of these new weapons systems, and the strategic and tactical theories behind their acquisition and deployment is vital to all of us, as concerned citizens and as serious gaming students. These new systems, now coming to the

²³⁸ Larry Peery, *Xenogogic* 4, no. 4.5, 1971, The Ray Browne Popular Culture Archive, 3.

²³⁹ Larry Peery, *Peerinalis* 2, 1971, The Ray Browne Popular Culture Archive, 2-3.

public eye, will be the mainstay of American military power for the next generation. They will be, in effect, the tools available to future gaming students.

With them, or in spite of them, they may prevent, fight, or end, future politico-military crises. As we move increasingly toward activities oriented toward future conflicts we will need an active understanding of the uses, and limitations, of the systems as they apply to us. For these reasons we are making available a series of monographs on some of the key systems, problems, and issues facing us.²⁴⁰

This rationale makes clear that Peery saw both an intuitive and natural connection between the military applications of gaming and the hobby communities in the American wargaming underground. Additionally, there is a sense of vigilante patriotism in this write up that makes clear the fact that Peery considers it his responsibility (along with the many other hobby players he has published with) to prevent emerging military crises.

Peery's work eventually crystalized in an institutional form. Peery founded The Institute of Diplomatic Studies in 1973, which became the moniker for all things related to politico-military wargaming in TTT Publications. He relates its impact, "Initial response to the call in PEERINALIS...has been remarkable. I don't know of anything like it in postal Diplomacy history. Inquiries have poured in from all areas and all types of people interested in most everything."²⁴¹ Despite this promising start, Peery later consolidated and moved discussion on politico-military wargaming back to the flagship zine, *Xenogogic*, in 1973. Here he compiled something like a RAND Corporation reading list, and requested that interested readers write RAND in order to request the following

²⁴⁰ Larry Peery, *Xenogogic* 6, no. 4, 1973, The Ray Browne Popular Culture Archive, 16.

²⁴¹ Larry Peery, *Peerinalis* 2, 1.

white papers: “War Gaming Methodology,” “An Extended Concept of ‘Model.’,” “An Introduction to War Games,” “Strategic Gaming,” “Some Observations on Political Gaming,” and “On Gaming and Game Theory.”²⁴² This reading list was intended to help readers prepare for the in-depth discussion on political games that would be hosted in later issues of *Xenogogic*. Here, Peery brought the secrets of the political-military elite to the popular imagination of the American wargaming underground.

The following issue, *Xenogogic* 6, no. 4, shows Peery digging deeper into the documents housed at RAND in order to provide a guide for serious hobbyists interested in researching political military wargames. Peery only had access to RAND’s publically published and distributed documents, and from this swath of publications, he made the deliberate choice to only consider documents appearing under the subject categories of “Gaming” and “Game Theory.” Many of the documents analyzed by Peery show an interest in the mathematical aspects of game theory as opposed to the social affordances of games. Documents like “Some Observations on Political Gaming,” which deals explicitly with Goldhamer’s *The Cold War Game*, were met with a fairly limited degree of exposition. It is summarized with a brief paragraph that concludes with the lines, “Herbert Goldhamer is one of two men, the other being Oliver Benson, who can claim to be the ‘father of the political game.’ As such, his views are of special historical significance.”²⁴³ This light bracketing of Goldhamer as a historical, yet not practical footnote in political gaming speak to the dissemination of Goldhamer’s role-playing

²⁴² Larry Peery, *Xenogogic* 6, no. 3, 1973, The Ray Browne Popular Culture Archive, 46. To see this reading list please see Appendix C: *Xenogogic Volume 6, Number 3 and Xenogogic Volume 6, Number 4*.

²⁴³ Larry Peery, *Xenogogic* 6, no. 4, 23. This is also reproduced in Appendix C: *Xenogogic Volume 6, Number 4*.

techniques within the fan community. Namely, while games like *Dungeons & Dragons* would offer immersive role-playing experiences to their players, the experience was not linked as closely to the highly realistic experiments in role-playing at RAND that Jon Peterson has claimed. It is likely, considering the derisive remarks which Goldsen and Kecskemeti had included in their summaries, that the experiments in role-playing at RAND were far too boring to sustain popular attention and interest. But, if the role-playing techniques developed in Goldhamer's *The Cold War Game* were only lightly considered by the American wargaming underground, which RAND documents did game developers find inspirational?

Unlike Goldhamer's paper "Some Observations on Political Gaming," which offers an overview of *The Cold War Game*, Peery considered the document, "War Gaming Methodology," by M. G. Weiner, fundamental to the study of wargames. Peery concludes his description of the paper by writing, "An understanding of this document is required for the serious wargaming student."²⁴⁴ Weiner's document is a comparative analysis of different types of wargames (Table 1),²⁴⁵ as well as many suggestions for shortening the time players had to spend in the game. It is no surprise that the emphases on efficiency and playability that emerged after Goldhamer's experiments in role-playing with *The Cold War Game*, were important to Peery. In this sense, the dialogues that took place between members of the military elite were literally replicated and reconsidered by Peery as he established himself as a key figure in the discourse.

The impact of the RAND Corporation on the American wargaming underground was focused. The military nature of the company's simulations interested Peery more

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 24.

²⁴⁵ See page 109 for Table 1.

than the documentation that Peery located on business simulations. He explains, “It seems likely to us, that no one, not even RAND, can keep up with everything going on in the gaming and simulation field today.”²⁴⁶ Business simulation texts such as Alfred Hausrathe’s book *Venture Simulation in War, and Business and Politics* were offered as examples of work being done on the topic outside of RAND. Although he offered little rationale for his interest in RAND as opposed to work being done in the business sector, it can be inferred from Peery’s interest in RAND that there was something distinctly synergistic about work in military war games and hobby wargaming. As Peery endeavored to replicate the work of the military in his hobby communities, some portions of the military elite—political scientists such as Lincoln Bloomfield, for instance—watched with deliberate interest.

Modding “The Cold War Game”

How did Larry Peery translate military simulations for consumption by hobby enthusiasts? By answering this question, we can see how new definitions of games and play were imagined. In order to translate the game for consumption by a new community, Peery implemented a set of modifications that streamlined the choices players would be able to make.²⁴⁷ By making these choices more clear, Peery transformed the wide open and qualitative scope of decision initially offered by the game into a narrow set of options that could be easily quantified and processed. This section performs a close analysis of

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 28.

²⁴⁷ Peery’s modifications to *The Cold War Game* have been reproduced here in Appendix C: *Peerinalis* 3.

Larry Peery's modification of *The Cold War Game* in order to reveal these unspoken design motives.

Because TTT publications used a play-by-mail system, the rules of *The Cold War Game* had to be adapted so that the game would be playable by mail. This modification can be read in two ways. First, there is a sense that this is a minor modification, as the original game relied heavily on the replication of paper-based bureaucracy associated with diplomatic activity. In contrast, this modification stands as a distinct difference in designs as Goldhamer had designed the game to be played over the span of a few months by an elite group of educated scientists working in the same building. Although they were knowledgeable about the military, the fans with whom Peery distributed his modification did not occupy the same geographic space nor did they share similar backgrounds. Lost here is the sense of epistemic culture, background, and training that RAND administrators such as Hans Speier had sought to curate. The players of Peery's game knew each other only as opponents as their only social relationship was their shared appreciation of play-by-mail *Diplomacy*. Their friendships relied on this rivalry, as they knew one another only through network bonds in the community.

Because interest in the hobby community was not as high as it had been when Goldhamer originally ran the game in 1955 and 1956, Peery modified the game so that the teams of players participating could work in smaller collectives than those originally envisioned by Goldhamer. Originally, teams consisted of "executive committees representing various countries in teams of five to ten players."²⁴⁸ Peery's modification cut Goldhamer's original committees in half. The United Kingdom, France, Israel, The

²⁴⁸ Larry Peery, *Peerinalis* 3, 1971, The Ray Browne Popular Culture Archive, 3.

United States, The Soviet Union, and Egypt now had five members in a team (as opposed to ten), while Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and The UN Secretariat were played in teams of two (instead of four to five).²⁴⁹ Mechanically, these differences in player counters represent a monumental shift in the scope of representation as invoked by these games. Compare the degree of discourse that could be hosted in a large seminar-scale format between ten renown experts of a subject to the degree to which authentic discourse can be had by five players role-playing a sense of expertise through the mail. The difference in the collective intelligence of these two groups is huge. The intelligence of nations, in this modification, is reduced and essentialized from a more plural sense representation to a representation which near totalitarian. Lost here are the potentials of role-playing to help cultivate empathy, knowledge, and understanding, as described in Chapter 3, instead the oppositional contours of ludic subjectivity are privileged through this totalitarian rendering of *The Cold War Game*.

Peery allowed players totalitarian control of their nations because the individuals held responsible for curating local teams had, in many cases, failed, and so Peery simply grouped players together by hand through a shared form distributed in *Peerinalis*. He explains:

Apparently there is some confusion about what constitutes a team of players. A team is any group plying one country in this game. I had hoped that you would sort yourselves out into teams on the basis of mutual interests and geographical location. However, this doesn't seem to be working too well. So, I am enclosing a questionnaire which will help me decide which of you will be teamed up with

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 5.

who in this game. In addition the questionnaire will give me a final indication of who is playing.²⁵⁰

Peery's player form exemplifies the value he placed in game mechanics over the more playful dynamics of social interaction. Because Peery had conviction that the game's fundamental principles would yield an interesting experience regardless of player count. Although *Peeriphanalia*, the zine that Peery eventually used to host his playthrough of *The Cold War Game*, never offered an official count of the total amount of players participating in the game, they did offer a list of the leaders of each nation with the disclaimer that there were some vacancies for junior players (players who had participated on teams, but who were not listed as team leaders) interested in playing empty nations. The count listed October 26, 1972 in the fourth issue of *Peeriphanalia*,²⁵¹ listed eleven players only, with no hints as to whether their countries were advised by totalitarian councils of one, or the full complement of five players to a nation. This discrepancy in representation further points to the degree in which the fan communities playing these games did not rely on producing an equivalent epistemic culture for game play. A condition that, as I have described in Chapter 3, was necessary to the efficacy of the games run at RAND and MIT.

Peery's experiments were also rooted in the past as opposed to the present. Instead of using role-playing as a technique for the divination of present-day scenarios, Peery ran scenarios that were outdated by at least fifteen years. The first scenario listed in *Peerinalisis* is entitled "Suez 1956," and it is a rehashing of the Suez crisis that Lincoln Bloomfield originally tinkered with in his experiments at MIT. When Bloomfield ran the

²⁵⁰ Larry Peery, *Peerinalis* 5, 1971, The Ray Browne Popular Culture Archive, 4.

²⁵¹ Larry Peery, *Peeriphanalia* 4, 1971, The Ray Browne Popular Culture Archive, 1.

game in the late 1950s, the conflict was still relevant to international policy. Peery's run of the game took place nearly fifteen years after the scenario to which it referred took place. This shift in temporal focus illustrates how Peery's interest in the mechanics of political games eclipsed his understanding of what was to be learned through their play.

In a way, the playful scope of action that Goldhamer had allowed for in his game was completely hemmed in by Peery's modification as well. Peery required players submit their moves through a shared form that queried for nine separate actions in particular. Players had the agency to issue either military or economic orders, share political developments (both domestic or foreign), offer official communication, distribute propaganda, offer an official communication, ask the gamemaster questions, alter existing national policies, or offer something as a special addendum. The formalism with which Peery constructed his game reflects the excessive demands of bureaucracy that had led to Goldhamer's experiments being canceled at RAND. The only way for Peery to manage the enormous amount of paperwork produced by the game was to establish a quantifiable and more easily manageable set of actions. In this sense, Peery shows how the grassroots came to inherit and imagine a narrow and specific definition of role-playing that can also be shown to as being inherited from the earlier models established in the military. Reduction of bodies, systems, and sociality to numbers was necessary, in part, for managing the bureaucratic demands levied by a nation-wide network of players. In short, quantification can be seen as a shortcut that helped hobbyists using their spare time and energy to better manage the opinions and positions of the hundreds of other players they interacted with in their network. As the next section will

show, this mode of reductionism—ludic subjectivity, one part of the heterogenous ludic imagination—was also useful to military philosophy and military operations.

The Military Listens In

Although it is tempting to pigeonhole the efforts of Larry Peery in organizing a fan community around military techniques as an outlier, it is important to note that there were several other key actors in the American role-playing underground who also operated simultaneously on several different levels as a wargame enthusiast, popular fantasy writer, and published military advisor and strategist, Jerry Pournelle, also participated in the cross-pollination of military and hobby discourse. This section aims to show the ways that individuals who had access to the elite strata of military strategy also took seriously the work in simulation they were involved in as fans on a grassroots level.

Peery inserted himself into the discourse of political games being played at the MIT Center of International Studies, as well. Included in *Xenogonic*, volume 6 number 4, is an article entitled “Games Foreign Policy Experts Play: The Political Exercise Comes of Age.” Within this essay Bloomfield explains that the political role-playing experiments at MIT such as CONEX II, were designed to help model and understand the behavior of small nation states when set in any number of probable and hypothetical situations. Bloomfield and Cornelius Gearin explain:

As early as 1963, a group at M.I.T. began to investigate the nature of local conflict, and the relevance of arms control and conflict control measures aimed at mimimizing the chances of small wars, particularly those that might involve the nuclear powers and thus contain the danger of escalation. This initial project,

sponsored by the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, was completed in 1967. [8]²⁵² Among the fruits of that research was a series of hypotheses bearing on the causes and effects of the United States policy toward local conflict in the developing world.²⁵³

Bloomfield's suggestion here is meant to explain how better understanding the politics of escalation in small nation states can help to prevent a nuclear strike. For Bloomfield, role-playing games had great potential to help ascertain intelligence on the subjectivities of nations that were otherwise inaccessible to government officials. He held at least a passing curiosity in the work being done by Larry Peery with TTT publications, evidenced by the copies of *Xenogogic* that he kept in his file and the fact that he contributed an article to issue 6-4.²⁵⁴

Within this issue of *Xenogogic*, there was also a book review of Stefan T. Possony and Jerry Pournelle's book, *The Strategy of Technology*.²⁵⁵ Larry Peery considered Jerry Pournelle, "a well-known figure in wargaming publications who needs no introduction."²⁵⁶ As the following section will show, the views advanced in *The Strategy of Technology* were in part responsible for many of the neoliberal attitudes that were to become ubiquitous in the various decades. It offered a vision of technological

²⁵² This number refers to a footnote in the original.

²⁵³ Lincoln Bloomfield and Cornelius Gearin, "Games Foreign Policy Experts Play: The Political Exercise Comes of Age," *Xenogogic* 6, no.4, 1973, The Ray Browne Popular Culture Archive, 36.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Stefan T. Possony and Jerry Pournelle, *The Strategy of Technology*, (Cambridge, UK: University Press of Cambridge, 1997/1970).

²⁵⁶ Jerry Pournelle wrote several articles for *The Avalon Hill General*, was a well known fantasy author, and a highly regarded military strategist. Given Pournelle's notoriety in the community as well as his prestige in other spheres, this dissertation will return to him and his work in a later section. Larry Peery, *Xenogogic* 6, no. 4, 88. Peery's review of Pournelle's book has been included in Appendix C: *Xenogogic Volume 6, Number 4*.

advancement, which positioned wealthy and technologically advanced nations such as the United States of America as a global watchdog. Interestingly, these attitudes were not taken for granted by fans such as Peery, who was fairly critical of some of the perspectives contained within the book. He referred to the book as overly theoretical to a fault, though he was clear to explain that the overall thesis advanced was both important and useful.²⁵⁷ In this sense, there was a constructive back and forth of ideas between the fan cultures curated and epitomized by Larry Peery, and the military elite as epitomized by Jerry Pournelle.

The networks of discourse that Peery established through the play-by-mail *Diplomacy* community were avenues of legitimate discussion between the grassroots and the political elite. Peery's work reflects a sense of grassroots interest because his readers self-organized around his publication due to their own personal interests in the work being done in role-playing within then usually closed walls of military think-tanks. Individuals like Pournelle and Bloomfield, with whom TTT publications would publish the work of, show how the military elite was taking an active interest in the fan publishing. A "review copy" of *Xenogogic* 6-2 was recovered from within Lincoln Bloomfield's file archive, with a section on page 33, which offered an overview of the MIT Center for International Studies, highlighted. Peery's work was most definitely considered by Lincoln Bloomfield and his colleagues within the space of MIT.

Considering that 1971 was the year that we can observe concrete connections between the political military elite and the grassroots fan communities there is no evidence here, however, of a direct connection here between the hobby communities

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

which played *Dungeons & Dragons* and the hobby communities which were concerned in political gaming and *Diplomacy*. Despite this, a common attitude—definitive of ludic subjectivity—is shared between these two spaces of the American wargaming underground. From these common behaviors, which Chapter 6 will explain in more detail, we can infer that there was an overlap in discourse that simply wasn't explicit. It snuck through the many other play-by-mail *Diplomacy* publications enjoyed by readers of TSR Hobbies and TTT Publications affiliated readers and writers. TSR Hobbies published the first edition of *Dungeons & Dragons* in 1973, and the first issue of *Chainmail*, its precursor, in 1971. Because many individuals participated actively between both Peery's San Diego, California based publishing network and Gygax's Lake Geneva, Wisconsin based publishing network, there is good reason to believe that ideas were shared, no matter how surreptitiously between individuals who straddled both spaces of the community.

Yet despite the common community discourse on the topic of role-playing, the divergence here between political role-playing experiments and commercial role-playing games is key here. The role-playing style advanced by the military was more scenario driven and analytic. The role-playing style advanced by the *Dungeons & Dragons* ruleset, in contrast, was somewhat divorced from these scenario-driven style devised by Bloomfield and Goldhamer. Instead, games used statistics and procedures to model immersive worlds. Where Bloomfield's CONEX experiments used techniques of surveillance to review the action of the role-play after the fact (in order to reveal and predict the potential politics of small nation states), the techniques of role-playing which

met the mass market were devised to produce an immersive state that did not require an empirical ground in reality.

The articles published in *Xenogogic* offer strong evidence of the embeddedness of TTT publications within a variety of institutional frameworks. It is clear from this evidence that there was a substantial amount of discourse between the political-military elites at both the RAND Corporation and the MIT Center for International Studies with members of the American wargaming underground. This is clear, because the *Xenogogic* offered readers a comprehensive review of RAND literature on games and game theory, the publication stands within the intersection between fan culture and military institutions. Second, because Peery was also in contact with Lincoln Bloomfield, who was a consultant for the United States Military, and an academic working at MIT, we can infer that TTT publications was also drawing in cutting edge research on gaming from the political elites working at MIT. Finally, Larry Peery's interest and engagement with Jerry Pournelle shows how the relationship between fan communities and military elites was not entirely one-sided. Instead, there was a sense of dialogue between the fans and military elites working in a variety of social and institutional registers as exemplified by the discussions hosted in *Xenogogic*. Because of these links we can see how TTT Publications serves as a key point of dissemination for how military ideology made its way into popular culture.

Between Fan and Strategist: Jerry Pournelle

Just as it was important to recognize Larry Peery for the ways that he endeavored to link fan publishing with military discourse, it is also important to recognize Jerry

Pournelle as a key figure in this history of role-playing games as he, more than any other, was able to effectively bridge several different communities of practice. Jerry Pournelle was a hobby *Diplomacy* player who had published in a number of *Diplomacy* outlets including the *Avalon Hill General* in the 1960s and 1970s. Although he was also renown as a science fiction author and president of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writer's Association (1973), he is perhaps most famous in military circles for co-authoring *The Strategy of Technology*²⁵⁸ with Stefan Possony (1970). Because of the variety of professional roles Pournelle took on, he bridged discourse between hobby *Diplomacy* communities and the military elite.

In a two-part article, written for *The Avalon Hill General* in 1971, Pournelle compared his experience at the Research Analysis Corporation (RAC),²⁵⁹ to the wargame *Afrika Corps*.²⁶⁰ In this article, "Simulating the Art of War," Pournelle offers a comparative analysis of the similarities between hobby and military simulation. In this analysis, Pournelle inquires what is to be simulated: tactics or strategy? For Pournelle, the crucial distinction to be had between the two categories was the fact that "strategy operates against the *will* of [an] opponent rather than his means."²⁶¹ In other words,

²⁵⁸ A key text in modern military strategy which suggests a method for how the advancement of military technology could be instrumental in maintaining a military advantage.

²⁵⁹ The RAC was a military think-tank, much like RAND, that was located in Virginia. Here, Pournelle participated in a variety of logistics simulations that were slow moving and analytical. By all accounts of his description, they seem like variants of Goldhamer's *The Cold War Game*.

²⁶⁰ Unlike *Diplomacy*, which maintained a considerable focus on player-to-player discussion and the paranoia of simultaneous and blind decision making, *Afrika Corps* is a wargame in the tradition of the *Kriegsspiel* which held a heavier emphasis on squad-level combat, dice-rolling, and probabilistic resolution.

²⁶¹ Jerry Pournelle, "Simulating the Art of War," *The Avalon Hill General*, The Ray Browne Popular Culture Archive, vol.7 no.5-6, (Baltimore, MD: 1971), 8.

strategies are long term, and as such, they are less concerned with the opponent's immediate surrender. In contrast, tactics are concerned with the loss or gain of key materials. Wargames, as theorized here, offer no sense of strategic purchase, as they are concerned with the loss and gain of key resources as abstracted on a map. In this sense, wargames are purely tactical apparatuses, as they have very little bearing on the psychic conditions of warfare as their focus is instead on the material conditions of battle.

Pournelle's point shows how *Kriegsspiel* style wargames like *Afrika Corps* favor a style of analysis that focuses on mathematical and quantitatively understood game states. It also favors an approach to *Diplomacy* that would reduce the resources of the map to quantities to allow for a tactical stance which incorporates the different means of various players.

The tactics of combat, as envisioned by Pournelle, have much to do with a mode of analysis that easily accommodates board games and gaming and it differs greatly from the strategic analysis of *The Cold War Game* as developed by Herbert Goldhamer at RAND. It is at moments like this, where analysis becomes a pragmatic process of resource management, as opposed to a psychological project, that games are established as separate from play. Put another way, games allow for a quantitative analysis of tactics and do not demand that social and inter-personal factors be taken into account. The more playful simulations of the RAC, with their focus on real-time action, and the simulation of slow bureaucratic processes were criticized by Pournelle for being somewhat boring.

Wargames in the tradition of *The Cold War Game* took on a somewhat plodding pace and were difficult for Pournelle to compare to the hobby wargames that he also participated in:

The last time I was involved with a RAC game (as a consultant to feed in data about how to simulate strategic and tactical air strikes) it took six months playing time to finish a forty-eight hour simulation—and that was with about ten players on each side, as staff of twenty referees, and a large computer to help. The game, incidentally, was one which eventually resulted in the US Army’s evolving the Air Assault Divisions, now known as Air Cav.

The point is that although an accurate simulation—it had to be, since procurement and real-world organization decisions were based in part on the results—the ‘war game’ at RAC was *unplayable*, and one suspects, even the most fanatical war-games buff would have found it dull after working at it full time for months.²⁶²

The abstraction necessitated by wargames requires both players and designers to consider how statistically based combat tables map onto the actions of players in the game. And as such, they provide a space for gamic action to develop quickly. The simulations to which Pournelle refers to here, on the other hand, were slow to develop. They focused more on the development and analysis of social action than the quick simulation of combat action that traditional wargames excelled in. The qualities being simulated in military simulations are more than just spatial and temporal, when applied, simulations do more than represent and reduce things in the world to miniature proxies, they also produce larger and more robust models of things that allow researchers to better sift through an array of moving parts. It is important to note, however, that the although simulations hold the potential to serve as robust heuristic tools, the quantitative and statistical aspects of

²⁶² Ibid.

simulations are those which are taken up by fan cultures and later brought to the mass market.

The quantitative and statistical work being done by other fans of *Diplomacy* was, in fact, of great interest to Pournelle. He concludes “Simulating the Art of War,” by relating how he feels that Edi Birsan (another fan) was doing great work in developing a more advanced combat matrix:

Still simulation is not impossible. We could develop a set of combat tables like those of [my erstwhile Diplomacy opponent] Edi Birsan in the Sept.-Oct. issue of The General. In fact, I would say, in the absence of something better the Birsan tables should be used in preference to either the old CRT or the new Kriegsspiel system alone. Better tables could be devised by spending a lot more time analyzing what happens in particular situations and adjusting the probabilities accordingly; I would like to see Edi Birsan continue this, and in any event I will return to the subject in a future article.²⁶³

The Birsan tables²⁶⁴ are useful for Pournelle because they produced results in a quick timeframe that accurately represented the complexity of the phenomenon they were representing. For Pournelle representing the complexity of a phenomena through

²⁶³ Ibid., 9.

²⁶⁴ The key to Birsan’s suggested modifications are a set of charts which demand that players secretly choose tactical positions before a battle. As opposed to a model of simulation where battle results could be easily forecasted, Birsan’s hope was that by producing a sense of tactical nuance, the uncertainty of battle could be better replicated. Birsan’s model worked like this: players would secretly choose poker cards (numbered 1-6), reveal, compare, and then process the result offered on a 6X6 grid. Included is even a variant that Birsan suggests for the true “nuts” out there, where a 4X4 grid of card-play (similar to the prior example) be used to determine the correct second grid of dice based variance for the battle. The battle would ultimately be reduced to a set of complex interlocked, spreadsheets. Ostensibly, the same complex computational systems that are used to determine combat in complex computer strategy games today.

statistics was the mark of good developmental work, and an encouraging sign that simulation might come, eventually, to offer strategic simulations that were playable within a reasonable time frame.

Although Pournelle's pontifications in "Simulating the Art of War," may not have been intended as a critique or commentary on the degree to which *Diplomacy* was itself a simulation, he intended them to speak to games such as *Waterloo* (a Napoleonic War Simulation) and *Afrika Corps*. And although these games were more traditional, done in the style of the *Kriegspiel*, they help us to better understand *Dungeons & Dragons*'s roots as a wargame. The quantitative aspects of *Dungeons & Dragons* were derived from a set of statistical combat tables, like those in *Waterloo*,²⁶⁵ developed specifically for allowing players a tactical battlefield experience. The core combat engine that underlies both *Afrika Corps* and *Dungeons & Dragons* reflects a struggle for resources in the tradition of *The Kriegspiel*. But where Pournelle saw more detailed statistical frames as a mark of complexity, there is also a sense that they denote a more single-minded belief in the values of "game" as opposed to play.

Where play is often sprawling and chaotic, games can be tight, erudite and efficient. And, as Pournelle offers a comparison of the simulations he would play at the RAC and wargames like *Afrika Corps*, it is clear that not only did he find the work of military simulation somewhat obtuse, he felt that more interesting work was being done by fans like Edi Birsan who were drilling down into the potentialities of statistics to better represent the plural outcomes of combat. As Pournelle represents a figure who saw the value of games as opposed to play, we must inquire as to how these beliefs relate to

²⁶⁵ Gary Gygax was an avid participant in the Waterloo fan community.

his larger ideological views as a military strategist. In order to do this we must stage a close reading of his book, *The Strategy of Technology*.

The Strategy of Technology

This section will show how Pournelle's viewpoints had a sizeable impact. As established earlier, Pournelle was both an influential science fiction and fantasy author and a notable military strategist. His ideas were considered both by fan enthusiasts and officers in training. His book, *The Strategy of Technology*, was read by members of *The Army War College*, and even recommended by Larry Peery to interested hobbyists in *Xenogonic*.²⁶⁶ By exploring his perspectives in *The Strategy of Technology* more closely we can ascertain evidence as to how Pournelle's views on what a game is influenced his work, and were indicative of a larger cultural shift toward the instrumental value of games.

The Strategy of Technology casts war as a "game." There are suspiciously few goals in this game, however, and no end state. Instead, the game of war is played only for the sake of continuing. Strategy, for Possonoy and Pournelle necessitates the acquisition of advanced military technologies that leapfrogs the capacity of enemy states to develop so thoroughly that their only option (as players in this game) involves striking an uneasy peace with their opponents. This sense of peace involves agreeing to the terms of any number of unfavorable trade agreements set by the technologically advanced nation. The alternative posed by this strategy would be to invest their few resources into furthering their military technology, and in so doing, impoverishing their people and ruining their

²⁶⁶ Issue 6-4.

infrastructure. This devious strategy has been at the heart of the American military-industrial complex for the last quarter of the twentieth century as the United States has continued to invest in military technology and intervene international affairs. It emphasizes a worldview that casts other nations without compassion as opponents, useful only insofar as they can be on the losing end of a trade agreement.

But why cast the “technological war” as a game? Considering Pournelle’s apprehension about equivocating wargames and simulations, it is suspicious that actual war, the sort that destroys and ruins the lives of thousands, if not millions, would be characterized in such seemingly glib tones. Possony and Pournelle seem conflicted on their use of the term. In one section they write, “The technological contest is a war. It is not a game against an impersonal force, it is a deadly conflict with an intelligent and implacable enemy.”²⁶⁷ Despite this disclaimer, Possony and Pournelle continue to articulate the ways that the “technological war” involves players and that technology itself acts as an intelligent opponent.

Indeed, Possony and Pournelle are articulating a view of technology which is quite similar to that advocated by Martin Heidegger in his famous 1954 essay, “The Question Concerning Technology.” Here, technology is theorized as a force that is always already in motion, and which takes on a profound importance in so far as it transforms all that it touches into resources for its use and reproduction.²⁶⁸ *The Strategy of Technology*, then, accepts this premise as one that has always been essential for strategizing warfare. It offers a political economic motive for the technological

²⁶⁷ Possony and Pournelle, *The Strategy of Technology*, Chapter 1, section 5, paragraph 1.

²⁶⁸ Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, translated by William Lovitt, (New York: Taylor and Francis, 1954/1977), 9.

momentum that Heidegger makes clear in his work. Military dominance relies on maintaining a consistent lead in the technological race. “In the new era, power grows largely—sometimes exclusively—from products based on applied science.”²⁶⁹ Not only is power a result of controlling advanced technologies, the technological war is an infinite one, “For the West, the Technological War is an infinite game; victory in one battle, or in an entire theater of conflict does not end the conflict.”²⁷⁰ This argument—that technology determines the gamespace of infinite war—brings to focus how the statistical methods of analysis, and quantitative measures of games, came to take on a deep significance in late twentieth century military strategy.

Key for Pournelle in understanding the “technological war” as a game is the fact that games are contests which involve the opposition of wills as opposed to the tactical deployment of resources:

First we see that strategy involves two opposing wills. This in itself sets the Technological War apart from the simple development of technology. The development of technology is a game against nature, which may be uncooperative, but which never deceives or actively conspires to prevent your success.²⁷¹ The Technological War is a contest with an intelligent opponent who seeks to divert you from seeing his purpose and to surprise you with his results.²⁷²

Here, the development of technology is theorized by Pournelle as a high-stakes bluffing game. The subtext here is that tools like game theory can be helpful in strategizing how

²⁶⁹ Possony and Pournelle, *The Strategy of Technology*, Chapter 1, section 1, paragraph 2.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., Chapter 1, section 1, paragraph 3.

²⁷¹ It should be noted that deception and conspiracy are two of the main mechanics in *Diplomacy*.

²⁷² Possony and Pournelle, *The Strategy of Technology*, Chapter 1, section 6, paragraph 6.

to succeed in this game, but what Pournelle adds is an ethos about the role of technology as competing player, or perhaps moderator. As much this chapter has shown Pournelle's fraught relationship with the reductionism that occurs when complex systems have been translated into a set of concrete and limited game rules, the term "game" slips again and again into his rhetoric. In this sense, Pournelle imagines a gamespace that can be quantified and strategized. He reproduces this by very publicly sharing his writing on strategy to fans and other military elites.

Military in the Underground

Both Larry Peery and Jerry Pournelle interacted with the hobby of play-by-mail *Diplomacy* in fundamentally different ways. As this chapter has described earlier, Peery is an interesting figure because he epitomizes grassroots interest and interaction with military simulations. In contrast, Pournelle worked in an opposite fashion, bringing his specialized military knowledge to inform the design of simulations in the underground. Both figures help to reveal how games were imagined at the intersection of the grassroots and the military as they sought to implement a design methodology that reduced both bodies and society to efficient and easily calculable numbers, and held a belief that war was inevitable and that others in the world could be considered oppositionally, as either ally or enemy. Fascinatingly, both figures were almost seamlessly integrated into both the military and hobby infrastructures. In contrast to other sites of discourse between the US military and the greater American population,²⁷³ which are remembered as rife with conflict, disagreement, and contest, there is a true sense of collaboration at play within

²⁷³ For example, protests about the draft and Vietnam.

the established avenues of dialogue that exist between the hobby community and military institution.

Still, greater questions loom: Since there is sufficient empirical evidence of an authentic dialogue between wargame hobbyists and military strategists in the archives of TTT Publications and *The Avalon Hill General*, what impact did these conversations have on the development of the role-playing game as a genre? Likewise, what impact did games with role-playing elements, such as *Diplomacy*, have on the development of simulations used by the military elite? And can a trend toward the quantifiable and rule-heavy aesthetics of wargames, for instance *Afrika Corps*, be located at this particular historical juncture? Does play at this very moment, take on a qualitatively different and less-pragmatic orientation than game, as it is shown to be inefficient and less able to be applied for strategic purposes? Although *The Cold War Game* and its derivatives (Bloomfield's work at MIT) surely had an impact on both the hobby community and military elites, it is difficult to discern the degree to which it has influenced the ethic of design amongst hobby developers. Instead, it stands as a case which shows how the more playful aspects of role-playing, improvisation and emotional investment, were eclipsed in several social fields by the quantifiable aspects of wargames and game theory.

Larry Peery and Jerry Pournelle fostered a discourse between play-by-mail *Diplomacy* fans and the politico-military elite. Notably, they both conveyed the two key principles of ludic subjectivity (quantitative essentialisms and oppositional thinking) to the community of play-by-mail *Diplomacy* hobbyists while fostering community interest in games that were of interest to them. Through this moment of ideological dissemination we can see how the values placed in games by military interests were

negotiated and understood by members of the American wargaming underground. The next chapter will consider how these values are crystalized in the rule-set of the game *Dungeons & Dragons*.

Chapter 6: Representation and Commercialism in *Dungeons & Dragons*

This chapter shows how TSR Hobbies, the company which produced *Dungeons & Dragons*, grew from a somewhat autonomous and grassroots enterprise in the early 1970s,²⁷⁴ into a corporately owned and held property in the late 1970s. As the company grew and sought to better address the needs of its investors, the characteristics and rules of *Dungeons & Dragons* were more clearly defined in the game's manuals. And, although the game was marketed as a "role-playing" game then, this chapter offers examples that demonstrate how the sense of "play," as defined by these rules was indicative of the rationality of the ludic subject. In *Dungeons & Dragons* aspects of games and play are most clearly polarized; it is clear which parts of the game are oriented around rules and which parts are oriented around acting and role-play. While Chapters 3, 4, and 5 have provided examples of how various practices of games and play define the ludic imagination, this chapter focuses specifically on how ludic subjectivity has been articulated in *Dungeons & Dragons*. I argue that the networks of play²⁷⁵ that constitute *Dungeons & Dragons* epitomize the practices of ludic subjectivity by abstracting bodies, systems, and more into game mechanics.²⁷⁶ The processes of abstraction take place against the backdrop of struggles for civil rights during the Cold War where the bodies of

²⁷⁴ TSR Hobbies began as an offshoot of the *Diplomacy* fanzine *The Domesday Book*, the key publication of The Castles and Crusades society, an alternative publishing association.

²⁷⁵ It is difficult to distinguish between player and designer in this chapter as many players at the time would modify the game through house rules, and many designers would play the game for leisure. In this sense, it is the play and design practices of the community which together instantiate a historical precedent for ludic subjectivity even while also representing a diverse sense of agency—their actions are not uniform but instead idiosyncratic.

²⁷⁶ For examples of the publications authored by these networks of play that are discussed here, please see Appendix D.

women and people of color were struggling for visibility on the larger political, cultural, and economic stage of America.

Continuing the work on community politics begun in Chapter 4, the first section of this chapter shows how the ludic subject negotiated tropes of racism, sexism, and homophobia while constructing the mechanics of *Dungeons & Dragons*. Evidence from issues of *The Dragon* (TSR Hobbies' publication for *Dungeons & Dragons*) that deals with the schematization of ethnic bodies, and female bodies in the game is contextualized within the corporate history of TSR Hobbies. The second section of this chapter shows how TSR Hobbies struggled to balance the interests of fans who were there at the company's inception in 1973 with the interests of those who adopted an interest in *Dungeons & Dragons* after it found a more widespread adoption in the community and beyond by the late 1970s. The chapter concludes by offering some notes on how Gary Gygax, the main developer of *Dungeons & Dragons* epitomized the attitudes of the ludic subject in his correspondence and policies. By showing how the game mechanics of *Dungeons & Dragons* relates to the corporate history of TSR Hobbies, this chapter hopes to show how mechanics which could be socially justified through efficient and clear justifications became the predominant mode of representation in the role-playing genre.

Simulation meets Representation

There is a clear problem of representation in games, and more importantly, the cultures that they are embedded in.²⁷⁷ This section stages a close reading of the way that

²⁷⁷ Most recently, this problem in representation has yielded controversies such as #gamergate. But, it is also more or less responsible for debacles such as the PAX "Diversity Lounge," the ignorant discussion surrounding the PAX dickwolves

bodies are portrayed in some early issues of *The Dragon* in an effort to present this problematic of representation and connect it to the larger theme of the ludic imagination as theorized within this dissertation. Within the game mechanics of *Dungeons & Dragons* bodies are transformed into numbers which are then justified through any number of biologically essentialist views. Additionally, the quantification of these bodies allows players to compare these bodies to one another, and in so doing, view other bodies oppositionally—as obstacles to be overcome. In order to explore how bodies are transformed into numbers to be compared and considered in opposition to one another, this section performs a close reading of a set of articles which were intended to provide mechanics for including women and people of color in the game's world.

The first article reviewed in the section is “Notes on Women & Magic—bringing the Distaff Gamer into D&D,” (1976)²⁷⁸ which offers a schematic for the ways in which the female body should be understood and regulated within *Dungeons & Dragons*. The second article, “Weights & Measures, Physical Appearance and Why Males are Stronger than Females; in D&D,” (1977)²⁷⁹ also deals with the schematization of bodies, but deals more specifically with how characters look when role-played. Together these articles

controversy, and the alleged controversy around Anita Sarkeesian's “Tropes vs. Women in Games” series. Outside the spotlight of digital games, some, like Ajit George (a role-playing enthusiast) and Shoshana Kessock (a game designer) have been outspoken about the problems of representation at Gencon, North America's largest tabletop game convention. See Ajit George, “Gaming's Race Problem: GenCon and Beyond,” *Tor.com*, <http://www.tor.com/2014/08/13/gamings-race-problem-gen-con-and-beyond/> and Shoshana Kessock, “Can't Swing a Con Badge Without Hitting a Nazi,” *Shoshanakessock.com*, <http://shoshanakessock.com/2013/08/21/cant-swing-a-con-badge-without-hitting-a-nazi/>.

²⁷⁸ Len Lakofka, “Notes on Women & Magic—bringing the Distaff Gamer into D&D,” *Dragon* 3, October 1976, 7-10.

²⁷⁹ P.M. Crabaugh, “Weights & Measures, Physical Appearance and Why Males are Stronger than Females; in D&D,” *Dragon* 10, October 1977, 19-20.

offer a glimpse into the subjectivities of gamers in the years 1976 and 1977, when a popular understanding of role-playing was being developed—by analyzing them we can consider how bodies were considered and constructed within the community.²⁸⁰

Regarding audience, these articles were published by men for a predominantly male audience. Although *The Dragon* was owned and operated by TSR Hobbies, they openly accepted articles by any contributors. Despite this, no women were admitted as authors until the fourteenth issue in 1978, when one fan, Ann Corlon, was given three paragraphs to explain the Ulik, a prize-winning monster submission.²⁸¹ Three issues later Patricia Pickens was given a similar space, and later still, in issue twenty-seven, Mary Lynn Skirvin was given an entire page to feature a new monster, The Horast. Finally, issue twenty-eight of *The Dragon*, published in 1979, featured the first women with a position on the editorial board. Listed last in the “Art. Dept.,” was Darleen Pekul. All of this is to say that very few women had a voice in the content published by *The Dragon*, and, as the examples explored in this section will show, women were configured as Other in the game mechanics of *Dungeons & Dragons*. By analyzing these articles we can better understand how the oppositional measures of ludic subjectivity are produced racist and sexist game mechanics.

Len Lakofka, author of “Notes on Women & Magic,” was an avid participant in the play-by-mail *Diplomacy* community. He ran a fanzine entitled *Liaisons Dangereuses* which began by facilitating play-by-mail *Diplomacy* games, but eventually began

²⁸⁰ Both articles have been made available to read in Appendix D: See *The Dragon* 3 and *The Dragon* 10.

²⁸¹ The only exception to this pattern was the work of Lee Gold who occasionally wrote articles for *The Dragon*, but was a known personality due to her work on the fanzine *Alarums and Excursions*.

publishing fan supplements to *Dungeons & Dragons*. Most notably, Lakofka served as the vice-president of the International Federation of Wargamers in 1968 when they sponsored the first GenCon convention. Later, Lakofka would take on a stronger role in managing the convention, organizing most of it in 1970. Lakofka was a notable figure in the history of *Dungeons & Dragons* and although many of the rules proposed in “Notes on Women & Magic” failed to stick,²⁸² they do offer an interesting historical lens through which the culture of the time can be interpreted. It helps us to understand what the players and designers of *Dungeons & Dragons* took for granted about the world—specifically how a predominantly white, male, gaming community imagined the bodies of women.

Women were not the intended audience of *The Dragon*, as made clear in the antagonistic and condescending tone Lakofka takes in “Notes on Women & Magic.” As the essay begins, one must wonder whether the notes were staged as a manifesto of whether or not women should be allowed at the game table, or within game worlds more broadly. Lakofka writes:

There will be four major groups in which women may enter. They may be FIGHTERS, MAGIC USERS, THIEVES and CLERICS. They may progress to the level of men in the area of magic and, in some ways, surpass men as thieves. Elven women may rise especially to high levels in clerics to the elves. Only as

²⁸² There is also a notable companion article within *Dungeoneer* #2, entitled “Those Lovely Ladies,” by an anonymous contributor which replicates many of the tropes regarding diminished fighting capability and beauty that were first penned in Lakofka’s article. The preface even admits that the article is intended to continue the conversation begun by Lakofka’s work.

fighters are women clearly behind men in all cases but even they have attributes that their male counterparts do not!²⁸³

Here we see Lakofka taking an overtly patriarchal tone in determining what women characters may or may not do. Additionally, women are defined here through the ways that their bodies differ from those of men. In this sense, the male body is the default and invisible standard to which the female body is judged and compared. This distinction is becomes even more exaggerated as Lakofka theorizes the primary difference between male and female bodies, beauty.

Instead of a charisma score (which is used to determine the attractiveness of male bodies), Lakofka suggests that female bodies should be considered through a “beauty” statistic. This statistic, unlike charisma,²⁸⁴ has a range of 2-20 as opposed to 3-18, an is relied on for a number of special skills that only female characters can use during the play of the game. These abilities focus on the character’s beauty specifically, and consist of abilities such as “Charm men,” “Charm humanoid monster,” “Seduction,” “Horrid Beauty,” and “Worship.” As shown in Figure 6.1, some of these abilities could be used to charm a man in a variety of different races provided that the female’s beauty score was equal to or higher than the number shown on the chart. It must be noted as well here that this matrix reflects a discourse of white supremacy as well as the fair skinned elves, and presumably fair skinned humans²⁸⁵ (referred to here as “women”) are more likely to be able to seduce any of the other humanoid character types including the darker skinned

²⁸³ Len Lakofka, “Notes on Women & Magic—bringing the Distaff Gamer into D&D,” 7.

²⁸⁴ Charisma is now generally used as the standard statistic for all bodies in role-playing games.

²⁸⁵ The following case study will demonstrate better how fair skinned was the default assumption in the community at the time.

Dwarves and Orcs.²⁸⁶ Through Lakofka's work, we can see the two characteristics of ludic subjectivity emerging, namely that characters are viewed in opposition to one another (it is assumed that men will want to resist seduction by women), and that bodies are essentialized as a set of numbers. Beauty is understood in so far as it can be naturalized. Here this means assuming different races have different natural proclivities toward what they consider beautiful as well as natural tendencies to *be* more or less beautiful than the others in this schematic. All races are naturally attracted to themselves as well according to this chart, as a beauty characteristic of 11 is needed to attract one's own kind. Quantities transform culturally determined characteristics into game mechanics (in this case, predicated upon misogynist and white supremacist categorizations) that are played with by the dungeon master and players. This manner of play is only possible because quantities enable an efficient comparison of characteristics between different character archetypes.

Woman's Race	Male's Race				
	Men	Elves	Orcs	Hobbits	Dwarves
Elf	10	11	10	10	10
Woman	11	12	11	12	12
Hobbit	12	14	13	11	12
Orc	15	20	11	14	17
Dwarf	13	15	14	13	11

Figure 6.1 - Chance to seduce via race, numbers indicate the minimum beauty required to seduce a man. Len Lakofka, "Notes on Women and Magic," 9.

²⁸⁶ According to the table, an female elf is able to seduce a male orc ten times out of twenty, while a female orc is only able to seduce a male orc eleven times out of twenty.

This element of opposition inherent in the seduction tables is even more pronounced because it is assumed that players will want to resist seduction. Figure 6.2 shows the game mechanics used for players who are interested in resisting seduction. Not only must women possess a minimum beauty characteristic to be able to seduce a man (see Figure 6.2), the men being seduced are also allowed to resist seduction by making a “Saving Throw.”²⁸⁷ These abilities work to represent women who use beauty as a weapon to get what they want from men who must in turn resist succumbing to temptation. Not only do these statistics reinforce the stereotype that a woman’s value and power lie only in her beauty, but they also reify a heteronormative standard of sexuality where relationships are exclusively staged between men and women. Thus, these charts work to reinforce racial stereotypes that revere a pale and slight standard of beauty; one that prefers exotic “oriental” bodies (hence the elf) and reads black bodies as invisible. Furthermore the idea that men have the final say in matters of sexual decision is also reinforced here, as men are given the opportunity to make a “Saving Throw,” before they succumb to temptation.

²⁸⁷ “Saving Throws” are also used to cheat death from a variety of other things in the *Dungeons & Dragons* universe. These include paralyzation, poison, death magic, rod, staff, wand, petrification, polymorph, dragon’s breath, and spells.

Saving Throws against seduction. The Saving Throw is based upon **seduction level** (spell # — not level of seductress). **Beauty score**. **Wisdom** of person being seduced, and **type** of figure being seduced.

Sum seduction level and beauty scores.

Subtract the Wisdom of the Target Figure and add that product to a 20 sided die roll.

A Fighter needs a score of 13 or higher to be saved (That is NOT laid — is that being saved???)

A Thief needs a score of 12 or better to be saved

A Paladin needs a score of 10 or better to be saved

A Magic User needs a 9 or better to be saved

A Cleric needs an 8 or higher to stay celibate.

Figure 6.2 - This table determines how easy it is for a variety of different characters types to resist seduction, higher results on a twenty sided die roll succeed. Len Lakofka, "Notes on Women and Magic," 9.

Because combat weighs heavily into the narratives of *Dungeons & Dragons*,

Lakofka also presents tables that elaborate on the abilities of women engaging in combat

(Figure 6.3). Here, women are compared to men as the default standard of fighting

prowess. Statistically, Lakofka shows how women fight at a disadvantage to men in a

variety of contexts. Additionally, women are given titles that are often derogatory as they

advance from level to level. A level one thief, titled "wench," fights at the ability of "man

-1," while a level two thief, titled "hag," fights equivalently to a "man." Even women in

the "fighter" class advance at a disadvantage, fighting only at a strength of "man +1"

upon reaching level two.²⁸⁸ Lakofka justifies this by explaining that it is easier for women

to advance in levels, and so they fight at a drawback as they progress. Despite this caveat,

women (and non-human races) are met with different glass ceilings as they advance, and

only human men may advance as high as they like in levels, all other characters are

²⁸⁸ Len Lakofka, "Notes on Women and Magic," 7.

limited—women fighters are limited to level ten advancement. These schematizations of the body make a consistent point: the bodies of women can only be understood when set in opposition to those of men, and within this realm they excel in quantifiable abilities that foreground the importance of their beauty.

THIEVES

Wench	1	man-1	-
Hag	2	man	-
Jade	3	m a n + 2	-
Succubus	4	2 men	1 limited and special
Succubus	4	2 men	1 limited and special
Adventuress	4+1	2 men +1	2 limited and special
Soothsayer	4+2	3 men	2 1 limited and special
Gypsy	5	3 men +1	2 2 limited and special
Sibyl	5+2	hero-1	2 2 1 limited and special

Figure 6.3 - This table offers a chart that shows how women should be evaluated for purposes of combat. Note that at all levels,

P. M. Crabaugh's article, "Weights & Measures, Physical Appearance and Why Males are Stronger than Females in D&D," offers a more precise take on the configuration and abilities of bodies. It focuses specifically on the abilities of bodies to lift, measures of height and weight, and the cultural parameter of ethnicity. Crabaugh saw the bodies of women differently than Lakofka, and argued that they excelled in some characteristics (aside from sheer strength). He granted female player characters a +1 bonus to their constitution statistic and a +2 bonus to their dexterity statistic. These countermeasures were controversial in the community, here is Crabaugh's defense to his critics:

[Constitution and Dexterity] and body mass are the only differences between male and female. Before someone throws a brick let me explain. As Jacob

Bronowski²⁸⁹ pointed out, as well as, no doubt, many others, there is remarkably little difference between male and female humans (the term here extended to include the Kindred Races), compared to the rest of the animal kingdom. There is little physiological difference, no psychological difference (Think about it. Consider that human societies have been both matriarchies and patriarchies. Don't let your own experience blind you to history.), and so forth.²⁹⁰

Crabaugh then goes on to offer the point that a constitution bonus is, in fact, due to the fact that women are more resilient to disease than men, and that their dexterity bonus hails from the fact that women have lighter builds, with sligher fingers and that they are then, therefore, more adept at picking locks than others.

Although not as condescending as Lakofka's treatise on women, Crabaugh reveals an essentialism in his writing that reads bodies as purely biological entities. By this I mean to say that for Crabaugh, knowledge of the body can and has been ascertained through scientific measures. Michel Foucault was deeply concerned with the reduction of bodies to numbers as he saw it as a mode of informatic power aligned with other techniques used to manage and control bodies in the modern state.²⁹¹ Within Crabaugh's writing²⁹² we can read this as a means of controlling bodies in the game state, but also, more broadly, a reification of existing modes of state and scientific control within the game itself. In this sense, ludic subjectivity appropriated and naturalized social and

²⁸⁹ A Russian Historian of Science.

²⁹⁰ P.M. Crabaugh, "Weights and Measures," 19.

²⁹¹ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol 1: An Introduction*, 154-5.

²⁹² This particular mode of informatics control can also be located within *Dungeons & Dragons*, more broadly, as an entire game system. Here bodies are understood through six primary statistical values: strength, dexterity, constitution, wisdom, intelligence, and charisma.

scientific methods of control. Players invented statistics to regulate fictional bodies just as scientists have invented measures to regulate our real bodies.

The statistics that Crabaugh uses to define bodies are based upon the bodies in the fantasy worlds that he, and other fans, were fascinated with. Alongside “handedness” in Crabaugh’s tables, lies “Skin” (Figure 6.4). According to this table, roughly one tenth of all players should have a “dark” complexion, one tenth of all players should have a “black” complexion, and one tenth of all players should have an “oriental” complexion. In defense of his chart, Crabaugh immediately explains that these determinations stem from representations of race in fantasy literature: “The reason that 16 out of 20 possibilities are variations on caucasion is not that that represents the actual population distribution; it is because the literature of swords & sorcery is *primarily* (but not entirely) concerned with Caucasions.”²⁹³ As Jon Peterson demonstrates in his work, sword and sorcery fiction was one of the primary influences of the role-playing game, he specifically cites *Hyboria* as a game set in Robert Howard’s *Conan the Barbarian* universe that was a strong precursor to *Dungeons & Dragons*.²⁹⁴ Here we find representation functioning as a mode of power that replicates and reifies. The representational contexts and normativities traditionally valued by members of the community are replicated and reinforced here within the systematic logic of the game.

²⁹³ P.M. Crabaugh, “Weights and Measures,” 20.

²⁹⁴ See Jon Peterson, *Playing at the World*, 43.

Skin (0-20)	
Die	Complexion
15-16	Dark
17-18	Black
19-20	Oriental
Handedness (2 6-sided)	
Die	Handedness
2	Ambidextrous
3-4	Left
5-12	Right

Figure 6.4 - A table used during character generation, used to determine ethnicity and handedness

The problem that recurs in both of these historic examples of game systems is one that elevates the values of authenticity (what Baudrillard would refer to as reenactment, or a second order simulation) above the values of inclusivity, plurality, and compassion. Although neither Lakofka nor Crabaugh are concerned with the authentic reenactment of history, they are interested in the degree to which fantasy can be authentically simulated. This single-minded focus on authenticity, however, facilitates the reproduction of what can be considered a set of predominantly white, patriarchal, vignettes. Even though Crabaugh endeavored to provide a reasonable simulation of the representations in swords and sorcery literature, he did not question the racist, misogynistic, and homophobic trappings within the genre itself. Robert Howard, author of *Conan the Barbarian*, though

idolized by the fan communities engaged in *Dungeons & Dragons*, has been heavily critiqued for the themes of white supremacy in his work. To simulate fantasy in the 1970s was to simulate work which divides people between good and evil, depicts a world filled with predominantly white male heroes, and often holds that might makes right.

In Ajit George's essay regarding the lack of diversity at Gen Con—North America's largest analog gaming convention—he touchingly writes, “As an awkward teen, like other awkward teens, I wanted to be accepted. But acceptance meant something different to me, as perhaps it does to other minority teens. Acceptance meant being white.”²⁹⁵ Given that George wrote this in 2014, it is important to recognize that the scene, and the subjectivities which thrive within it, has changed very little in the past 47 years. Has Gen Con or the role-playing community, as broadly construed, ever been free of problematic racist and misogynist tropes? To some extent, the hobby has been coping with cultural bias since its infancy in the *Diplomacy* fan community, and this sense of discrimination has become a seemingly inextricable part of the rules and cultural traditions that have passed between players for years.

The simulation of literature, imagination, and other fantastic worlds is not without the potential for improving its representational tropes. Although several toxic pathologies (specifically racism and misogyny) can be traced through the interpretive and historical work above, players, designers, and gamewrights alike can choose to represent whatever they like as they play these games. Although some game rules are written into fanzines and manuals, the culture of the hobby also allows games to bring with them an interpretive flexibility which allows for rules to be broken, statistics changed, bodies

²⁹⁵ Ajit George, “Gaming’s Race Problem,” paragraph 10.

invented, and worlds represented. This task, however, is one that belongs to all members of the community and is one that demands that players acknowledge the extreme biases that are written into the games we play. Although some designers in the indie game and alternative game movements at the time of this writing are taking deliberate steps to avoid reproducing problematic rules and images in the games we play, these ethics seldom cross over to the mainstream which will uncritically duplicate racist and misogynist tropes in their productions.

Alternative Visions of Simulation

This section aims to offer some background on the people working in the hobby who pushed for a more progressive sense of representation. It shows how even the individuals who questioned the racist and sexist tropes in role-playing games viewed the world through the quantitative and oppositional lens of ludic subjectivity.

Kim Mohan helped to push TSR Hobbies in a more progressive direction. Beginning as “Staff” in issue 29 of *The Dragon* in September 1979, he quickly advanced through the editorial ranks at the magazine. In the next issue, *The Dragon* #30, the designation of “Staff” was changed to “Editorial Staff,” and by March 1980 in *The Dragon* #35, Mohan was promoted to Assistant Editor. Finally, in issue #49 of *The Dragon*, published May 1981, Mohan became Editor-in-Chief, where he worked until 1986. Under Mohan’s direction, *The Dragon* slowly began to accept more articles which advocated for a diverse gamer set. Later in his career, Mohan was the lead editor of the *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons*, Third Edition project, which is notable in so far as it worked against much of the canon at the time. It eschewed rules which limited the

capabilities of female bodies, and allowed players to play non-human races beyond the typical Elves, Dwarves, Halflings, and Half-Elves that previously denoted the limits of individual representation in the rules.

One essay by Mohan stands out as a turning point in TSR Hobby's corporate though. It was co-authored by Jean Wells and entitled, "Women Want Equality: And Why Not?"²⁹⁶ In this article, the Wells and Mohan argue that both the culture surrounding the game, and the game's systemic implementation constitute a prejudice around women in role-playing games. They explain:

Some of the obstacles set in front of women players by the structure of the *D&D* system itself, as well as those barriers posed by male players with personal prejudices against women, will weaken or disappear with the passage of time. In fact, many aspects which women players have had reason to be upset about in the past have improved. But it is also apparent, from letters sent by women players around the country as contributions to this article, that many instances of unfair and degrading treatment of women players—and their characters—remains to be corrected.²⁹⁷

The article then continues to describe the paradox of discrimination. Either women are discriminated against because they have a different set of social values than the male players of their groups, or they are discriminated against because some Dungeon Masters found it difficult to manage the sexualities of women who wanted to play up some aspects of their sexuality during gameplay. In short, any deviation from invisibility in the

²⁹⁶ Jean Wells and Kim Mohan, "Women Want Equality: and Why Not?", *The Dragon* 39, July 1980, 16-17. To read this article, please see Appendix D: *The Dragon* 39.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 16-17.

patriarchal cultures of role-playing constituted a problem for women who were interested in getting involved in the hobby. Because of this double standard, as evidenced by the letters noted by Wells and Mohan in their article, the hobby has been notoriously hostile toward women. Interesting in this discussion is the focus on managing groups of players as a dungeon master, this is a reflection of the drive toward efficiency of information that has yielded the groundwork for ludic subjectivity.

In the article by Wells and Mohan, there is a return to the topic of strength and the female body. Here, like Lakofka and Crabaugh, who both exemplified ludic subjectivity by privileging supposedly authentic biological measures as a model for game mechanics, Wells and Mohan turn also to biology as a way of understanding how bodies ought to be. They are, however, slightly more critical of game systems than Crabaugh and Lakofka, as they explain:

Then there is the *D&D* or *AD&D* game system itself. Another often-heard complaint from women concerning the built-in restrictions on maximum strength for female player characters. It does seem unfair to many women that human female characters cannot have Strength of more than 18/50, when men can attain 18/00.²⁹⁸ However, the reason for this is based in reality and cannot be logically argued against. Women are, as a group, less muscular than men, and although some women may indeed be stronger than some men (as in real life), the strongest of men will always be more powerful than the strongest of women.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁸ The number following the “/” in this statement is a percentile value. 18/50 is akin to eighteen and one half while 18/00 is akin to eighteen and one whole.

²⁹⁹ Wells and Mohan, “Women Want Equality: and Why Not?”, 17.

Following this point about character strength, Wells and Mohan offer the same compromise solution that had been offered by Crabaugh, where women would receive bonuses on some other statistics in order to compensate for an artificially imposed maximum to strength. Mohan even goes a step further to match this article with another article on a similar topic entitled “Points to Ponder,” by Kyle Gray, that suggests, much like Crabaugh, that women will receive a bonus to constitution and dexterity. Gray also offers several examples of warrior women taken from both history and fantasy that debunk the claim that women do not make good warriors, but acquiesces to the point that their strengths may simply lie in facets of the body beyond muscle.

The arguments for biological essentialism made in this essay are taken for granted by Wells and Mohan, who were perhaps two of the most open minded individuals writing for *The Dragon*. This points to the degree that the fundamental principles of ludic subjectivity—oppositional thinking, and the quantification of bodies, society, and more—has been naturalized by almost all members of the community, even the most progressive ones. Perhaps this is due to the ways that simulation became a practice that relied on rational analytic measures to produce its most efficient results. As Goldhamer’s work on play at the RAND Corporation has shown (see Chapter 3), holistic methods of understanding were deemed too inefficient for the military to consistently fund. Likewise Larry Peery opted for a more quantifiable set of rules when he ran Goldhamer’s games as completely open worlds were difficult to moderate. In this sense, the supposedly rational logic of numbers permeates the structures of simulation. When simulating something, like fantasy, the maintenance of a perfectly logical and rational system came before all else. This meant, for players at the time, the reproduction and defense of systematic

measures used by scientists in biology, sociology, physics, and more, as these were the common sense educational matters of fact that constituted the worlds of the players. Given that a large portion of the player-base consisted of science-fiction hobbyists, the elevation of science to a sublime art should come as no surprise. To some degree, the charts and tables which governed the capacities and capabilities of mythical monsters and heroes demonstrate what philosopher of science, Bruno Latour, would refer to as a factish.³⁰⁰ In other words, they become a fetishized fact, where there is really just pseudoscience. They present the non-rational as rational by producing systems that mimic science, but in truth only represent fictions. At the core of the discussions surrounding gender in *Dungeons & Dragons*, it is evident that the community relied heavily on fantasy literature to provide a knowledge base for the characters, bodies, and objects that they would simulate. Little did they realize that by doing this they were reproducing the same racist and sexist foibles of the fiction itself.

In 2015, Jon Peterson published an article for the website, *Medium*, entitled “The First Female Gamers.” Here, Peterson argues that TSR Hobbies accidentally opened the door for women in the hobby with the marketing decision they made when initially distributing *Dungeons & Dragons*.³⁰¹ He tells, in great detail, how Lee Gold³⁰² protested

³⁰⁰ A factish, for Latour, is a combination of a fact and a fetish. In other words it is a scientific fact with a culturally presumed validity (one obtained from pseudoscience), that presents an aura of truth around what is really only fetish. See Bruno Latour, *On the Modern Cult of the Factish Gods*, (Charlotte, NC: Duke University Press) 2010.

³⁰¹ Jon Peterson, “The First Female Gamers,” *Medium.com*, 2014, paragraph 63. <https://medium.com/@increment/the-first-female-gamers-c784fbe3ff37>

³⁰² Lee Gold was the publisher of *Alarums and Excursions* which was published only two months after the first issue of *The Strategic Review*. *Alarums and Excursions* proved to be a notably different sort of space than *The Dragon*, as it maintained a focus on integrating a plurality of voices into the discourse and as such would feature more varied politics of representation in its publication.

Len Lakofka's article, "Notes on Women and Magic," in *Alarums & Excursions* #19. Her work in bringing other fans together to resist Lakofka's sexist article caused TSR Hobbies to reconsider some of its more sexist publishing practices. Although these moments of resistance were few at the time (they showed a market of .5% women growing to a market with 10% women), they help us to understand the ways that external cultural forces caused some in TSR Hobbies to reconsider its internal policies. The work done in this dissertation points to the fact that although women were, in fact, entering the hobby, they were being acculturated into a system of ludic subjectivity—a system that encourages a number of somewhat misogynist beliefs amongst its constituents.

A feminist standpoint must observe how Peterson's narrative seeks to whitewash a good deal of the sexism in the community in the mid 1970s. We must recognize the degree to which TSR Hobbies catered to a somewhat xenophobic market of ostensibly white, male, gamers. Then, as the remainder of this chapter will show, as the company boomed and the markets they hailed for *Dungeons & Dragons* expanded, those in charge had to take steps to show potential consumers that theirs was not a sexist enterprise.

Copyright and Controversy

The goal of this section is to show how ludic subjectivity was evoked in the corporate policy of TSR Hobbies. TSR Hobbies sought to strictly enforce copyright law with the materials published about their game. By understanding how members of the community negotiated copyright law, and how TSR Hobbies policed it, we can recognize the contours of ludic subjectivity. The policing of copyright evinces the oppositional

thinking of the ludic subject. This is a testament to the ways that *Dungeons & Dragons*, and our cultural understanding of play and games became even more extremely polarized in the 1970s. The corporate politics of TSR Hobbies are contrasted with the conversations regarding *Dungeons & Dragons* that were informally conducted through fanzines in the American wargaming underground. These conversations reaffirm the degree to which members of the community internalized ludic subjectivity.

Many of the debates over copyright took place in the fanzine, *Alarums and Excursions*. Lee Gold, the editor of *Alarums and Excursions*, was particularly clear on the economic makeup of the zine. Unlike *The Dragon*, which quickly evolved from the semi-commercial infrastructure of *The Strategic Review* into a commercial publication, *Alarums and Excursions* provided the transparency of a semi-commercial publication to its readers. An informational set of paragraphs led the first issue:

This fanzine is set up to serve as a monthly discussion zine for s-f fans and others interested in DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS. It should give all of us, especially Dungeon-Masters and Wilderness-Lords, a chance to discuss interpretations of the rules and to share our own special monsters and treasures with others who will appreciate them properly. It will also give us a chance to write up expeditions we've participated in.

ALARUMS AND EXCURSIONS is edited by Lee Gold...in the fervent hope that it won't won't lose too much money. To that end, it will be run as a cross between a standard fanzine and an apa.³⁰³

³⁰³ Lee Gold, "Introduction," *Alarum's and Excursions 1*, 1975, 2.

Alarums and Excursions included submissions from anyone who would write. It was a clearing house for several other publications on the topic by other interesting parties. Because so many authors contributed to each issue, but each issue was titled *Alarums and Excursions* it struck a balance between what was traditionally considered a zine, and what is considered something more.

Participants who were interested in publishing with *Alarums and Excursions* would pay Lee Gold to have their articles published. The fee was a cost that covered reproduction to the initial group of sixty subscribers. Inclusion ran at thirty-five cents a page for copies of a master done in mimeo stencil, but jumped to fifty cents a page for handwritten copy that Lee Gold had to transcribe from text to type. All fees were waived if sixty copies of the article were sent to Gold as she could then simply staple them into the issue. In exchange for submissions, contributors did not have to pay for the zine itself, only the postage used to mail it. There was also a middle category of semi-contributors who would receive the magazine for free if they contributed more than four pages of text, or at a forty cent discount if they contributed some small amount of material, perhaps a page. Non-contributors had to pay seventy-five cents plus postage to receive the issue. *Alarums and Excursions* was nothing if not diverse as Gold's explicitly transparent and horizontal structure encouraged a wide breadth of submissions from the community.

In addition to the high level of material investment and care that Gold and her contributors devoted to the construction of the zine. Lee Gold's husband, and co-publisher Barry Gold was also quite careful to reiterate a clear set of rules regarding what constituted the legal sharing and reproduction of TSR Hobbies' copyright work. A disclaimer was offered to those seeking a *Dungeons & Dragons* ruleset:

Lee and I, as publishers of *Alarums and Excursions*, recommend that you buy the rules to *Dungeons and Dragons* if you don't already have them. Xeroxing somebody else's copy is unethical and illegal too. If you are going to get involved enough in the game to build your dungeon, you should at least spring \$10.00 for the rule books. If you aren't making your own dungeon, you don't really need the books—some other player can tell you how to make and play ac character. So there is no excuse for making a bootleg copy and depriving Gary Gygax, the game's inventor, of his fair share.³⁰⁴

The tone of this commentary is particularly interesting. Instead of warning devious players of the legal ramifications and concerns they might evoke if they were to Xerox copies of *Dungeons & Dragons*, Barry Gold provides an appeal based on community honor. Gesturing at the degree to which TSR Hobbies' ascertations in their early issues that they put their fans before their profit motive, this evidence suggests that the fans bought in to this rhetoric wholeheartedly.

Not all readers of *Alarums and Excursions* agreed with these community values, however. In the fifth issue of *Alarums and Excursions*, Dick Eney penned a letter to the editor on the topic:

There are mutterings of Discontent over your comment anent [sic; "comment about"] depriving Gygax of his fair share by Xeroxing *Dungeons and Dragons* and, by extension *Greyhawk* and *Chainmail*.³⁰⁵ As I believe that I (hem hem) am

³⁰⁴ Barry Gold, "It Comes Up Magic," *Alarums and Excursions* 1, 1975, 20.

³⁰⁵ *Greyhawk* was a supplement to *Dungeons & Dragons*. *Chainmail* was the rules system from which *Dungeons & Dragons* emerged.

unlikely to be tagged as one of the irresponsible hippie types trying to tear down the fabric of our Free Enterprise system, maybe I'd be the right one to state them.

Firstest, let us Define Our Terms. *D&D*, *Greyhawk*, and *Chainmail* are fanzines (and there are a more than a few fanzines with better artwork and proofreading). That is, they are something that is published in connection with Gygax's hobby and for fellow hobbyists; they are not his bread and butter and we don't have to make a baseline calculation of what brings him in a decent annual salary, as we would with a full-time professional. On the other hand, we do have to do him justice and make sure that a work which has brought us so much pleasure doesn't wind up costing him something out of his pocket. All X so far?³⁰⁶

After this introductory blurb, Eney moves to sketch out the political economy of copying within the fanzine Xerox community in order to make a point about the ethics of TSR Hobbies, and therefore Gary Gygax's—the company's founder and leader—ethics. Math aside, Eney argued that TSR Hobbies was essentially charging ten dollars for a product that cost TSR Hobbies seventy-five cents to publish.³⁰⁷ This markup, according to Eney, was fundamentally unjust given, in his opinion, considering that hobby publications were about supporting a community and not generating profit. Gygax was being accused by Eney of not conforming to the semi-commercial norms that govern the culture of the hobby.

In his response to Eney, Gary Gygax embodies the oppositional mentality of the ludic subject. Although Gygax offers a fair breakdown of the company's profit, shows

³⁰⁶ Dick Eney, "It's Eney's Fault," *Alarums and Excursions* 5, 1975, 27-28.

³⁰⁷ Please refer to Appendix E to see the full extent of Eney's calculations.

him losing patience with Eney by the end of the article. This article was published in *Alarums and Excursions* #8, but was supplemented by a companion article published by Gygas in *The Dragon* #11. Namely, Gygas points out that professional publications require substantially more money than fanzines:

The production of a game or rules set entails very many expenses beyond the base printing cost, and I must say that the printing cost of D&D runs quite a bit above the six bits that Eney mistakenly asserts is the cost. (If, in fact, he can have the three booklets printed, the separate charts also done, and assembled, the box made and wrapped, and the wold put together and shrink wrapped for that price, he should contact me immediately and let me know the name of the printer!).

However initial printing cost is not the only consideration. First, a substantial sum of money must be raised in order to pay for from 3,000 to 5,000 copies of the print run, and a place to house all these sets must be found. Then the materials to handle orders, wrap them and ship them must be arranged for, as well as someone to do the actual work. Records must be kept. Taxes must be paid. Royalties must be reported and paid to authors and artists. Salaries must be paid. Overhead must be paid. And there is always the good old discount! We offer them, hobby shops get them (and most folks would rather go and pick up their material immediately than wait for a mail order), and distributors get very substantial ones. They're all necessary and beneficial—except that in some cases the authors make more money on a run than TSR does! That's fine as long as the overhead and fixed

expenses get taken care of, but it doesn't consider what is to be done for the new production.³⁰⁸

Though Gygax raises a number of excellent points regarding the business expenses of TSR Hobbies, it is clear that he is speaking a fundamentally different language than Eney. Where Eney was looking at TSR Hobbies as a small-print venture, Gygax was looking at the company as a business. And a business requires profit for a number of reasons, many of the humane. Here though we can see a subtle change in Gygax's priorities as compared to those assumed by members of the fan community. Where critics like Dick Edey felt that TSR Hobbies should support the community, Gygax felt that there could be no community if TSR Hobbies was to put business second.

In a later paragraph Gygax would point out that much of the profit he earned was necessary to support the salaries of the business's six employees. He explains that, at this point, the business had grown to be his full time job and that its profit became necessary to support his family. Though somewhat compelling, this explanation marks a clear break from the vision of TSR hobbies as offered by Tim Kask in *The Strategic Review* #2, where Kask argued that the business worked in tandem with the many fans in order to support its products. As TSR Hobbies grew as a business, they began to make decisions that supported the interests of its employees and their families, as opposed to decisions that were ostensibly for the greater welfare of the community.

Gygax is particularly clear on the value of the labor, even immaterial, that had gone into the playtesting and development of *Dungeons & Dragons*. He does hold an odd double standard, however, in so far as he privileges and prioritizes the work being

³⁰⁸ Gary Gyax, "TSR Hobbies: A Letter from E. Gary Gyax," *Alarums & Excursions* 8, 1976, 4.

done by those directly affiliated with TSR Hobbies to the amateur work being done by those in the community. He writes:

It is illegal to copy D&D. It is unethical. And in the final analysis it might mean real loss to great numbers of people. That isn't to say that there is the least objection to copying parts of the books for your own use or for that matter if some individual is too damn poor to afford the cost of his own compy of D&D is better he get a Xerox than not be able to play. But how many copies are simply made so as to profit the fellow illegally duplicating his D&D? Or how many are made in order to save the money, so as to use it for some other form of entertainment? It all boils down to the question about whether or not the laborer is worthy of his hire.³⁰⁹

For Gyga, it seems, a particularly problematic part of Xerox piracy was that fans in the community seemed to be privileging the purchases of other media products—records, books and movies—instead of supporting TSR Hobbies, which was at the time a grassroots publishing venture. He argues here that those copying games while also watching movies or consuming books are voting with their wallets on what forms of media they truly admire. In this sense, not only was Gyga learning to think more like a businessman, but he was being pushed in that direction by fans in the scene who were making it difficult for him to turn a profit.

Gyga exemplifies aspects of ludic subjectivity in his writing. Not only does he view media pirates in opposition to the work being done at TSR Hobbies, he is also careful to think through the business as one dealing with a quantifiable stock, and a

³⁰⁹ Gary Gyga, "TSR Hobbies: A Letter from E. Gary Gyga," 5.

concrete profit motive. The dark side of this oppositional thinking even comes across in some of Gygax's writing for *The Dragon*, where he is more candid about how he feels about those making illegal copies. Here he lists the stance of TSR Hobbies on copycat products as being one of, "contempt," and offers a quite vivid description of their corporate practices:

I cannot resist the analogy of a lion standing over it's kill. The vultures scream, and the jackals yap, when the lion drives them off without allowing them to steal bits of the meat. Perhaps a hyena will manage to successfully grab off a mouthful, but that is all. Other lions may also prey upon the same herd and make even bigger kills, but that is the law of the land. Pardon me, please, if you find the picture not to your liking. From my end it seems most *apropos*, for I hear a good deal of screaming and yapping. TSR was the lion which brought down the prey, and we intend to have the benefits derived from therefrom. If we share with anyone, it will be on our terms. The hunter which fails to bring down its kill dies itself.³¹⁰

Here, the struggles over intellectual property faced by TSR Hobbies were life and death. Role-playing, is considered the company's kill and so therefore it is important for the company to police this property through any means necessary. At this stage we can see corporate logics defining the terms of the property it produces. It can be safely assumed that at this point, December 1977, TSR Hobbies was no longer a semi-commercial endeavor, they had become a game company. Furthermore, the behaviorist and zoological

³¹⁰ Gary Gyax, "View From the Telescope Wondering Which End is Which," *The Dragon 11*, December 1977, 6. To read this article in full please see Appendix D: *The Dragon 11*.

metaphor of animals preying upon one another in the savannah reflects the aspects of ludic subjectivity that are determined by a profound ontological belief in the truth of pseudoscientific knowledge. This statement assumes that we are no different than animals eating one another in the wilds, that combat is a necessary part of life, and that we must view all others in opposition to us and then determine who we would be amenable to sharing with. Gyga's barbaric and patriarchal perspective also runs counter to what has become common knowledge in matters of copyright since.

If we are to consider this incident in light of the conversations around copyright and cut and paste culture that are circulating today, it's important to note how TSR Hobbies' quasi-commercial infrastructure made the act of copying a site of contest and conflict within the hobby. Media theorist Henry Jenkins has paid close attention to the ways in which the labor of fans is often co-opted by corporate interests that seek to use it as a way to extend their brand. He posits that on instances where fan productions of copyright works interferes with a corporation's vision of their brand's development, the fan labor is discouraged through legal measures as fans are often issued cease and desist orders, or even worse, sued. Although corporations such as Warner Bros. often recognize the degree to which fan labor plays a necessary role in keeping products relevant and alive,³¹¹ there is a distinct sense that fan labor also threatens to undermine clean branding strategies.³¹²

³¹¹ Warner Bros. has assisted J. K. Rowling in the construction of the website "Pottermore," in an attempt to produce a deliberate structure for the management of fan fiction.

³¹² For more on this see Henry Jenkins, "Why Heather Can Write: Media Literacy and the Harry Potter Wars," *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, New (New York: York University Press, 2006) 175-216.

The conflicted nature of fans in this case points to a healthy sense of dialogue and discourse in the community. While some like Barry Gold worked to police TSR Hobbies' copyright, others like Dick Eney would work to challenge such modes of regulation. And although Eney's calculations were called into question by Gary Gygax, the resulting back-and-forth did nothing but make the corporate practices of TSR Hobbies more transparent. Readers were able to read about the price of materials and make an informed choice about the ethics of TSR Hobbies for themselves.

The promiscuity of Xerox copies of *Dungeons & Dragons* manuals in the wargaming underground must also be taken into account at this juncture. While the cut and paste Xerox culture at play in this moment clearly extended the reach and entrenchment of the *Dungeons & Dragons* brand, it also worked to its detriment and slowed the corporate growth of TSR Hobbies. The company's transformation from grassroots hobby venture into hierarchical corporate enterprise are exemplified by the changes in tone hinted at in issues of *The Dragon* and *The Strategic Review* which explain the company's growth. From Brian Blume's generous editorial statement in *The Strategic Review*, "In a nutshell we do not believe that we can ever work too closely with our fellow wargamers, for TSR's sole justification for its existence is to provide you with products which you desire,"³¹³ to Gygax's brutal animal metaphor in *Dragon 11*,³¹⁴ it is clear how a need to sell books helped TSR Hobbies to transform from a community interested company in Summer 1975 to a business enterprise concerned with bottom lines in December 1977. Within this transformation we can see the playful aspects of

³¹³ Brian Blume, "TSR –Why We Do What We Do," *The Strategic Review 1*, no. 2, 1975, 2. To read this article see Appendix D: *The Strategic Review Volume 1, Number 2*.

³¹⁴ Gary Gygax, "View From the Telescope Wondering Which End is Which," 6.

Dungeons & Dragons becoming more distant from the game's rule-based and marketable aspects. It also becomes clear how Gygax's cold, brutal, visions of the world became operationalized in game mechanics around comparison, conflict, and opposition.

Conclusion

I have argued three points throughout this dissertation: First, that “the ludic imagination” can be defined as a discursive understanding of how games and play have been predicated upon the historically contingent and cultural meanings that are given to them during the period of the Cold War analyzed between 1954 and 1984. Second, that throughout the twentieth, and now twenty-first centuries, these meanings have shifted along with the economic, political, and cultural makeup of American society during the Cold War. Third, I have argued that this configuration of economic and cultural value relates to the emergence of what I term “ludic subjectivity.” Because the ludic subject values the analytic dimensions of games, they have adopted the logic of game theory (either explicitly or implicitly) for negotiating the pressures of everyday life. The ludic subject is characterized both by a belief in the value of mathematics and numbers, and an oppositional form of thought characterized by tropes of racism, sexism, and homophobia. This conclusion reviews the evidence provided in this dissertation related to the ludic imagination as a heterotopic discursive space for imagining the potentialities of games and play, and then considers the scope of ludic subjectivity as a reductive military worldview that emerges as a dominant concept within this discourse.

At its heart, this dissertation has been working to identify themes of descent in role-playing games throughout. These various imaginings of what a role-playing game is include the many ways that role-playing games have been understood to structure community, empathy, creativity, and identity between and within their players. At the same time, I have endeavored to problematize ludic subjectivity as a site of emergence where players negotiate the dominance of military ideology in a variety of ways. The

problematic of ludic subjectivity helps us to consider the cultural domains where war and oppression thrive today.

If Johan Huizinga had written *Homo Ludens* in 2015, I posit that the largest development that he would be forced to contend with is how the dynamics of oppression in the digital era are fundamentally different than those during World War II. In the 1940s, Huizinga saw games as a civilizing element in culture and therefore theorized that they could be utilized as a technique to produce order in a chaotic and barbaric world that he witnessed with the rise of ideologies of supremacy and exclusion in his time.

Despite his optimistic opinion of games, Huizinga struggled with the question of whether the productive and creative elements of play were entangled within the material conditions of warfare. Was war itself a form of deadly, decisive play also implicated by the magic circle?³¹⁵ It is likely that Huizinga struggled with this very question:

While Huizinga is remembered for an optimistic appreciation of the play element which views it as a noble activity that enhances culture and is constituted within culture, he is actually quite pessimistic: “A happier age than ours made bold to call our species by the name of *Homo Sapiens*”. . . This shows that Huizinga was aware of both the changes being implemented in 1938 by the Third Reich and horrors yet to come when he introduced his theory of the *Homo Ludens* that is

³¹⁵ Fuchs contextualizes Huizinga’s thought on war in the following way: “Is war of a playful nature? Huizinga says on page 210: ‘Modern warfare has, on the face of it, lost all contact with play’. . . On the same page, he speaks about his ‘gnawing doubt whether war is really play.’ He comes to the conclusion at one point, that ‘war has not freed itself from the magic circle,’ but keeps the reader uninformed why this is ‘despite appearances to the contrary.’ . . . Considerations like these show Huizinga’s awareness that the materiality of the world was in direct conflict with his idealistic concepts.” Mathias Fuchs, “Ludoarchaeology,” in *Games and Culture* 9, no. 6, edited by Aaron Trammell and Anne Gilbert, 2015, 535.

often read in defense of “free activity,” “fixed rules,” and “orderly manner”. . . The *Homo Ludens* of 1938 was not an unproblematic, cheerful guy sitting on a hill or inside a magic circle, but he was in serious doubt and probably in deep despair.³¹⁶

Does play—considered as free activity embedded *within*, not outside of everyday life—offer a potential to resist the forces of pervasive and unending war? Do the rituals associated with play offer an alternate social framework that helps to resist the hegemony of the military entertainment complex, or does it, in contrast, serve to replicate and instantiate militaristic tropes when evoked? My research suggests that the ambiguity in Huizinga’s language between games and play is a key part of this problematic. If Huizinga lived today, he would see the pervasiveness of this ambiguity. Games, as they have been construed by both military and commercial enterprise, reproduce the militaristic values that Huizinga was concerned with, yet they are often dismissed as play or leisure. These definitions emerge through a discourse that this dissertation terms the ludic imagination,³¹⁷ and we must consider the inextricable relationship of military interests within this space. The ludic subject is key to this form of social and cultural reproduction as they equivocate the strategies of game theory with play, and thus embody the reproduction of these oppositional military values.

First, the concept and justification for the ludic imagination will be considered in this conclusion. After addressing this concept, the conclusion will review the evidence set forth in this dissertation that establishes the various forms that games and play take

³¹⁶ Ibid., 535.

³¹⁷ A construct introduced to discuss the space of play and games in the historical case studies presented in Chapters 3-6.

during The Cold War as well as the constant intervention of military interests within this space. Finally, this dissertation will return to a discussion of ludic subjectivity in order to consider the potentials therein for future research.

The Viability of The Ludic Imagination

This section reviews the evidence that this dissertation has mounted in an effort to present the concept of the ludic imagination. It begins by reviewing the historical narrative presented in this dissertation, the different ways that role-playing games and game theory were imagined at the RAND Corporation, and the implications of these perspectives for grant funding. It then reviews the *Diplomacy* play-by-mail community as a place where role-playing games were imagined in a variety of different ways: as spaces of fun, spaces of equality, and spaces of military verisimilitude. The historical narrative concludes by showing how the hierarchical understanding of games and play was implemented in role-playing games like *Dungeons & Dragons* and suggests that this implementation holds within it a problematically essentialist politics that has been used to abstract misogyny and racism into ostensibly innocuous algebraic formulae and code. Finally, this section casts the concept of ludic subjectivity within the ludic imagination and suggests that it can be best understood as the development and reinforcement of a modern military ideology that contrasts and values the mathematic and analytic aspects of games over the open and somewhat chaotic domain of play.

In popular media, RAND's association with the development of game theory is so well-known, that Herbert Goldhamer's work on role-playing games at the same institutions has fallen into obscurity. For example, Stanley Kubrick's (1964) cult hit

Doctor Strangelove is an explicit parody of the work done in RAND's Physics Division by scientists like Herman Khan. While the figure of Khan was satirized in *Doctor Strangelove* for the somewhat reductionist and callous way that he treated bodies, the game theorist John Nash was depicted in Ron Howard's (2001) less sarcastic biopic *A Beautiful Mind*. The John Nash characterized by *A Beautiful Mind* was one who viewed other people in society as opponents in a massive real-world game. Understanding how role-playing is rendered invisible by these dominant narratives around the RAND Corporation and game theory is further evidence of the way that games hold a social and cultural position greater than that of play.

The Cold War Game, when considered alongside Nash's work in game theory and Kahn's work in disaster management, in 1955 and 1956 respectively, sits uneasily within RAND's mostly quantitative oeuvre. Despite this, there is a clear line of reasoning that led to the game's development. As related in Chapter 3, *The Cold War Game* was originally developed in the service of game theory, as Herman Goldhamer was assigned the task of developing a game that would help to quantitatively justify non-rational, emotive states. The Social Sciences Division had been given the task of nuclear deterrence, which meant that they needed to develop contingency plans for social factors that couldn't quite be controlled for through the predictive means of game theory. This meant finding ways to structure "non-rational" things (like an official who is having a bad day) as quantitative variables that could be predicted and understood by game theory. *The Cold War Game* was ultimately a failed experiment as it was an inefficient means of generating the quantitative data needed to manage "non-rational" states through game theory.

The Cold War Game failed to produce quantitative metrics for game theorists, but it revealed a completely different space of creativity around games than that of game theory. Players were able to imagine the positions and affects of others when playing *The Cold War Game*, even though they were unable to report these findings through numbers. From this evidence, a vision of play as a technique of empathy and understanding coalesces.

Compared to the role-playing games at RAND, game theory was a critical and economic success. Even though *The Cold War Game* was ultimately a failure, we can read the simultaneous development of the two techniques as a parable about what is valued by science. Modes of efficient inquiry are valued by science and it is clear from Goldhamer's experiments that even though *The Cold War Game* was a useful heuristic tool for training and contingency planning, it was a completely inefficient means of developing these forms of knowledge. Chapter 3 shows how relationship between game theory and role-playing games is aligned with the scientific valorization of "rational" knowledge defined as quantitative and consistent with capitalist ideology. As Goldhamer's work on *The Cold War Game* came to be associated with "non-rational" social phenomena, Nash's work on game theory came to be associated with "rational" phenomena. The biases associated with these terms can be further associated with a binary perspective on games and play that understands games as rational and orderly, and play as non-rational, chaotic, and affective. This relationship is important because ludic subjectivity is produced by a player bias toward the "rational" strategies necessary for efficiently navigating games, the workplace, and everyday life.

Games and play are imagined outside of the binary focus of “rational” and “non-rational” in the play-by-mail *Diplomacy* community between the years 1971 and 1972. This dissertation characterizes evidence for this in two ways: First, Chapter 4 shows how games were used as a medium through which community could be imagined in the 1960s and early 1970s. In the discourse chronicled here, the relationship between play, games and fun is explored in great detail. We can see by looking at discussions around censorship in the grassroots *Diplomacy* community how community values are related through games, as well as the diverse and often politically charged connections between play and fun in this discourse. Second, Chapter 5 shows how two key actors performed as intermediaries in military-fan discourse, moving ideas between the two communities. By considering how the play-by-mail *Diplomacy* community acted as both a site of dissemination and adoption, I hope to show that the economic and cultural value placed in games over play was not a phenomenon limited only to the work being done at the RAND Corporation.

The cultural values that are ascribed to games are related in Chapter 4. Through the example of the *Diplomacy* press release, we can see members of the fan community engaging in a discourse about what the purpose and value of play. Because the diegetic action of *Diplomacy* revolved around warmongering and fortification, discussion in the press release section of *Diplomacy* fanzines was often nationalist, racist, and sexist. As a default, press releases took on an unpleasant and antagonistic tone as players used them as a space to establish a narrative around their nation’s militaristic actions. The racist, homophobic, and misogynist nature of these press releases prompted Penelope Naughton

Dickens—one of the only women who published regularly in the *Diplomacy* player community—to instigate a dialogue around whether or not they were a safe space of play.

The arguments around censorship and hate speech in the *Diplomacy* community support my theorization of the ludic imagination by revealing the variety of perspectives around play and games in the hobby community. For some, games were imagined in a positive way, as an ordering factor that sets rule to the chaos of play. Others who argued that they should be allowed to use hate speech in their writing to a casual, comical effect tempered this optimism around games. These examples show how the play-by-mail hobby community imagined play as simultaneously free and restrictive, and games as paradoxically neutral and political. In 1971, two other *Diplomacy* players, Larry Peery and Jerry Pournelle, would better articulate a separate military discourse around play-by-mail *Diplomacy*.

The unification of military and grassroots discourse on games and play is important, because it supports my argument that the politics of ludic subjectivity are essentially the politics of the military. The factors of oppositional thinking and quantitative rationality that define ludic subjectivity are definitive because they exemplify military thought on the value of games and play.

Larry Peery's publishing syndicate, TTT Publications, was instrumental in forming a concrete link between the publications on game theory and role-playing at RAND with and the play-by-mail *Diplomacy* fan community. In TTT Publications, Peery set up a play-through of *The Cold War Game* alongside other wargames played in political think tanks like RAND. Although it is unclear from my research how Peery was

informed about the experiments in political gaming at RAND,³¹⁸ he does make fairly clear in his publications how influential these dialogues were in the *Diplomacy* fan community. In addition to staging a play-through of *The Cold War Game*, Peery also created a reading list of private RAND research documents on role-playing games and game theory that interested players could order from the company. Peery published reviews of these documents in his fanzine, *Peerinalis*, and then encouraged players to order and read the documents for themselves. Importantly, Peery's reviews of the RAND research documents applauded the documents that used game theory the most, and struggled to find much meaning in the documents that dealt with role-playing. Through Peery's RAND reading list, we can see a valorization of game theory over role-playing in line with the fundamentals of ludic subjectivity.

Peery wasn't the only fan to bring military discourse to the wargaming underground. Jerry Pournelle, a science-fiction author, military strategist, and avid wargamer, also bridged both worlds. Through Pournelle's writing in fanzines and *The Avalon Hill General*, two important themes emerge: First, an attitude that real-time military simulations such as *The Cold War Game* were both inefficient and boring. And second, an attitude that celebrated and valorized statistical simulations. In Pournelle, we find an instance of mathematics and statistics being valorized over the slow and qualitative work of role-playing. Pournelle and Peery together epitomize the degree to which military discourse was able to impact the play-by-mail *Diplomacy* community. Their attitudes show how the valorization of mathematics and game theory as "rational"

³¹⁸ The story of how Peery discovered information about the secret experiments in role-playing at the RAND Corporation and MIT has been mystified by the sources I have examined. It is a potential avenue for further investigation, and one that will be best approached through interview (as Peery is still alive today in 2015).

methods of analysis can be read in a hierarchical relationship to the “non-rational” methods related to ritual and play.

The historical work in this dissertation concludes in Chapter 6 with an example of how the cultural capital afforded to mathematics and game theory coincides with the construction of character bodies in *Dungeons & Dragons*. The fundamentals of ludic subjectivity—a belief in the essential truth of numbers and oppositional, antagonistic, logic—such rules were epitomized by the procedural and algorithmic rules of *Dungeons & Dragons*, and then reproduced in other role-playing games as well as within the community itself. This dissemination is described by Michael Tresca: Given that the development of *Dungeons & Dragons* coincided with the development of personal computing, the game became a touchstone for game developers hoping to incorporate its mechanics into a digital swords & sorcery-style adventure.³¹⁹

Chapter 6 uses historical examples from *The Dragon* in an effort to show how some early attempts to integrate the female body within a game-system that presumed most players to be white and male. The examples provided in this chapter show how a biologically essentialist understanding of the female body was reduced to numbers so that it could be manipulated in the game. The examples drawn from *The Dragon* show how the racist and misogynist attitudes of the player community are operationalized within the rule systems that govern role-playing games. It shows how players valorized a quantitative rule-set for understanding and determining the limitations of bodies over the qualitative determinations of play-acting and embodiment. Even though the examples make clear how racism and sexism are coded into game design, this chapter tries to make

³¹⁹ Michael Tresca, *Dungeons & Desktops*.

clear that the greater problem is the reductionist logic that transforms bodies into numbers.

Chapter 6 concludes by making clear that the reductionist and oppositional logic of ludic subjectivity was also impactful on the level of the game design industry by revealing how Gary Gygax, the founder of TSR Hobbies, characterized piracy of *Dungeons & Dragons* as explicitly hostile, antagonistic, and oppositional. In this sense, *Dungeons & Dragons* epitomizes the cultural reproduction of ludic subjectivity. It shows how the concept took root in the common-sense and everyday perspectives of the game's designers, and how it was implemented in the coded and algorithmic rules that structure the game.

Based on the writing of political and military elites at the RAND Corporation and hobbyists in the American wargaming underground, the ludic imagination with the economic, symbolic and cultural value of games took in the world. Ludic subjectivity, within this frame, relies on the hierarchical positioning of games as “rational,” efficient, and valuable over play, which is associated with “non-rational,” affective, and ritual phenomenon. The development of oppositional thinking within the ludic subject in many ways parallels Caillois's musings on the combination of the two forms of play he identifies as competition and chance, which, combined, lead to the rise of meritocracy as a form of governance and to capitalism as a mode of sociality. The ostensibly egalitarian discourse of competition and chance actually belies a distinctive characteristic of isolating and distinguishing one player above others. Caillois explains:

Both [competition and chance] require absolute equity, an equality of mathematical chances of almost absolute precision. Admirably precise rules,

meticulous measures, and scientific calculations are evident. However, the two kinds of games have opposite ways of designating the winner. As has been seen, in one the player counts only upon himself and in the other on everything except himself.³²⁰

Both competition and chance speak to a positive sense of equality, but the ways that this sense of equality requires the development of a distinct and atomic sense of individuality speaks to the negative aspects of these play elements. This sense of the atomic individual—one who counts only on themselves, or only on others—relates to the oppositional thinking that develops within the ludic subject. The ludic subject views others oppositionally and deliberately considers that as the fundamental mode of their sociality.

These two elements—a belief in the essential truth of numbers, and the oppositional thinking characterized by the isolated subject—together form what this dissertation considers the ludic subject. The ludic subject enjoys and collaborates in the reproductions of game mechanics that reproduce and exaggerate social difference through numbers and statistics. In this sense, the extent to which many games go unchallenged as uniquely racist, sexist, and homophobic constructs in the gaming community has much to do with the degree to which the principles of ludic subjectivity are a fundamental part of the discourse. Such valorization of statistics as an efficient mode of social apprehension and control can be traced back to historical maneuvers in the social sciences. As historians Armand and Michèle Mattellart write:

³²⁰ Caillois, *Man, Play, and Games*, 74.

[P]robability theory³²¹ was an invitation to a new way of governing people...The technology of risk and reasoning in terms of probability, already at work in managing private insurance applied to mortality, shipping risks, and fires, was transferred to the political field and became a tool for managing individuals considered *en masse*. In the course of this shift from civil to social law, towards calculated solidarity and interdependence, there arose the principle of the welfare state that socialized responsibility and reduced all social problems to a question of odds.³²²

Game theory is part of the history of probability theory touched on here by Mattelart and Mattelart, and, as captured here in this quote, the use of statistics as a way to quantify and control the unpredictability of burgeoning urban centers was fundamental to work being done in the social sciences in both the 1920s and still, although to a lesser extent, today. This logic was transformed at RAND into an approach to preventative war. Here, the aims of game theory coincide with the early values of the social sciences, and can even be read positively as a means to control the chaotic politics of nuclear war. Now, however, we must consider the applicability of the term subjectivity to this worldview. What are the limits of this theorization, and where can we locate ludic subjectivity within the world?

³²¹ By this, Mattelart and Mattelart simply mean the use of statistics, which rose to prominence as a scientific methodology in the 1920s.

³²² Armand Mattelart and Michèle Mattelart, *Theories of Communication: A Short Introduction*, translated by Susan Gruenheck Taponier, (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2004/1995), 12.

Is Ludic Subjectivity a Subjectivity?

This dissertation combines a historical approach that addresses the genealogical descent of role-playing as a concept between 1954 and 1984 with an approach that addresses the emergence of a dominant military subjectivity within this discourse. The various definitions games and play take on within the discourse of role-playing is referred to here as the ludic imagination, and the more specific emergence of domination within this space is referred to here as ludic subjectivity.

Some questions about the nature of this project emerge from this theorizing: First, what communities or individuals constitute ludic subjectivity through their practice?³²³ Is ludic subjectivity a rhetorical position, devised to prompt critical inquiry, or a phenomenon with empirical weight? Finally, and perhaps most importantly, what implications does the concept hold for game studies and digital media theorists? In order to answer these questions, this section will first consider some definitions of subjectivity, and then compare the evidence provided in this dissertation to the definition of subjectivity outlined in this section.

Michel Foucault avoids writing about subjectivity in his earlier work, and doesn't explicitly approach the concept until his later writing where it emerges alongside "ethics" and "truth."³²⁴ Before his later writing, Foucault writes more about systems of subjection than he does subjectivity. Here, subjectivity is produced by domination, though what subjectivity is left largely undefined. As had been noted earlier in this dissertation,

³²³ Rephrased, I am asking what individuals strategize through the structures of everyday life using mainly the techniques of game theory?

³²⁴ Mark G. E. Kelly, "Foucault, Subjectivity, and Technologies of the Self," *A Companion to Foucault*, edited by Christopher Falzon, Timothy O'Leary, and Jana Sawicki, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2013), 510.

“Genealogy, however, seeks to reestablish the various systems of subjection: not the anticipatory power of meaning, but the hazardous play of dominations.”³²⁵ This quote makes clear the problem of subjection, and even alludes to the production of subjectivity, but here no individual criteria are given for what constitutes a subjectivity. We could gather from this quote that the play of dominations outlined in this dissertation are a ludic system of subjection, but not a ludic subjectivity in particular.

Critical theorist Mark G. E. Kelly has considered the definition that subjectivity takes in Foucault’s later work: lectures from 1983 and 1984, *The Government of the Self and Others* (1983), *The Courage of Truth* (1984), and Volumes 2 and 3 of *The History of Sexuality*. In Foucault’s later work, Kelly admits that the most consistent definition of subjectivity to be found holds a key and mutual relationship with another concept: “techniques of the self.”³²⁶ From this suggestion, Kelly considers commonalities between the techniques of the self addressed by Foucault in writing and in lecture and lists the following criteria of subjectivity:

- 1) Foucault takes subjectivity to be something *constituted* (EW1, 2990),
and specifically something *historically* constituted (PK, 117).
- 2) Moreover, he claims that the subject *constitutes itself* (*se constitue lui-même*) (EWI, 290).
- 3) He associates subjectivity with “a reality ontologically distinct from the body” (C-CT, 159).
- 4) This however is a *form*, rather than a substance.

³²⁵ Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” 83.

³²⁶ Kelly, “Foucault, Subjectivity, and Technologies of the Self,” 512.

5) Lastly, the subject for Foucault is constituted through practices.³²⁷

Subjectivity, in this definition, does not necessarily speak to the play of domination within history (although it can). Instead, it is directly related to the practices that are used to understand and define ourselves. We can glean these practices through historical inquiry, and so therefore, genealogical methods are particularly useful in that regard. Drawing on the earlier points made in this dissertation regarding Foucauldian descent and emergence, the commonalities of descent can be used in identifying practices that constitute the subject, while emergence is specific to the systems of subjection that take form within the umbrella of these practices.

As I have argued in the introduction, this dissertation relates to the descent of role-playing games. Throughout the dissertation, I consider the various ways that role-playing is defined as it is negotiated by hobbyists and key military actors; this is the ludic imagination. The practice of role-playing, as articulated through the ludic imagination, shows how role-playing emerges as a technique of self-constitution between 1954 and 1984. It speaks to the plural and potential ways that the self is imagined when taking on the role, attitude, and beliefs of another. Role-playing, as identified in this array of practices, is not a subjectivity because it does not reflect the third criteria identified by Kelly: an ontologically distinct reality. We can locate this reality by observing the processes of subjection identified through genealogical inquiry.

If ludic subjectivity is a Foucauldian subjectivity, then this dissertation has provided evidence of its emergence (in Chapter 6) within the role-playing game *Dungeons & Dragons*. The practices of role-playing that constitute the game are distinct

³²⁷ Ibid., 513.

from the practices of role-playing described in Chapter 3 at the RAND Corporation. Instead of focusing only on the play-dialogue provoked by acting through a fictional role (as epitomized by *The Cold War Game*), players of *Dungeons & Dragons* were encouraged to justify their actions and, indeed, sense of reality, through the calculus of charts and tables provided in the manuals of the game. Ludic subjectivity, in this characterization, reflects shifts toward militarization in the definition space of games and play throughout The Cold War. As *Dungeons & Dragons* develops as a commercial product in the 1970s, it colonizes play-acting with the algebraic logic of game theory. Action becomes possible only when it is justified by the mathematical and oppositional terms provided in game supplements and manuals.

But does the ludic subject exist outside of gameplay? Can the practices of role-playing that constitute the self within what Johan Huizinga termed the “magic circle” of play be considered within the context of everyday life?³²⁸ I argue that they do. I have provided evidence in Chapter 6 that concretely links the design decisions made by hobbyists in the *Dungeons & Dragons* community to biological essentialisms and militaristic attitudes distinct to The Cold War. In other words, the cultural acceptance of Len Lakofka’s misogynistic essay, “Notes on Women and Magic,” however niche, relates concretely to an attitude of verisimilitude in simulation that sees bodies as objects to be transformed into numbers and compared against one another. The fact that this attitude emerges simultaneously to discussions around women’s rights in the 1970s is relevant

³²⁸ The magic circle of play refers to the distinction drawn by Huizinga between play activities and real-world activities. It invokes a greater question about the degree to which play, and other activities sometimes characterized as leisure, produce feelings, knowledge, and other tangible experiences outside of the game space.

here, as it relates concretely to the practices used to define masculinity in opposition to the spread of feminism in popular culture.

An argument can be made for the potentiality of ludic subjectivity to exist today within the coalescence of movements such as #gamergate, which, although ostensibly a response to ethics in game journalism, has also been tied to death threats, rape threats, and the widespread declassification of private data of women in the video game industry. Key arguments made by #gamergate relate also to the verisimilitude of simulation—reviewers who are appreciative of games with radical and often feminist themes are criticized for desiring games that are unrealistic. Although there is an argument to be made about the relationship between ludic subjectivity and the social movements that persist around gaming today, their counter-historical nature marks them as an avenue of potential study, rather than a conclusion to be drawn from this particular work.

The ludic subject exists in a world saturated with the procedures and rules of games in the spheres of industry, military, and most importantly, everyday life. The ludic subject negotiates these procedures by choosing strategies that have been derived from the logic of game theory. As a result of deploying the strategies of game theory, the ludic subject views others oppositionally and reduces bodies, structures, and physics to quantifiable data. Although I have provided strong evidence for the emergence of ludic subjectivity in role-playing games in the 1970s, further inquiry must be performed if these conclusions are to be generalized to communities beyond those identified in this dissertation.

One conclusion to be read into this dissertation's inquiry into the ludic imagination is that much work remains to be done in recognizing the complex exchange

of agency between game, designer, and player. By considering the definitional ambiguity of game and play, the interchangeability of the terms often relates to a masking of where agency is to be located within structure and where structure is to be found within agency. This conclusion suggests that definitions that seek to categorize “game” as one thing and “play” as another miss the point, and find themselves entangled in the tired discourse around games, play, progress, and leisure that they often seek to evade. Here lies the ultimate potentiality of the ludic imagination: as an inquiry into the heterogeneous and plural definitions of games and play that remind us of how the two concepts are always already being remade and reconsidered to meet the demands of their respective cultural milieus.

Future Research

As noted in the previous section, although a strong argument can be made for the existence of ludic subjectivity, the evidence for it in this dissertation is limited primarily to cases found in the *Dungeons & Dragons* fan community in the 1970s. Additionally, in reaction to the mathematical and combat-oriented engine that drives *Dungeons & Dragons*, some contemporary role-playing games like *Fiasco*, *World of Darkness*, and *Fate* have attempted to replace the focus on dice rolling and mathematics required by the game with systems that encourage good storytelling and player interaction. There persists a strong community of role-playing game players and developers who imagine games in a way that is based neither on numbers nor opposition. The horizons of the ludic imagination are endless and each potentially valuable in its own way.

This dissertation suggests that more work is needed on the various ways that people imagine play and games. While it has focused on one particular subjectivity within this spectrum—ludic subjectivity—the diverse relationships between games, play, and the self are all possible avenues of future research. One avenue in particular, the historic experience of women and people of color who game, has been opened up by this dissertation and is, I believe, particularly worthy of continued inquiry. An important future research question to be addressed from this work is: What voices have been silenced by the dominant representational tropes featured in role-playing games, and how have others made do with these problematic tropes?

In addition to staging studies that better tell the stories of marginalized individuals, this dissertation also suggests that the military-entertainment complex in The Cold War has roots that predate the widespread development of digital games by at least one decade. If arguments are to be made about the synergistic relationship between games and the military, they ought to dig deeper and look at more than just the usual suspects, such as digital games like *America's Army*, *Spacewar*, and *Computer Space*. The relationship between the military and games is more than just technological; it is networked and social. Exploring games beyond the digital is a simple way to work toward uncovering these previously invisible network ties. This dissertation shows evidence that the military imagination and the ludic imagination share a good deal of overlap, and that the relationship between the two might be deeper than previously imagined by political scientists, military analysts, and game studies theorists. More research must be done on military interest in analog games during The Cold War.

Finally, the work in this dissertation would be greatly supplemented by interviews with the many individuals described within. This work has deliberately avoided interview as a methodology in an effort to avoid revisiting the past with the perspectives and biases of the present. Having done that, interviews would add a fascinating dynamic to the research conducted here insofar as they can help fill in gaps left in the narrative. The relationships between key individuals can be clarified, and the narrative traces that have been set together here as structure can be better given a living, beating heart and situated within our present circumstance.

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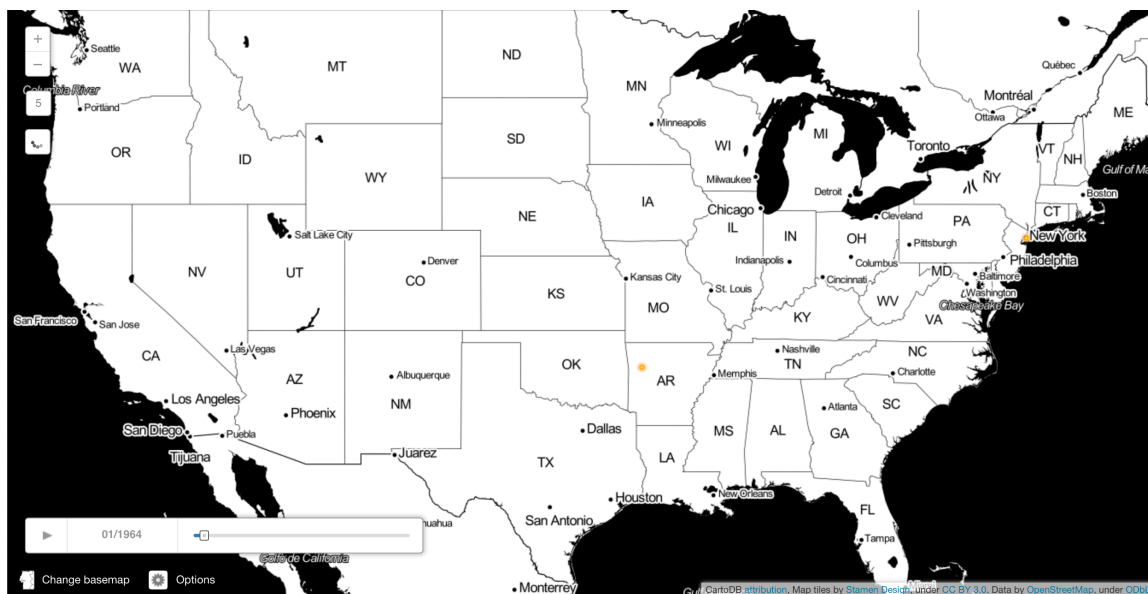
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Appendix A – Year by Year Visualization of Diplomacy Fanzine Growth 1963-1992

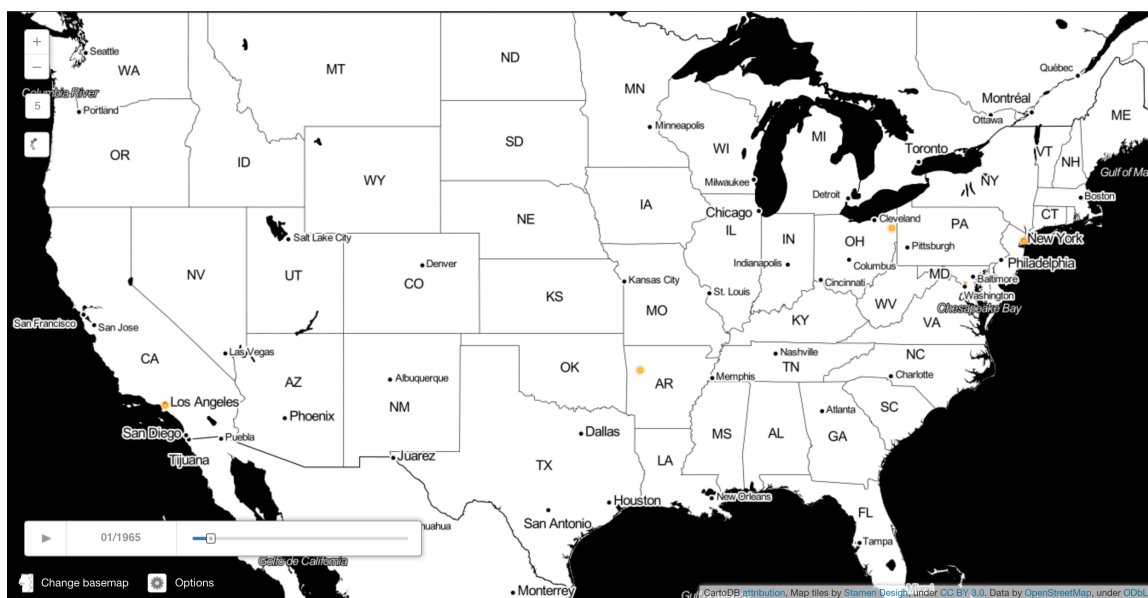
This appendix charts the growth of the *Diplomacy* play-by-mail community between the years 1963 and 1992. The visualization was constructed by adding the zip code data of all fanzines included in *Meinel's Encyclopedia of Postal Diplomacy* into a spreadsheet for processing through CartoDb software. I have included here a year-by-year visualization of fanzine growth across America. Each yellow point represents a fanzine, and larger points indicate a cluster of fanzines in one geographic area as determined by the size of the map. These maps are discussed and referenced within Chapter 4.



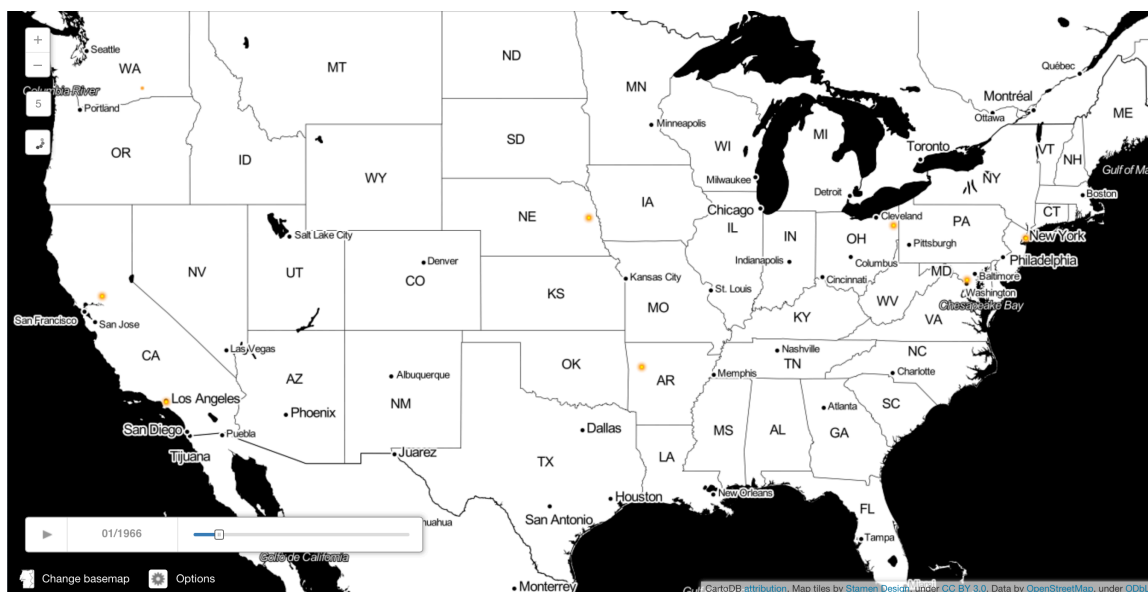
Visualization 1 - Cumulative Visualization of Diplomacy Fanzines, January 1963



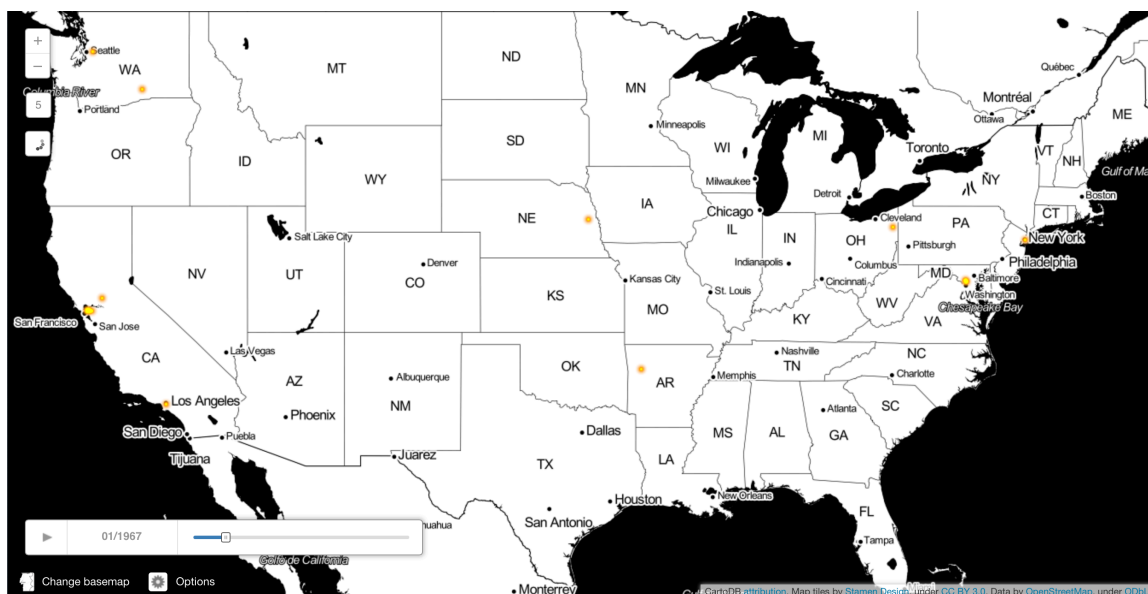
Visualization 2 - Cumulative Visualization of Diplomacy Fanzines, January 1964



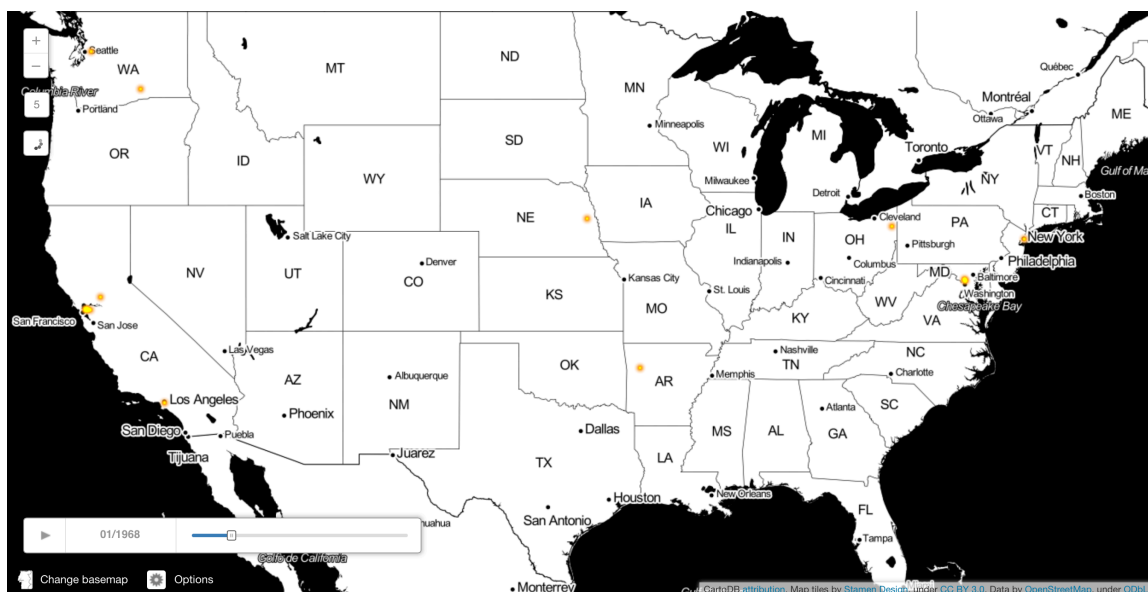
Visualization 3 - Cumulative Visualization of Diplomacy Fanzines, January 1965



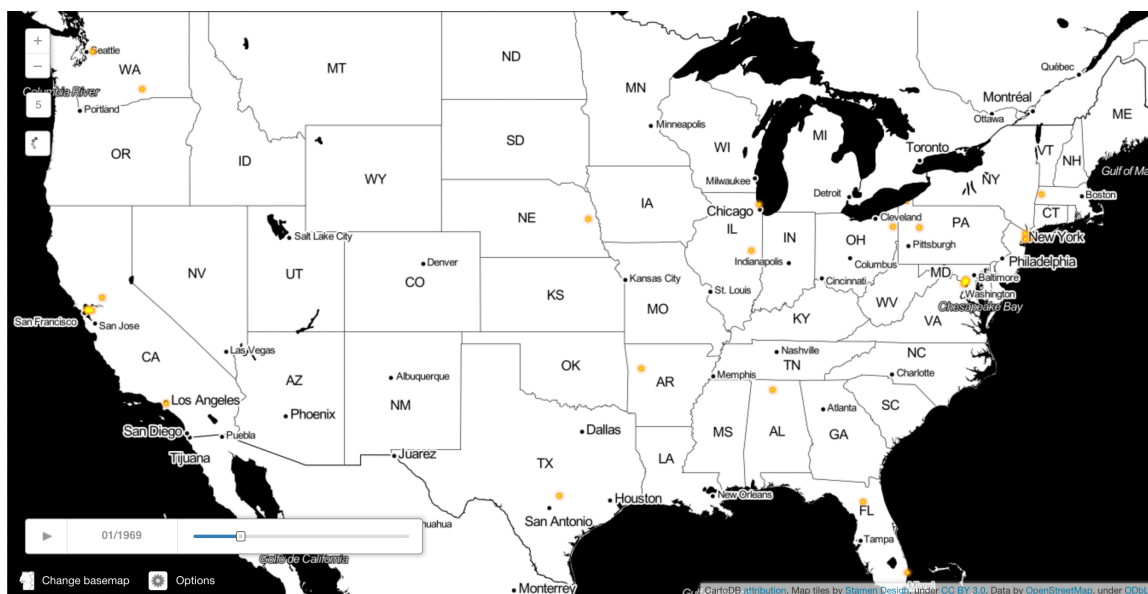
Visualization 4 - Cumulative Visualization of Diplomacy Fanzines, January 1966



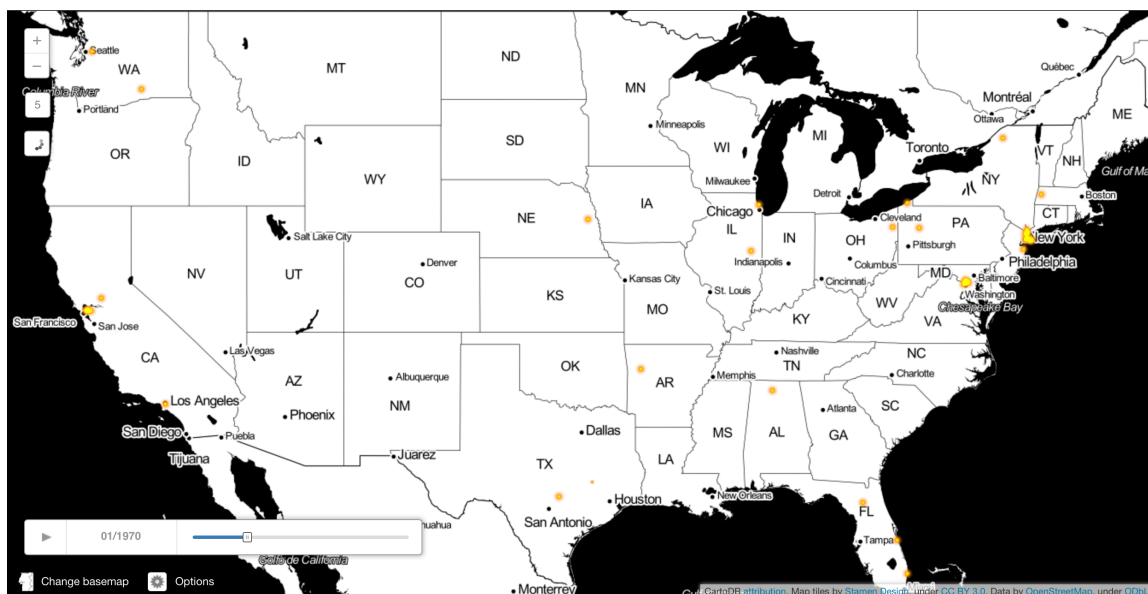
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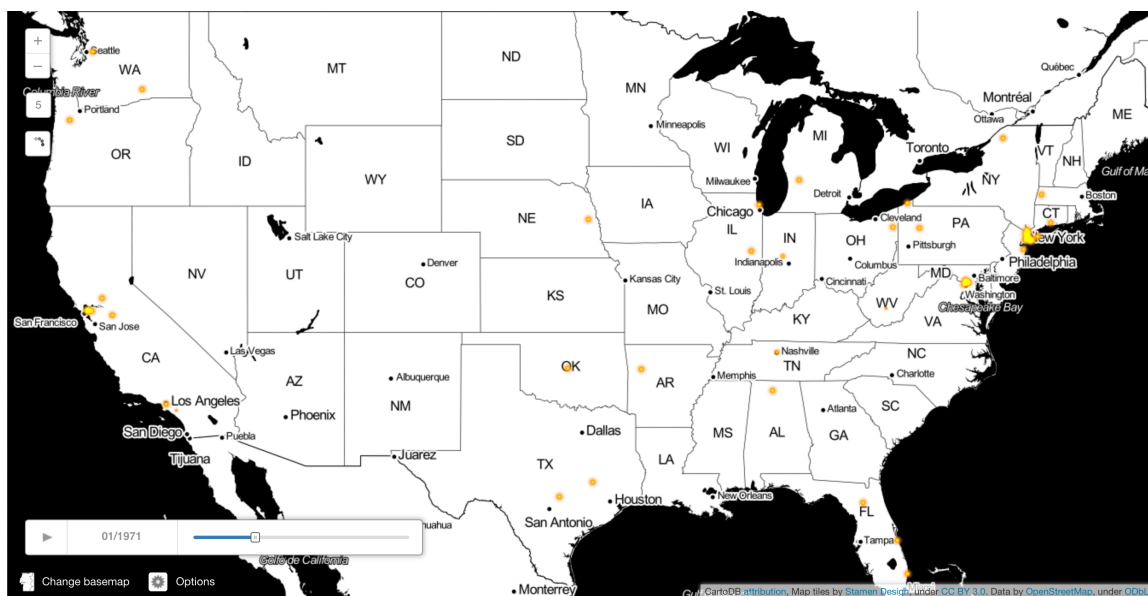
Visualization 6 - Cumulative Visualization of Diplomacy Fanzines, January 1968



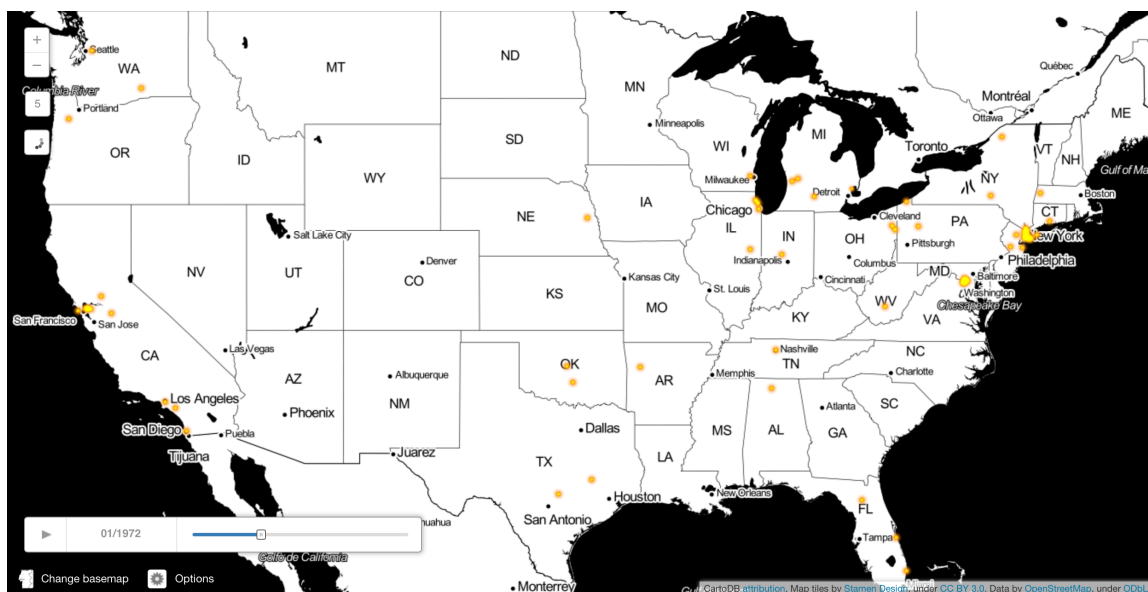
Visualization 7 - Cumulative Visualization of Diplomacy Fanzines, January 1969



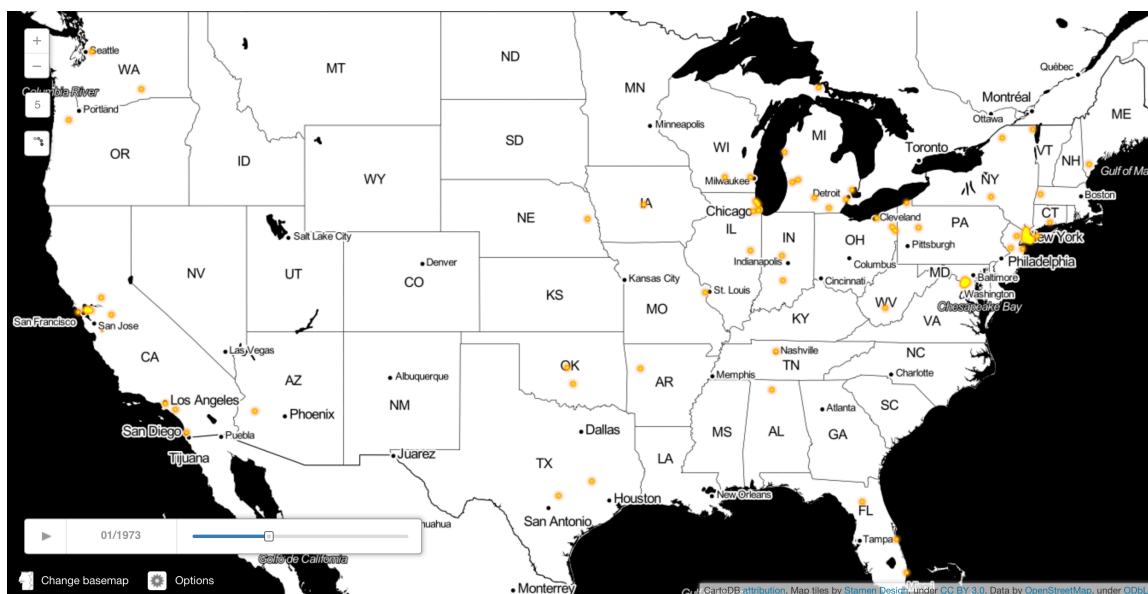
Visualization 8 – Cumulative Visualization of Diplomacy Fanzines, January 1970



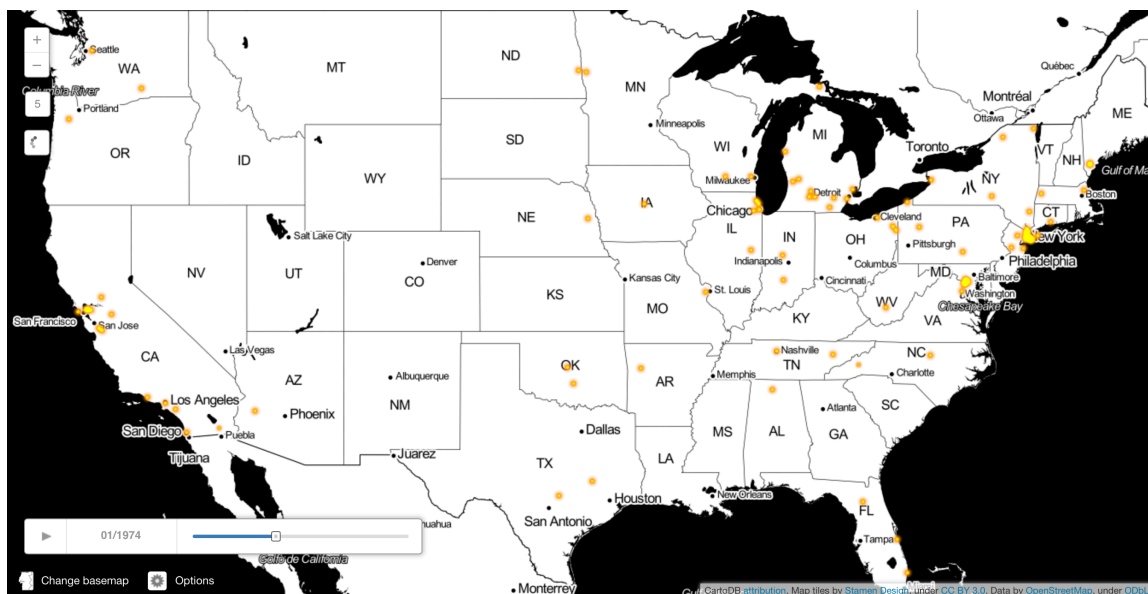
Visualization 9 - Cumulative Visualization of Diplomacy Fanzines, January 1971



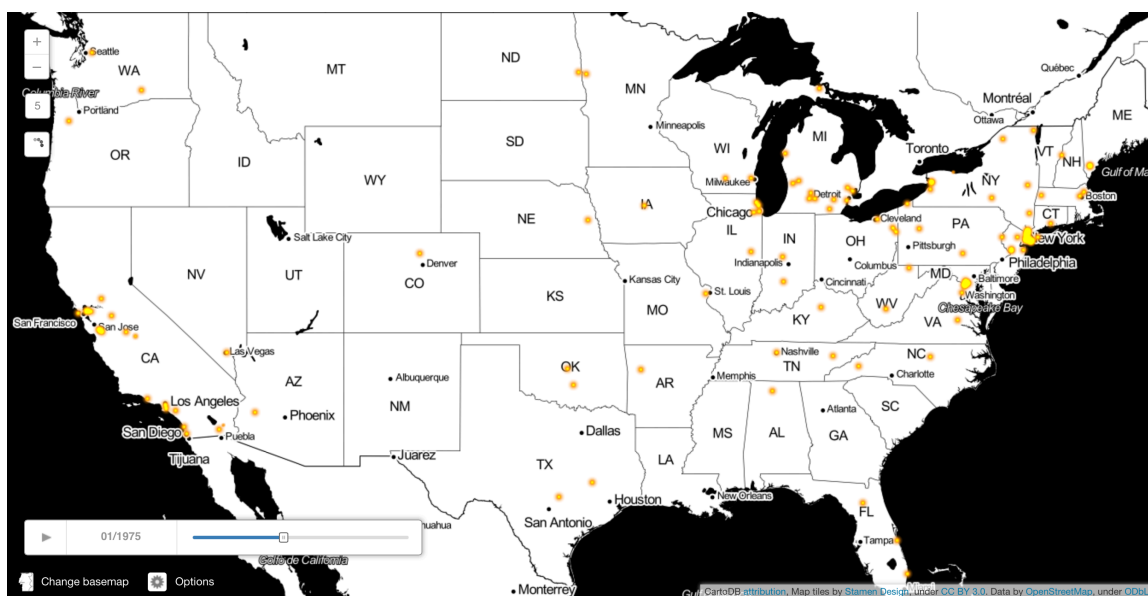
Visualization 10 - Cumulative Visualization of Diplomacy Fanzines, January 1972



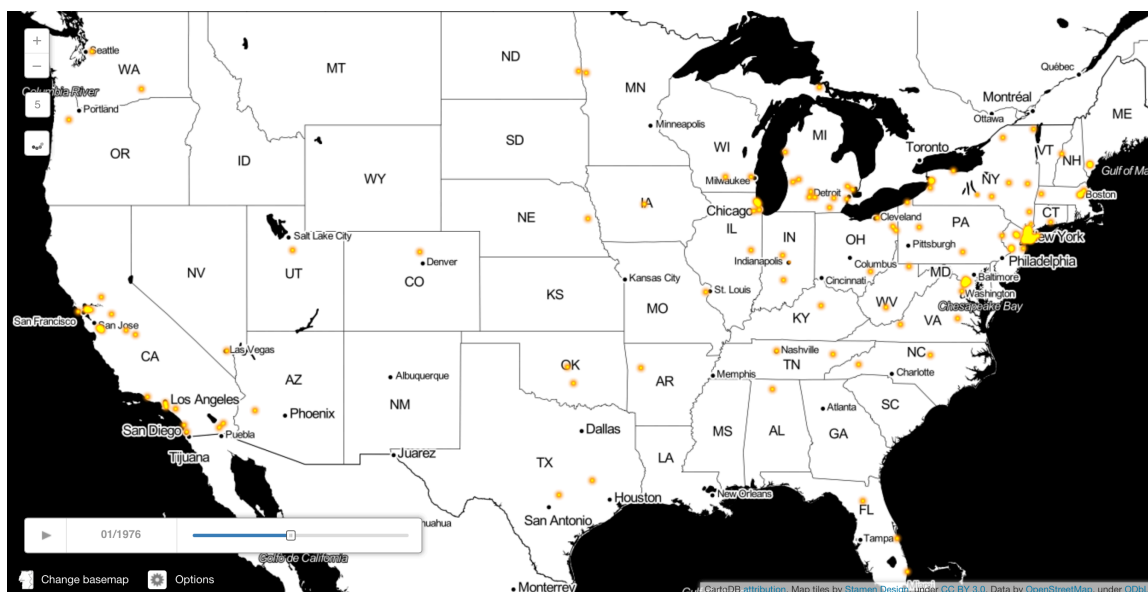
Visualization 11 - Cumulative Visualization of Diplomacy Fanzines, January 1973



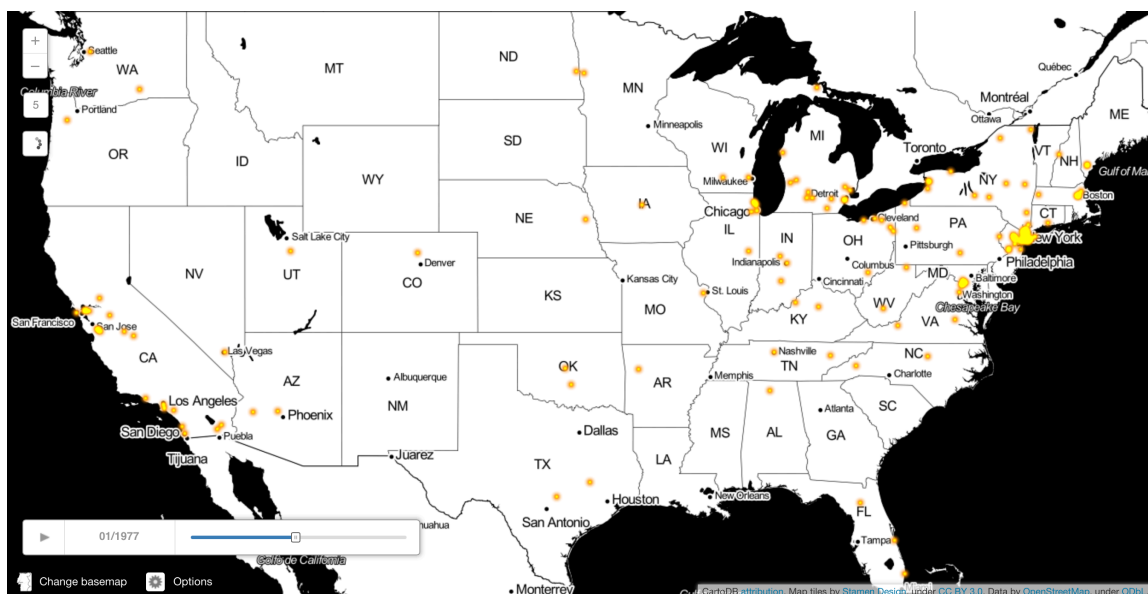
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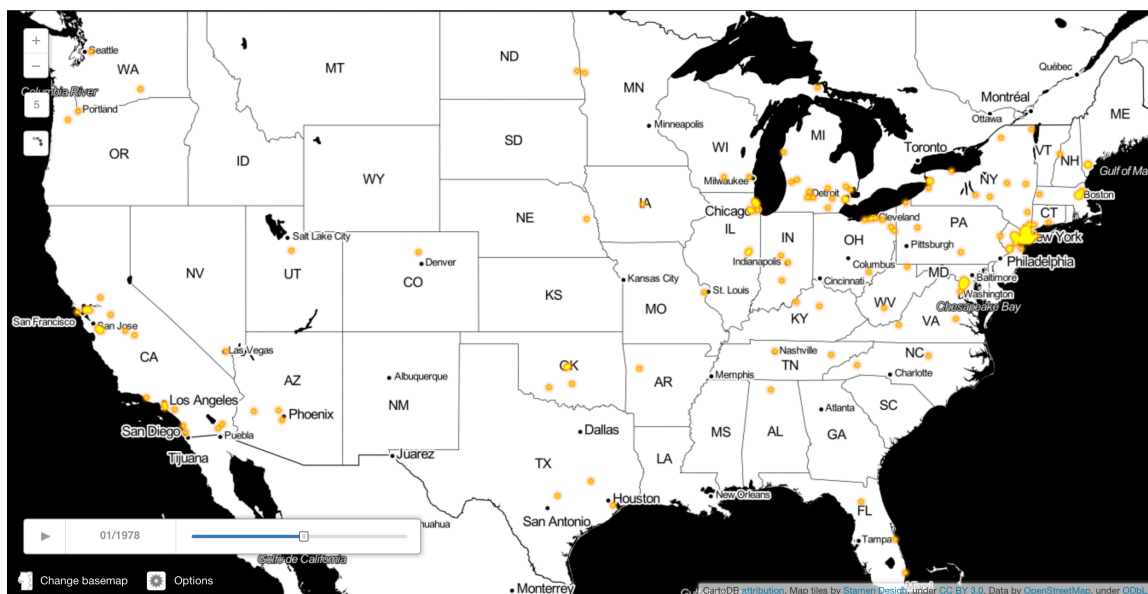
Visualization 13 - Cumulative Visualization of Diplomacy Fanzines, January 1975



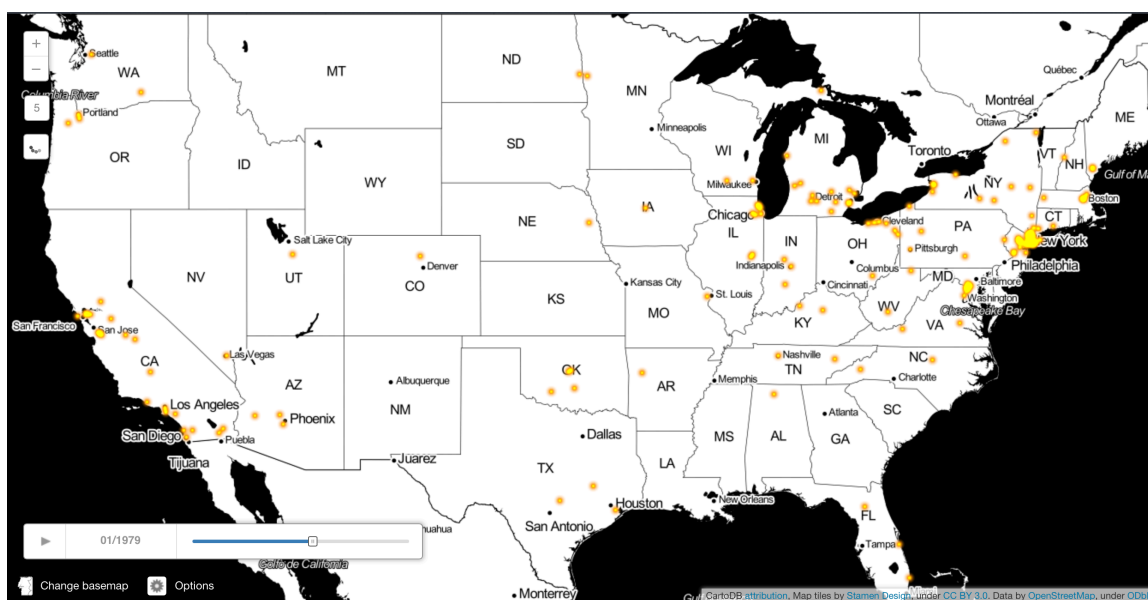
Visualization 14 - Cumulative Visualization of Diplomacy Fanzines, January 1976



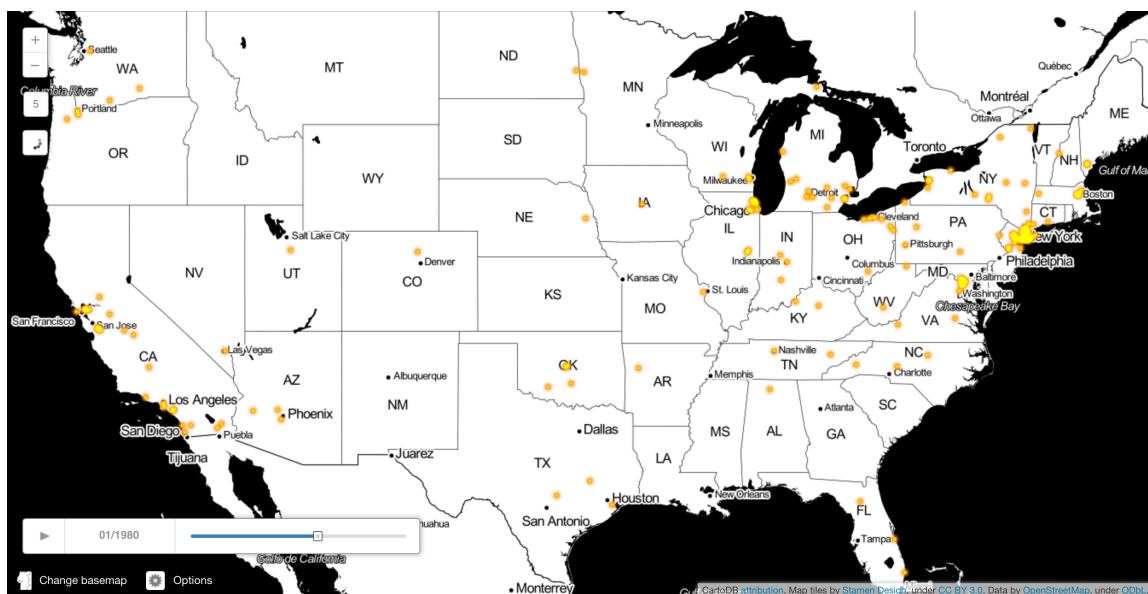
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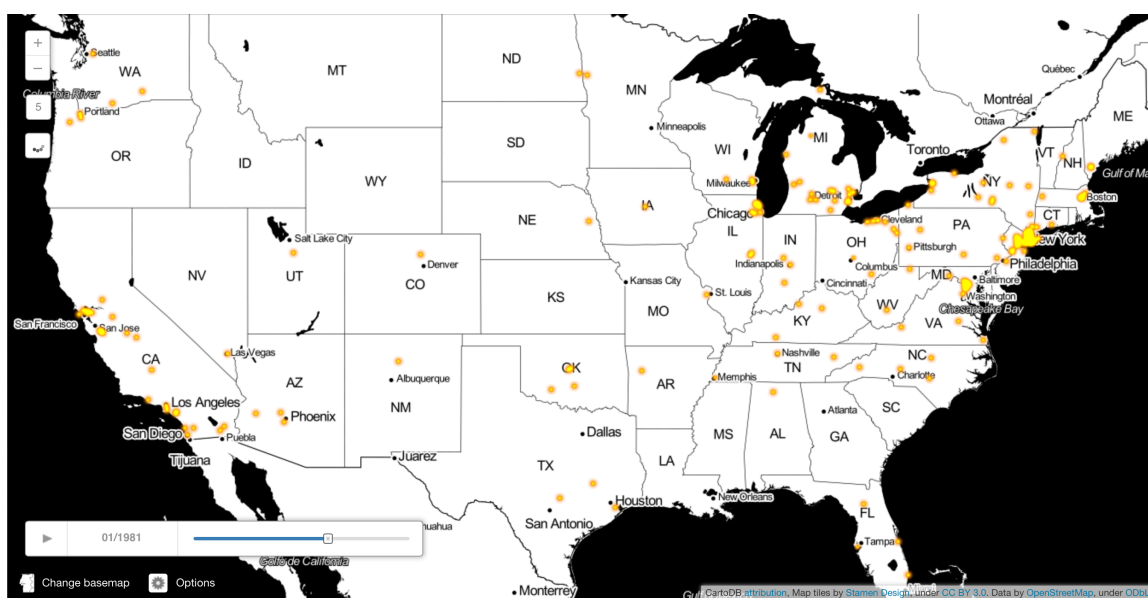
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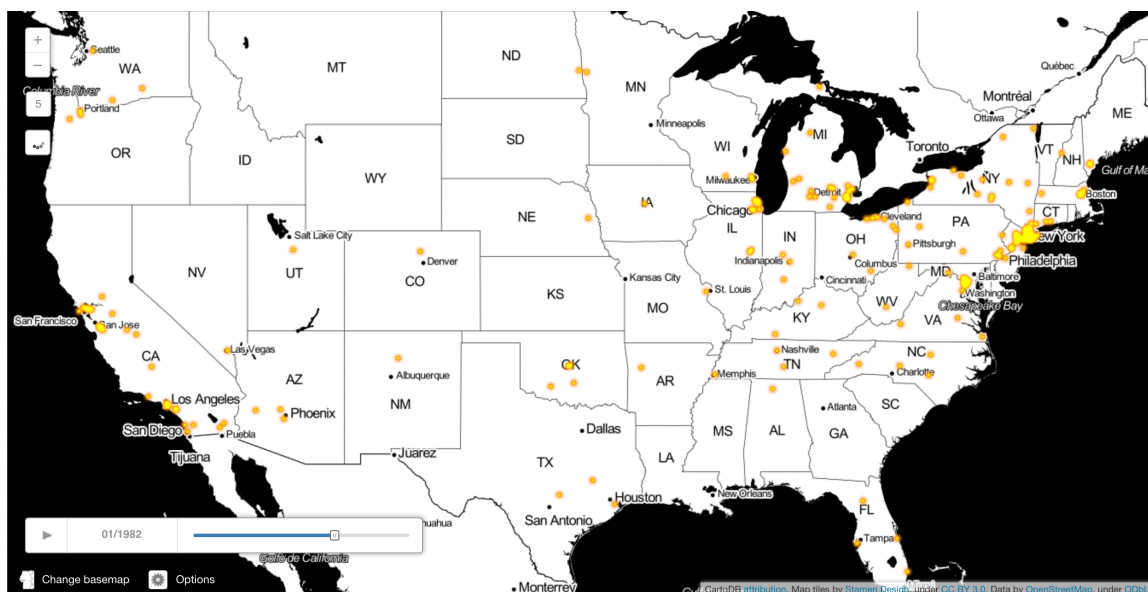
Visualization 17 - Cumulative Visualization of Diplomacy Fanzines, January 1979



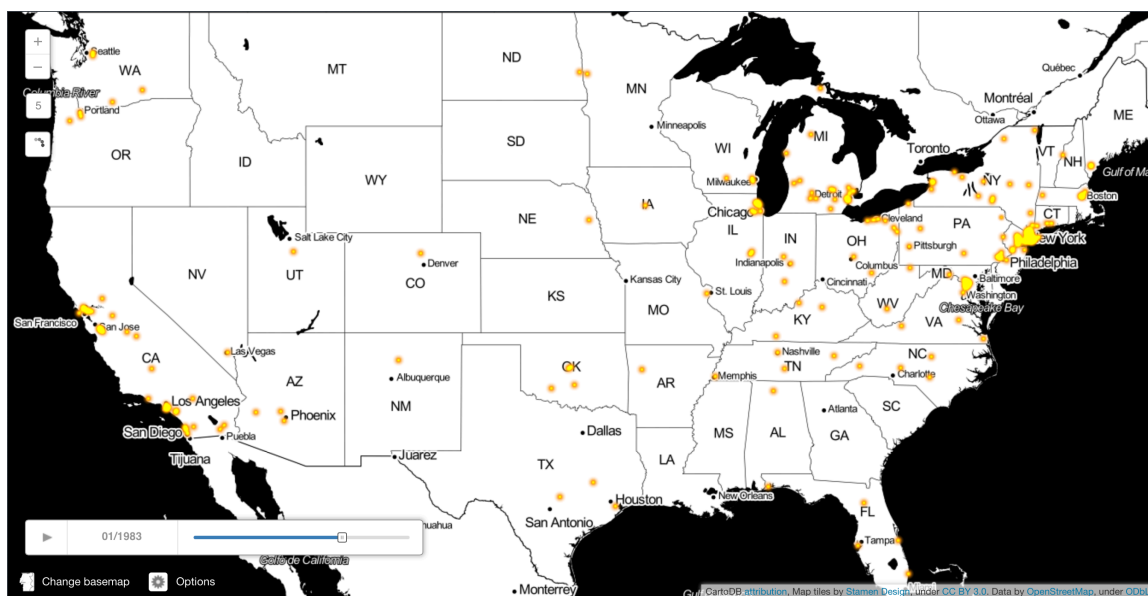
Visualization 18 - Cumulative Visualization of Diplomacy Fanzines, January 1980



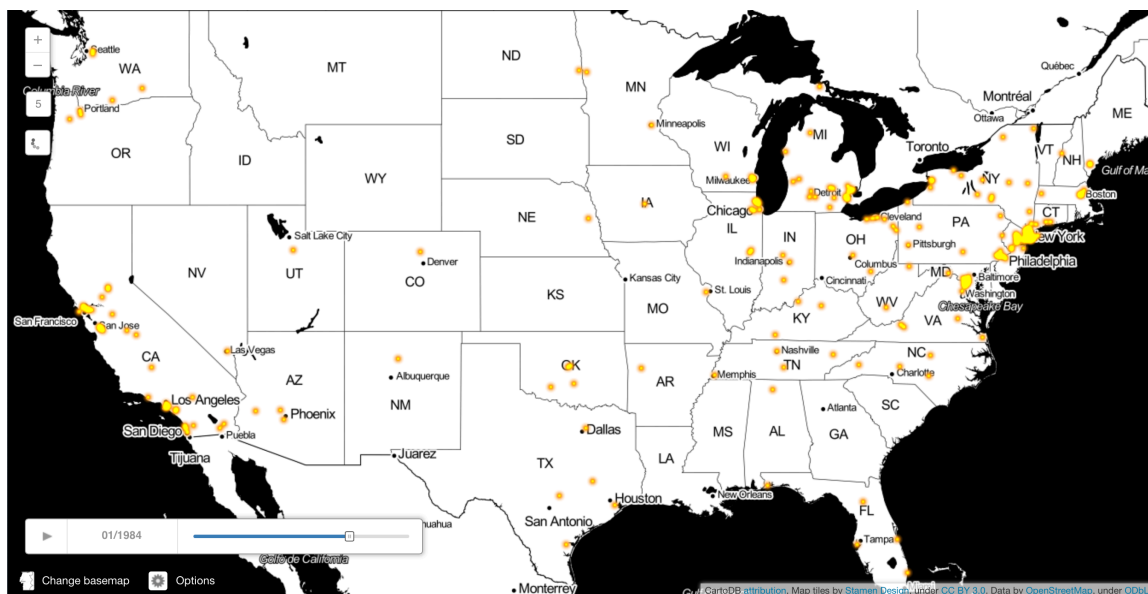
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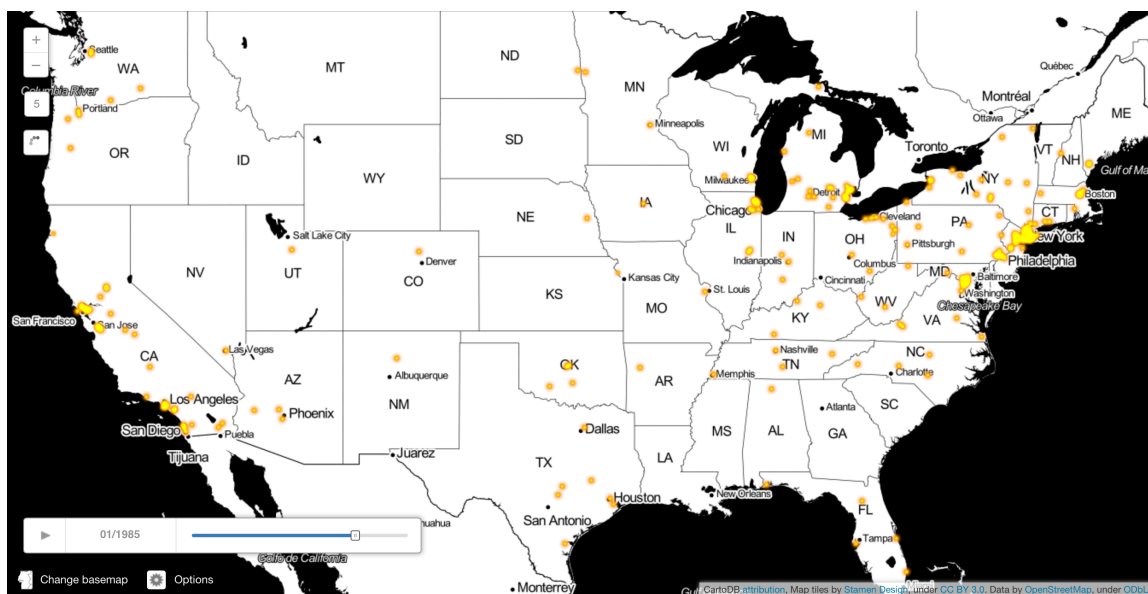
Visualization 20 - Cumulative Visualization of Diplomacy Fanzines, January 1982



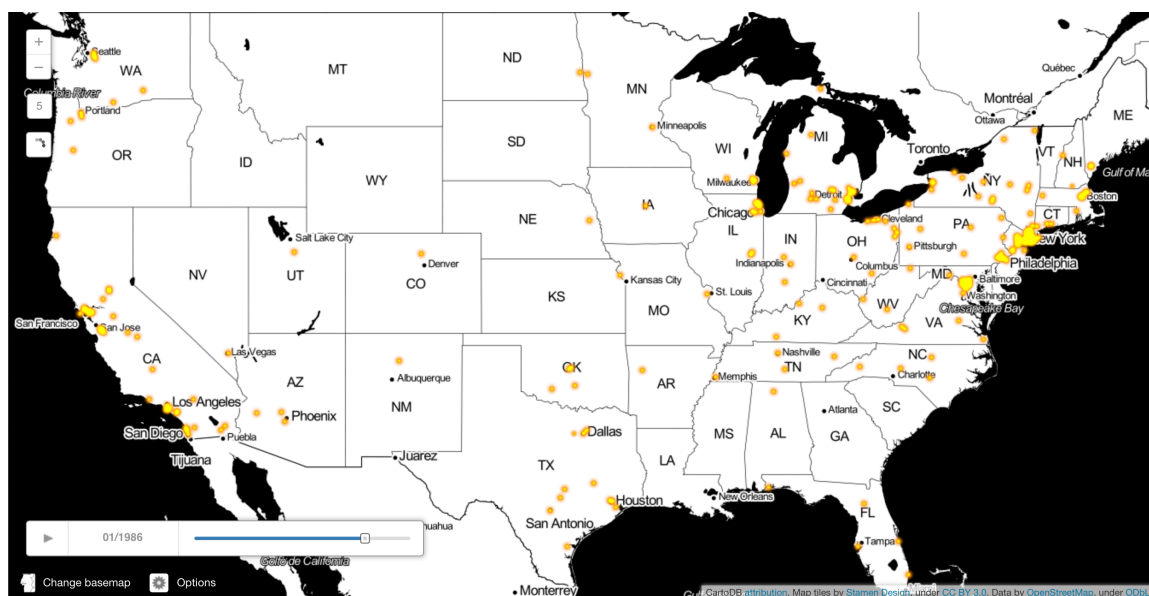
Visualization 21 - Cumulative Visualization of Diplomacy Fanzines, January 1983



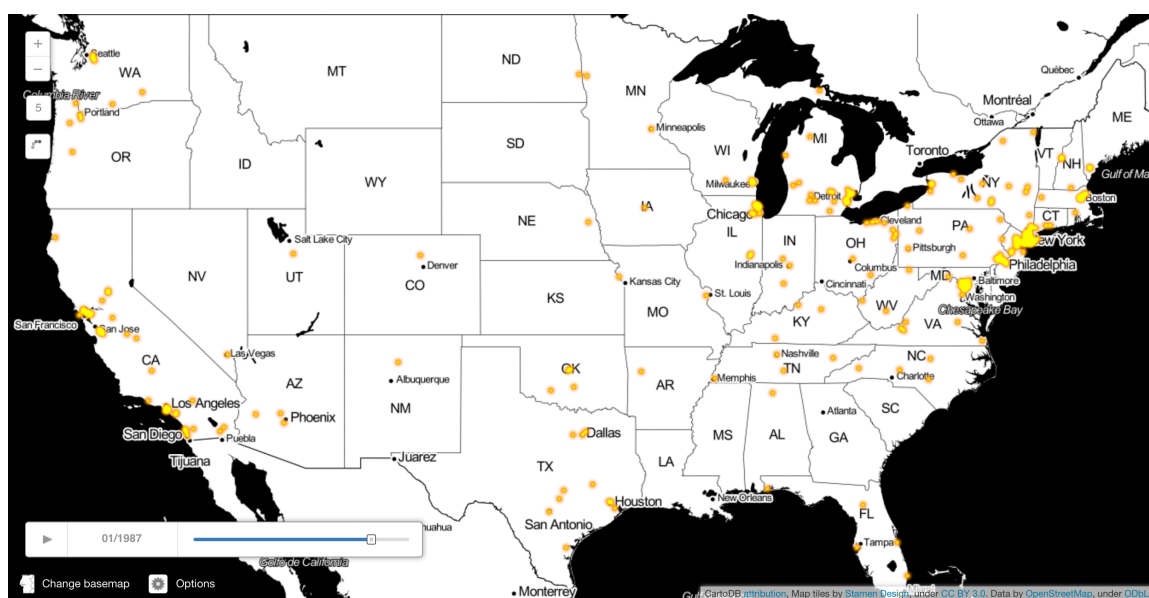
Visualization 22 - Cumulative Visualization of Diplomacy Fanzines, January 1984



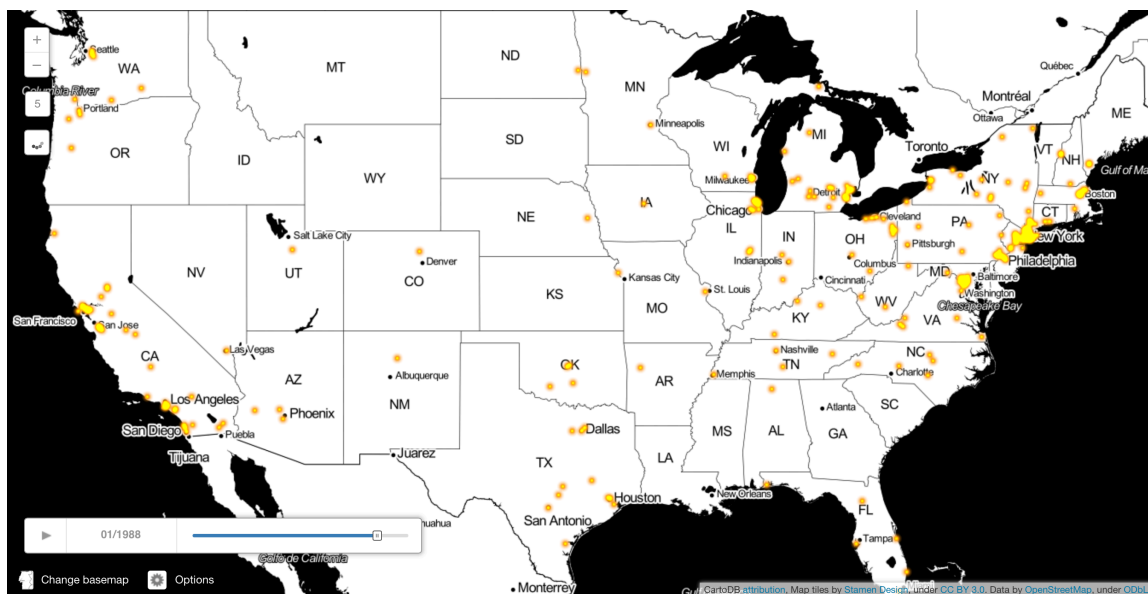
Visualization 23 - Cumulative Visualization of Diplomacy Fanzines, January 1985



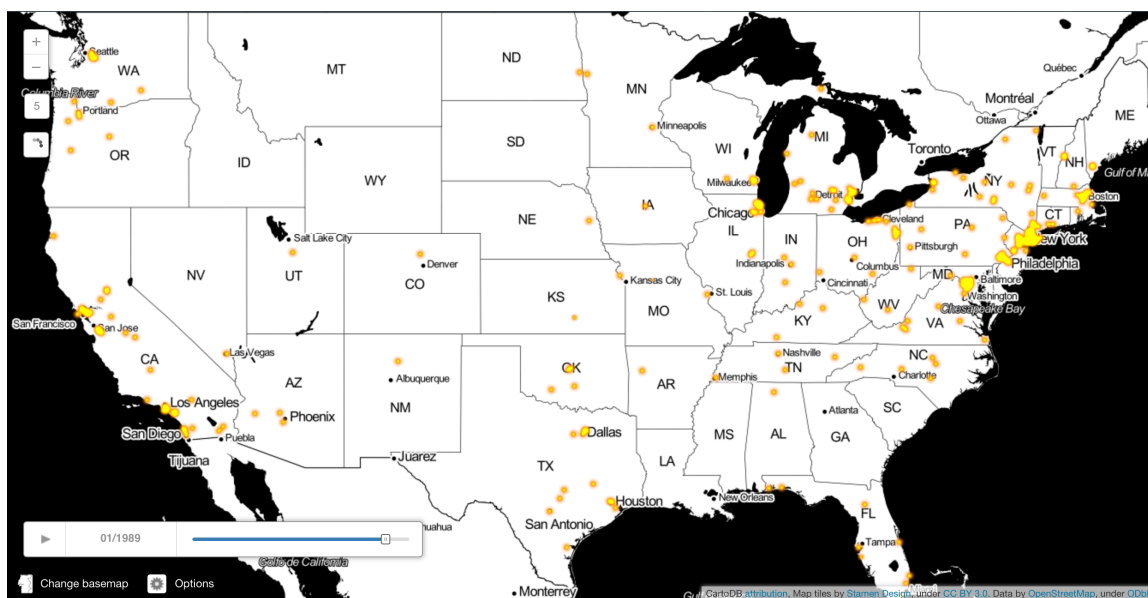
Visualization 24 - Cumulative Visualization of Diplomacy Fanzines, January 1986



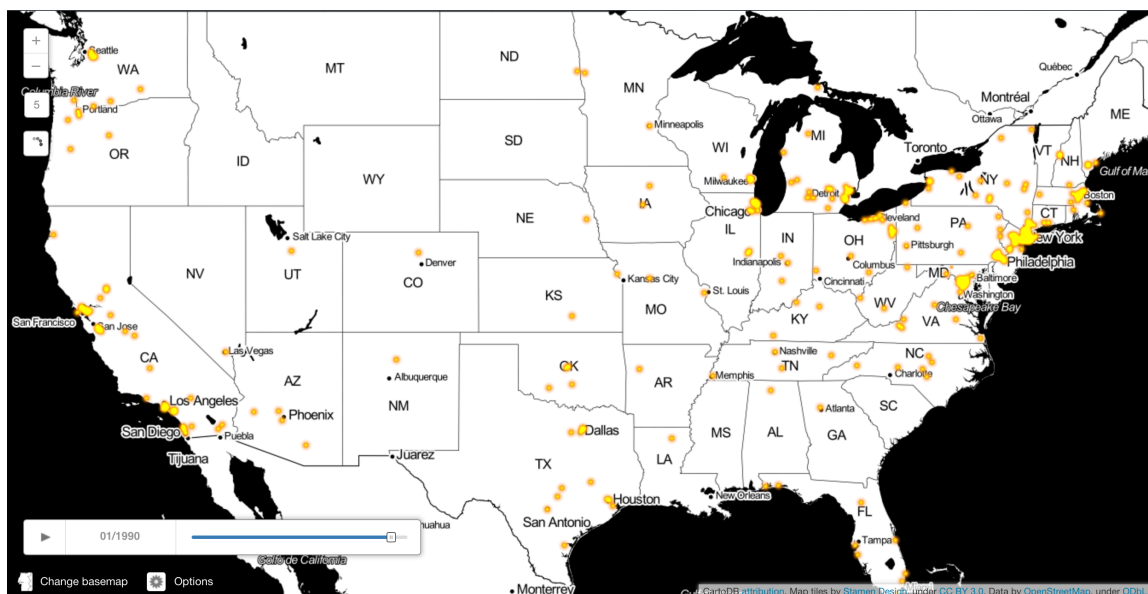
Visualization 25 - Cumulative Visualization of Diplomacy Fanzines, January 1987



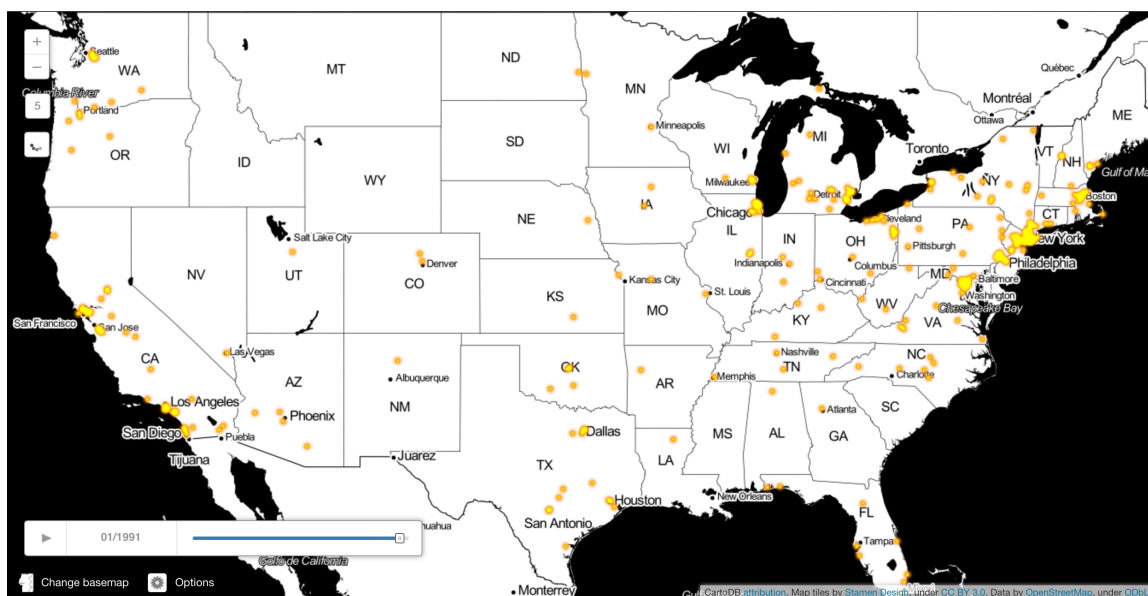
Visualization 26 - Cumulative Visualization of Diplomacy Fanzines, January 1988



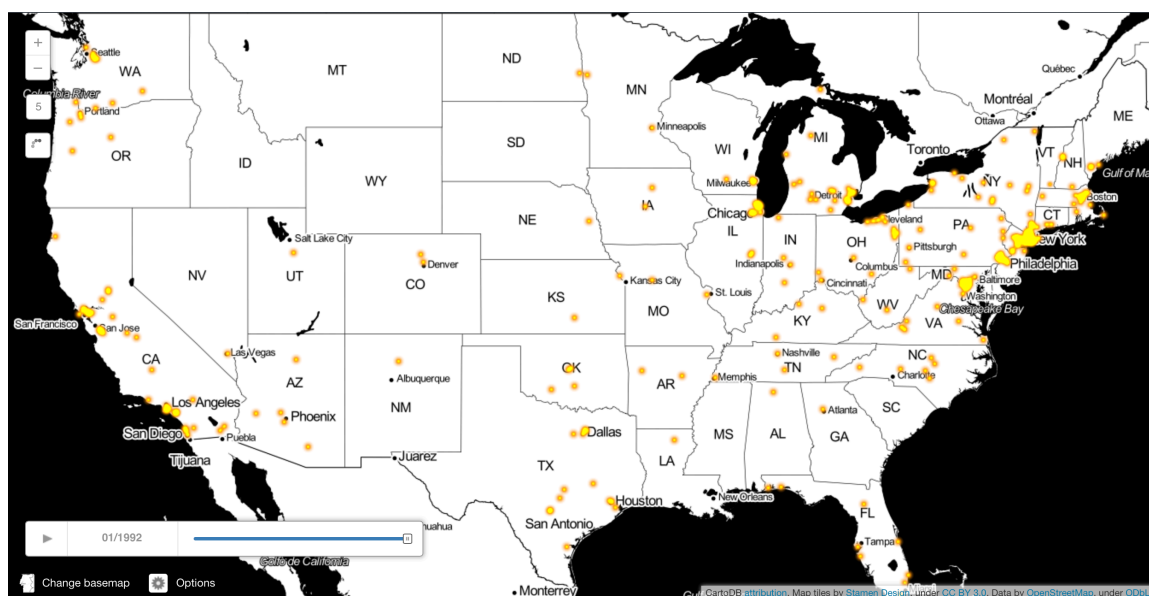
Visualization 27 - Cumulative Visualization of Diplomacy Fanzines, January 1989



Visualization 28 - Cumulative Visualization of Diplomacy Fanzines, January 1990



Visualization 29 - Cumulative Visualization of Diplomacy Fanzines, January 1991



Visualization 30 – Cumulative Visualization of Diplomacy Fanzines, January 1992

Appendix B – Excerpts from New York Conspiracy Fanzines

This is a selection of fanzines referenced within Chapter 4 where a debate over censorship in postal *Diplomacy* takes place. I have included the key articles used in this chapter when discussing the implementation and management of hate speech within this fan community. Included here is a supplementary discussion with Penelope Naughton Dickens taken from *The Pouch 36* where she touches on what it means to be a women publishing for a predominantly male audience of gamers.

page four

tape recorder to the outhouse door to tape the secret conference. James Bonda once again crossed the street and pulled out his Macaroni Special and fired four shots at the outhouse. Unfortunately in his nervousness, James Bonda had failed to check to see if his gun was pointing in the right direction.

TRANSCRIPT OF TAPED CONVERSATION (5/6/1906):

KRUDHEAP: Welcome to humble Naples my dear Said. (Don't sit on that sir, it wasn't flushed!)

PASHA: Well major, have you read the secret papers yet? (You're right, I shouldn't have sat there!)

KRUDHEAP: Yes Said. Although quite short it proved to be quite informative.

PASHA: Does it answer all our questions? (You've got to be kidding Major! This is a public toilet!)

KRUDHEAP: It certainly does. (But Said, this is about the only place I was sure that the Italian Secret Service would not bug.)

PASHA: OK Major, let's get on with it. So how many pallbearers are needed at a Italian Funeral?

KRUDHEAP: Two Said. There are only two handles on a garbage can.

PASHA: And why is the Italian suicide rate so low?

KRUDHEAP: Because it's hard to jump out of a basement window, Said.

PASHA: See you in Turkey Major. I'll make sure you're given a reward for this job well done. (I'll make sure you're put in charge of the palace latrine.)

END OF TAPE TRANSCRIPT.....
TOP SECRET TOP SECRET TOP SECRET TOP SECRET TOP SECRET TOP SECRET TOP SECRET TOP

* * * * *

73-2 (DAILY WOP) NAPLES 5/7/73 Today a man claiming to be James Bonda was arrested for disturbing the peace when he ran through the streets yelling "Allah be praised, the beneficent, the merciful !" The prison doctors report that at the time the man in question had four bullet holes in his head. The doctors also said that it was remarkable that the man had suffered no apparent damage from this accident.

73-2 (TURKEY PRESS) Constantinople 5/8/1906 Foreign Secretary Said Abdul Pasha in an announcement to the Turkish Parliament in Devil's Prison, announced that he was all for Chancellor Kahn being given political asylum. Two hours later the Foreign Secretary was heard to whisper to his advisor and friend Baron Neiger Von Neiger (On a diplomatic mission for Prime Minister "Nuts" Hever) that the only Asylum that Turkey would give Chancellor Kahn was the Turkey State Asylum.

To Walter Buchanan:

I first want to thank you for this reward that you have bestowed upon me. Secondly I want to apologize for my rude remarks about Indiana. I have finally realised that any state that has a beautiful garden spot like Gary, Indiana can't be all bad. People should be proud to live in a state so flat that it appears to have no geographical features whatsoever. After all who says the world is flat!

Duncan Smith, author of 1001 jokes about Indiana

* * *

73-2 (NEW YORK SLIME.) Washington D.C, USA 1910

Today President Wilson announced that he would not intervene on the European continent even though the French and British "are making asses of themselves". At this point the french Premier Ambassador screamed: "Mais ca c'est pas fair, c'est communiste, c'est intolerable....."!

73-2 (THE PICKLED EVAN GAZETTE) August, 1910

There is no longer any doubt about it. Members of the Turkish State Mental Hospital are being tortured. Some reporters were able to seize some of the transcripts of the interrogation of Col. Nikoplat A. Poponov, the Montenegrin officer.

Q: Is it true that your government, and especially you, is smuggling "Eau de Saber Tooth Neiger" into this country?

A: No

Q: Play the tape Count Alexis.

(Tape Recorder plays some Evan Jones Press Releases)

A: NO, NO, AHHHHHH, stop the tape, anything but that, I'll talk.

Q: That Evan Jones sure did a lot for the art of torture, eh Alexis. Answer this you Nickelplated Poponov, did you or didn't you help smuggle in order to corrupt our country's youth, Eau de Saber Tooth Neiger?

A: Yes, we all did. We got paid by Queen Evan of Savoy and Prime Minister "Nuts" Heuer to do it.

We of the press are shocked by the above transcript. We feel that this is cruel and unusual punishment. They could just as easily brand him, whip him, stretch him, even castrate him, all of which are much kinder tortures.

73-B (Dodecanese Islands, Somewhere in the Pacific, 1936 Or is it 1901)

(OVIRGIN OF WW II) PM Ron Kelly, Maximillius Half bright, Count Alexis Von Katzoff, Saber-Tooth Neiger and me, HR, all attended a meeting of Nations in Berlin.

(PATMOS FYBOGIAN FEVER) When your Humble Reporter offered the Isle of Patmos to Ron Kelly in return for the Baltic States, he accepted. Later he wanted to trade again but I said "No Deal" at which point he broke down and cried "Meanie, Meenie".

--- Humble Reporter

CENSORSHIP AND THE PRESS RELEASE

by Penelope Naughton Dickens

Ever since the idea of writing press releases was originated, editors have had to decide whether or not they had the right to edit or censor press. After all, many people still disagree as to whether movies or novels should be censored. But then a Diplomacy zine is not a movie or a novel. The editor then has to decide by himself whether a press release can damage his zine.

No one will deny that some press releases can damage a zine's reputation. Just as anywhere else there are bound to be people who get offended when they, their race, or their religion is attacked in some press. An attack on a specific person is most damaging. An example of this can be found in the Roinsel-von Metzke debacle. Although the fight did not occur because of press directly, it could have. What would you have done as an editor if you had received some press from Roinsel viciously attacking von Metzke? Some press of that sort can be excused on the grounds that the person attacked and the writer of the press are friends. An example of this is Conrad von Metzke's calling Edi Birsan a "fucking wop," and Duncan Smith's calling Evan Jones "Queen Evan of Savoy." No one could deny that in this case the writer and the person attacked are friends. Yet these attacks, although not offensive to Edi Birsan or Evan Jones, could easily offend an Italian or a homosexual. What does an editor do in this case?

There is no real reason that so-called "obscene" press should be censored as long as it fits within certain guidelines. If it is considered obscene because of the words or references to sex, then it should not be edited. (Unless the editor truly feels that his readership will be offended by the words or descriptions). But if the press is obscene because it attacks Jews, Blacks, Homosexuals, etc., then it should be edited. No editor should allow his zine to become the weapon for prejudice.

This brings us back to the afore-mentioned case where Edi Birsan is called a "fucking wop" and Evan Jones a "Queen." It is my opinion that such references should be edited out of press releases since neither can be shown as truly being necessary to the release or the zine. If the writer cannot write press without references to race, creed, or religion, then perhaps he should not be allowed to write press at all.

* * *

Since we're doing three big issues in a row with only a one week break we need a lot of guest material. If you've ever wanted to write an article, do so now and send it in. Please! And even if you're not in a game send in mountains of press. This may be the last time we ever want that much press, so now's your chance.

* * *

AHKBD LE IAHLI: DESF CJKFJL'C CINJ MHLG TJ.

THE WOMAN'S TOUCH

an interview with Penelope Naughton Dickens

THE POUCH: Let's start out with the obvious. What's a nice girl like you doing in a hobby like this?

PND: Well, for one thing there aren't many hobbies like Diplomacy. Diplomacy is a lot more interesting than slot car or model train hobbies. I find that Diplomacy is an interesting way of finding out about people, a sort of miniature group-therapy.

THE POUCH: Why do you think that the Diplomacy hobby is so male oriented?

PND: I don't really think that Diplomacy is as male oriented as people think. Quite a surprising number of the alltime great players according to Doug Beyerlein's ODD ratings, are female. Not only that but there's the Diplomacy Widow's association which jokingly objects to Diplomacy but in reality is quite an important part of the hobby. Not only that but its president, Carol Buchanan, is very much responsible for Hoosier's Archives's success. If women can become great Diplomats like Golde Meier and Madame Gandhi, there are no reasons why they cannot become great Diplomacy players.

THE POUCH: Are you as conservative as your name?

PND: That's really a dumb question. Why should a name give anyone an impression of that person? Does Conrad von Metzke look like a Prussian general? Does Charles Reinsel look like a monster just because of his name? Anyway if you insist on an answer, it's no!

THE POUCH: Why have you made press your main interest?

PND: Well, considering that press is the most widely used filler in the hobby, I decided that it was only fitting that someone should say something about it. About the only person who objects to it is Edi Birsan. Almost everyone else uses it to a great extent. I really didn't see any reason why someone should have to read so much leusy press.

THE POUCH: Why do you feel that you have the right to write articles about press when you've never written any yourself?

PND: I feel that I have every right! After all, does a surgeon have to have surgery performed on him in order to be able to operate? Of course not! Just because I don't write press doesn't mean that I'm totally ignorant about it. After all I have to read it. Anyway, the writer of press can hardly be impartial about his own press.

THE POUCH: What are your feelings on the attack by Robert Lipton in Mixumaxu Gazette on your last article?

PND: To sum it up he accused me of being a prude for not wanting to see bad press in Diplomacy zines. Not only that but he accused me of wanting to censor everything in sight. From this I can only deduce that Mr. Lipton doesn't bother to read the articles that he criticizes. First I said that I felt that porno or ribald

the woman's touch (continued)

page eight

press was perfectly all right and that I only objected to racist press, the most obscene type of press. Also I did not advocate mass censorship at all. I said that the censoring of press was totally up to the editor and his readership. What Mr. Lipton was probably trying to do is fill up half a page rather than make any serious comment.

THE POUCH: I take it that you don't like Robert Lipton very much.

PND: It's not that at all. I just believe that if I'm going to be attacked, then it might just as well be for a good reason.

THE POUCH: Why don't you play Diplomacy in the hobby?

PND: I'm such a good player and I don't really think that the hobby is ready to be defeated by a female player.

THE POUCH: Can you tell us what your favorite zine is or are you afraid of offending anyone?

PND: I'm willing to tell you but I don't think that I could offend anyone. Was George McGovern offended because the American people chose Richard Nixon instead of him? Actually that's a bad analogy because if anyone picked Richard Nixon over me for any reason, I would be mortally offended! Anyway I doubt that one person's opinion will destroy a zine's reputation. Back to the subject though! My favorite zine is K 35.

THE POUCH: Why?

PND: K 35 is funny. Conrad von Metzke is undoubtedly the wittiest person in the hobby and it shows in K 35. Not only that but since my main interest is press, I love to read it. And even better, a fellow woman, Anita Bryant, is in the game there.

THE POUCH: What are your predictions for the hobby in the future?

PND: Now that's a hard question. There are two trends in the hobby right now. There's the newszine, best represented by Hoosier's Archives, and Washington Reports. Edi Birsen's Arena wants to do that too. Then of course there are the big gamezines best represented by Costagana and Impassable, maybe even The POUCH. The Diplomacy hobby can only get bigger. The latest S&T poll shows that almost 50% of all readers own and play Diplomacy. Since there are about 27,000 subscribers that means conservatively that there are about 5,000+ Diplomacy players. That's a tremendous market. That means that there's room for a lot more zines. Unfortunately it also means that professionalism will start to enter the hobby. Perhaps some zines will do what The POUCH did. The Rigot has with some modifications. It's now weekly and even has a staff. Of course coming out weekly is a hell of a lot of work but in the end it pays off.

THE POUCH: What are your views on premarital sex?

PND: Now that's the first good question you've asked.....

The Care and Feeding of Press Releases

In the Pouch #31, Penelope Dickens has an article suggesting that press releases be edited so no one will be offended by them. She cites one instance in which Conrad von Metzke called Edi Birsan a "fucking wop" and another in which Duncan Smith referred to Evan Jones as "Queen Evan of Savoy." She went on to suggest that press be so that no one will be offended.

My first reaction was to wonder if Dickens is crazy; then I decided that I shouldn't be the first to cast stones. Then I asked myself if she was joking.

Nope. A few issues before, she had forced the retraction of some press she had found offensive. One asked her to show the author her etchings. She hastened to assure the readers that she was as sexually liberated as anyone. My reaction is to raise my eyebrows.

I am surprised that anyone takes press releases seriously enough to believe they should be edited. I have written over fifty pages of this nonsense. I should know. I have played in several games. In one of them I could have won. I didn't want to stab. It would have taken some of the fun out of the game.

I assume that's why we're playing the game: to enjoy ourselves. Anyone who takes press releases seriously probably agonizes over the board when there is a conflict, thinking we're actually fighting WWI... and what's more, doesn't enjoy himself. I pity them. But I won't change what I do for such.

Press is not to be bowdlerized; to do so castrates it. Undoubtedly Ms. Dickens has supporters in her crusade to turn Diplomacy 'zines into the Saturday Evening Post (to the pure, she apparently reasons, all things are impure). If so, I suggest they all sit around sipping tea until they drown.

Fuck them.

1973 FY

Italians Help French Take Marseilles

Fall 1901

Austria(Tatay): F Alb-Gre; A Ser S F Alb-Gre; A Gal H: has Bud, Gre, Ser, Tri, Vie (5); may build two units.

England(Smith): A Edi-Nwy; F Nth Sea C A Edi-Nwy; F Nrg S A Edi-Nwy: has Edi, Liv, Lon, Nwy(4); may build one unit.

France(Horne): F Mid-Por; A Pic-Bel; A Bur-Mar; has Bre, Mar, Par, Por; may build one unit.

Germany(Hulland): F Den S RUSSIAN F Bot-Swe; A Kie-Hol; A Ruh-Bel: has Ber, Den, Hol, Kie, Mun(5); may build two units.

Italy(Kollman): F Ion-Tun; A Tus-Ven; A Pie H: has Nap, Rom, Tun, Ven(4) may build one unit.

Russia(Blume): F Bot-Swe; F Sev-Rum; A St.P-Fin; A Ukr S F Sev-Rum: has Rum, St.P, Sev, Mos, Swe, War(6); may build two units.

Turkey(Stehle): A Bul S RUSSIAN F Sev-Rum; A Con-Ank; F Ank-Bla: has Ank, Bul, Con, Smy(4); may build one

Underlined moves fail. Winter 1901 moves are due in by noon, Friday, 16 Nov. 1973. Look inside for press.

1973 ER (continued from p.1)

The unit listed as A Ukr last issue was A Rum; all players were informed. Bruce Coy has a new address: 785 Camino Del Sur D-39, Goleta, Ca. 93017

They've started the hunting season in Italy, and they're off to a good start. As of Sept. 19, hunters have bagged five other hunters. The big ones, eighty of them, got away. (New York Times 19 Sept. 1973)

The Mixumaxu Gazette
Box 360, Lafayette College
Easton, Pa. 18042

FIRST CLASS MAIL FIRST CLASS MAIL FIRST CLASS

Do you have the feeling the
USPS is giving you a lot of bull.

Walter Buchanan T
R.R. #3
Lebanon, Ind. 46052



Appendix C – Excerpts from TTT Publications

This appendix is intended to supplement the connections made between Larry Peery, a *Diplomacy* player, fan publisher, and community figure, and the military elites working at RAND. Peery's reading list of RAND documents is included here, as well as his review of Jerry Pournelle's book *The Strategy of Technology*. By examining these documents, we can locate concrete ties between the grassroots publishing practices of *Diplomacy* fans and the ideological views of military elites.

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Good will to all nations! But your America and mine needs us as never before to stand together for all that is fine and noble, to hold fast to that which we know is true of our own great heritage---life, liberty, and justice for all. Think of the blessing of living in a land where we have the right to vote as we wish; where we have the privilege of expressing an opinion on any civic, national, or international question freely. Do not abuse this privilege, but use it to bring about a friendly feeling among men. Remember that all men are brothers regardless of color, race, or creed. This is true whether we like it or not. There is one God and Father of all.

IN PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT ISSUE READ

To better prepare yourself for the next issue's discussion of RAND it may be helpful to you to have read, or reviewed, the following RAND publications:

- RM-2413 WAR GAMING METHODOLOGY (M. G. Weiner)
- P-4427 AN EXTENDED CONCEPT OF "MODEL" (E. S. Quade)
- P-1773 AN INTRODUCTION TO WAR GAMES (M. G. Weiner)
- P-1902 STRATEGIC GAMING (O. Helmer)
- P-1679-RC SOME OBSERVATIONS ON POLITICAL GAMING
(H. Goldhamer and H. Speier)
- P-3535 POLITICAL-MILITARY SCENARIOS (H. A. DeWeerd)
- RM-3489-PR WAR GAMING (E. W. Paxson)
- P-4608 ON THE SCOPE OF GAMING (M. Shubik)
- P-4609 ON GAMING AND GAME THEORY (M. Shubik)

Many publications of RAND are available to the public. For further information contact: RAND Publications Department, 1700 Main St., Santa Monica, California, 90406

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RAND: INTELLECTUAL "SALON" OR "PLAYPEN?"

Attempting to describe RAND's place in the Gaming and Simulations Community, if such a "Community" can be said to exist anywhere except in the minds of wishful wargaming thinkers, is all but impossible. Either one tends to over-praise RAND and attribute to it all, or at a minimum most, of the important accomplishments in the field of gaming in the past 25 years or so or, some, like Herman Kahn, maintain that when they left RAND it became an "intellectual wasteland" and a "playpen for frustrated science fiction writers." Neither view, in our opinion, is correct. In this second article of a series dealing with RAND we hope to evaluate objectively some of RAND's many contributions to the gaming world.

To understand and appreciate RAND is difficult for an outsider, by definition anyone not party to RAND's secrets (which are not necessarily the same as those of its clients: the Air Force, AEC, etc.). Comparisons with other "think tanks" are misleading because of RAND's preeminent position in the field. Next to RAND all other think tanks are as American Motors is to General Motors; a useful parasite. RAND is not a private enterprise; it is a "not for profit corporation" under California law. Nor is RAND a government agency; it is a highly valued auxiliary to many government agencies. Nor is RAND an educational institution; it is one of the best collections of scholars and academic specialists in the world. RAND is something of all these things: business, government, school. It shares their strengths and it shares their weaknesses. RAND's strengths are well-known and require no comment as they will be self-evident. However, its weaknesses are less apparent. Perhaps two of RAND's greatest weaknesses are its hyper-secretiveness (a disease which it shares with most government quasi-agencies), which Daniel Ellsberg has gone after, and its tendency toward being a closed system in which outside influences, both good and bad, are minimal, something on the order of the Rosecruians. RAND operates in, frankly, an "eggheads' vacuum," and tends to see the world---past, present, and future---through RAND-colored glasses. Still, it is well worth an effort to understand RAND's work and its importance to us.

One possible, and very tentative, comparison for RAND is found in French history. The "salon" was a French Enlightenment institution, as RAND is a modern American institution. In it the best minds of the Enlightenment gathered to discuss their times, radical ideas ahead of their times, their problems, and possible solutions of all kinds;

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all supported by an indulgent, generous and uncomprehending aristocracy. Even this analogy is subject to challenge---the salons mostly discussed---RAND has, more often than not, acted on its discussions.

The fruits of the salons' discussions were recorded in Diderot's Encyclopedia and thousands of letters exchanged among Enlightenment figures. The fruits of RAND's work are found in its publications: books, reports, research papers, etc. The higher purposes of both are found in the lives of our own people, a better life for all mankind, present and future, and the victory of peace over war.

The purpose of this article is to carry on where the article introducing RAND in Vol. I, No. 1, January 1973, left off. Here we will discuss some of RAND's publications of interest to gaming and simulations students; their place in the literature; and how these publications may be obtained from RAND or various libraries and government agencies.

Two things should be noted. First, this article concerns, primarily, RAND's unclassified documents and publications, approximately one-half of its total output. RAND's traditional policy has been to publish a generalized paper dealing with non-classified aspects of more sensitive documents. Thus, the substance, if not the form, becomes real and, sooner or later, RAND's knowledge becomes general knowledge. RAND has published one paper for each day of its existence, according to some sources, which means somewhere between 7,000 and 10,000 papers of various sorts by hundreds of different authors including, by the way, most of the foremost thinkers of our time in dozens of different fields.

Second, RAND's papers are categorized by subject areas which are listed below. These categories reflect RAND's internal organization and areas of special interest to her. We will focus on only two, out of a score or more, of these areas: Game Theory and Gaming. Those interested in other areas, such as Computer Simulation, Systems Analysis, etc. should inquire about appropriate bibliographies.

For general public orientation RAND has published a folder, Publications of the RAND Corporation, which is available from RAND for free and which covers, in a general way, sources for RAND publications. The general contents of the folder are summarized below for those interested.

RAND publications are available from the Corporation. Individual titles are available from RAND Publications Dept., 1700 Main St., Santa Monica, Ca. 90406. Prices depend on the number of pages in the publication but average \$1 to \$2.

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Books are not available from RAND directly but must be ordered through their publishers.

Collections, by subscription, are available, on a yearly basis which includes 350 to 450 titles, an Index and Abstracts, but not the books. The fee is \$300, domestically mailed. Back collections, for the two previous years, are also available.

Indexes include a description of each publication, as well as an Abstract. Index of Selected Publications of the RAND Corporation, 1946-1962, \$10 per volume set, and Selected RAND Abstracts for the years 1963-1971, in annual volumes, \$5 each.

Bibliographies cover the following subjects: Aerodynamics, Africa, Arms Control, China, Civil Defense, Combinatorics, Communication Satellites, Communication Systems, Computer Simulation, Computing Technology, Decision-making, Delphi and Long-range Forecasting, East-West Trade, Education, Game Theory, Gaming, Health-related Research, Human Resources, Latin America, Linguistics, Maintenance, Middle East, Policy Sciences, Pollution, Population, Privacy in the Computer Age, Probability, Program Budgeting, Public Safety, SIMSCRIPT, Southeast Asia, Space Technology and Planning, Statistics, Systems Analysis, Television, Transportation, Urban Problems, USSR/East Europe, Water Resources, Weapon Systems Acquisition, & Weather and Meteorological Studies. Copies of the above bibliographies are available from RAND without charge.

Many RAND documents are available to government users and other official groups from Government Document Centers.

RAND document depositories are maintained at more than 270 U.S. public and corporate libraries, and overseas. Most of these are located at major university centers. A complete list of the depositories is found in the Publications.

Two samples of the Bibliographies are those for "Gaming" and "Game Theory." The Gaming Bibliography, SB-1050, last updated in June 1972, includes listings for 2 books, 2 reports, 23 memorandum, and 36 papers. Of these documents approximately 10 are of special interest to the average wargamer. Some of them are described more fully below. The Game Theory Bibliography, SB-1039, last updated in June 1972, covers 53 pages, and includes entries for 8 books, 6 reports, approximately 200 memorandum, and a hundred or so papers. This Bibliography also contains a 19 page Subject/Author Index. Each Bibliography contains various kinds of index, abstracts, order forms, etc. Bibliographies are normally updated on a yearly basis. Selected Abstracts, published quarterly, lists new publications.

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In addition to the Gaming and Game Theory Bibliographies, those for Computer Simulation, Systems Analysis and Delphi and Long-range Forecasting may be of special interest to gamers.

RAND produces five main types of documents: Books, which are normally authored by one or more individuals at RAND but which are published by a university or commercial publisher; Research Papers or Reports, which are prepared specially for someone, such as a government agency, which are usually funded under a research contract, and which are fairly elaborate in scope and deal with some aspect of RAND's work; Papers, which are less formal documents reporting on some RAND project; and Working Papers, which are informal and subject to revision, and which are usually prepared for discussion purposes. Another way of looking at them is that RAND books are for the world, Research Papers and Reports are for clients, Papers are for fellow researchers, and Working Papers are for in-house discussion.

With even this limited over-view of some of the basics of RAND publications, let us consider some of the fruits of her labors in the gaming and simulations field. The following representative, although we have tried to pick from among the best, selections are chosen from hundreds available to illustrate the development of RAND's gaming studies. They are also representative of the historical development of RAND's work in this field; its depth, its breadth, and the varieties of its methods, approaches, and authors.

- 1) *TECHNIQUES OF SYSTEMS ANALYSIS
RM-1829-1-PR
June 1957
H. Kahn and I. Mann, 161 pp.

This document is a preliminary draft of a portion of a planned book, Military Planning in Uncertain World. "Techniques of Systems Analysis" was to be part one of the book, followed by parts dealing with "Techniques of Operations Research" and "Philosophical and Methodological Comments." "Techniques of Systems Analysis" includes chapters on: Designing the Offense, Probabilistic Considerations, Designing the Defense, The Two-Sided War, Evaluation and Criticism. Part 2 included chapters on: Probability and Statistics, Monte Carlo, Game Theory and War Gaming.

The document represents an early development in the authors and RAND's gaming experience. Many of these gaming students/authors went on later to make substantial contributions of their own to gaming research: Bernard Brodie, E. S. Quade,

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C. J. Hitch, A. J. Wohlstetter. Still, the basic philosophy and style of the document is pure Herman Kahn. Kahn left RAND and founded his own Think Tank, the Hudson Institute. And, we believe, that was best, in the long-run, for both. Primarily a document of historical interest.

- 2) *SOME OBSERVATIONS ON POLITICAL GAMING
P-1679-RC
April 30, 1959
H. Goldhamer and H. Speier, 25 pp.

This paper, which was intended for publication in World Politics, surveys five years of RAND working in the game field and the development of political gaming, as well as the efforts of other individuals and groups working in the same general area. The document gives a brief description of the technique and some of the authors' observations about its utility. Herbert Goldhamer is one of two men, the other being Oliver Benson, who can claim to be the "father of the political game." As such, his views are of special historical significance.

- 3) *WAR GAMING METHODOLOGY
RM-2413
July 10, 1959
M. G. Weiner, 103 pp.

This document explains and discusses the methodology of war gaming as developed and used in the study of limited war situations by the RAND Corporation. The technique was developed for the study of possible limited wars in the period from 1955-1960 in Southeast Asia, the Far East, and the Middle East (the SIERRA Project).

Limited War, as the term is used here, includes the full context of air, sea, ground and logistic actions. Moreover, the nature of limited wars implies a strong interaction of military and political elements, and of economic aspects. The inclusion of these factors requires techniques that allow them to be combined and interact in diverse ways, a demand that is not met by a properly constructed war game exercise.

As a research tool, the war game provides a systematic method for organizing and analyzing large groups of data and many varied factors. It forces decisions to be made, and permits the interactions and relationships among the factors to appear in specific, concrete forms. It provides a means of continually checking the credibility and feasibility

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of the military and political decisions, and is a useful framework for organizing a group and achieving division of effort in a natural "real life" way.

The author's objectives are to provide a sufficiently detailed study of war gaming methodology to enable the reader to understand the findings and conclusions of limited war studies, and to enable small, balanced staffs to organize and conduct their own limited war studies.

The memorandum includes discussions of the concept of war gaming, preparatory steps for gaming, techniques for two-sided gaming, functions of the player and control teams, the play of the game itself, and analysis of the play. There are appendixes illustrating the types of background materials and planning factors used in war gaming, a comparison of the staff-study and the pre-gaming techniques for shortening of the time needed for some phases of gaming, and a sample analysis of decision points from one hypothetical game.

An understanding of this document is required for the serious gaming student.

- 4) *AN INTRODUCTION TO WAR GAMES
P-1773
August 1959
M. G. Weiner, 40 pp.

This paper is the initial form of Chapter 11 of a book entitled "Sequential Decisions and Simulation," edited by Rosenstiehl and Ghouila-Houri, to be published in France by Dunod, Paris. The book describes various aspects of simulation. The purpose of Chapter 11 is to present some general information on war games. This paper provides a short history of war games and an introduction to the various characteristic techniques, and types of war games. An illustration of the steps in an umpired game is included.

Shubik, et al. say this of Weiner's "Introduction," "This is an excellent survey of war gaming from early times to the present. The author distinguishes two types of war games and analyzes their differences. This study remains timely today."

- 5) STRATEGIC GAMING
P-1902
10 February 1960
Olaf Helmer, 19 pp.

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This paper uses a number of exhibits relating to a strategic procurement game in order to illustrate various concepts and techniques of operational gaming. In particular, the relative merits of play by human players versus machine play are discussed, as are those of rigid rules versus umpire rulings. The roles of the experts in different aspects of gaming are examined and illustrated.

- 6) *WAR GAMING
RM-3489-PR
February, 1963
E. W. Paxson, 35 pp.

This memorandum reviews those types of war games which provide support for military operations decisions.

Shubik, et al. say: "The paper is an excellent, well-written, and informed survey of wargaming with reference to the significant literature. Originally prepared as a chapter in B. O. Koopman, ed., Military Operations Research, the selection has more general appeal. The game classes discussed include Monte Carlo, man-machine, rigid manual, semi-rigid, and free-form games. Each class is characterized and exemplified; weaknesses and potentially productive research avenues are noted where appropriate. Significant issues for debate among gamers are noted."

- 7) STROP: A STRATEGIC PLANNING MODEL
RM-4817-PR
July 1966
N. C. Dalkey, 38 pp.+

This memorandum describes one of the models developed in a continuing project at RAND concerned with strategic planning techniques. The particular model described is designed to be one of an integrated family of computer models for generating strategic war plans and evaluating force structures.

STROP is a highly aggregated central nuclear war game, coded for a high-speed computer which evaluates a pair of Red and Blue allocations of missiles and bombers to some combination of four target systems: missile sites, bomber fields, bomber defenses, and value targets. The routine will evaluate one pair of Red and Blue allocations in about 1/50 of a second. The routine can be used to generate and survey a large sample of Red and Blue allocations or to evaluate specific allocations selected by the analyst.

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8) *POLITICAL-MILITARY SCENARIOS

P-3535

February 1967

H. A. DeWeerd, 14 pp.

"The article is a good short lesson in writing scenarios. The author gives a brief history of political-military scenarios, which can serve variously as background contexts, settings for war games, and narratives of war games. To be effective the scenario should be modeled as closely as possible on the existing world; changes from this world should be explained as completely as possible. Two problems with scenarios, credibility and relevance, are discussed. In some cases relevance, rather than credibility, should predominate; otherwise future problems cannot be studied. The problem of the players reaction to the scenario is handled and suggestions are given to avoid the problem" says Shubik, et al.

In 1970 and 1971, RAND conducted a critical evaluation of the activity and products of gaming, model-building, and simulation, under the sponsorship of ARPA. Some of the results of that project were:

9) *ON THE SCOPE OF GAMING

P-4608

March 1971

M. Shubik, 26 pp.

"Gaming and simulation mean different things to different people. Currently there exists separate schools of individuals working on interrelated but basically different areas. Each have their own special goals, terminology, and criteria of validation. Yet there is a sufficient enough overlap among them that it is important to clarify the common interests and terminology.

"The general topic of gaming is ripe for an examination to see to what extent there exists a basic methodology and theory of gaming. This paper addresses itself, in part to this problem. Different types of games and simulations and different purposes are discussed. A way of applying the work expositied here to the construction of validation procedures for specific games is noted." says Shbik, et al.

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- 10) *ON GAMING AND GAME THEORY
P-4609
March 1971
M. Shubik, 33 pp.

This is a companion piece to the above article.

- 11) *THE LITERATURE OF GAMING, SIMULATION AND MODEL-BUILDING:
INDEX AND CRITICAL ABSTRACTS
R-620-APRA
June 1972
M. Shubik, G. Grewer, and E. Savage, 121 pp.

This Bibliography is one of the results of the study referred to above. The specific aim of that inquiry was to assess the usefulness of gaming in military-political policy-making. Its general aim was to contribute to the definition of common standards and the refinement of objectives that are necessary to the gaming professions' advancement.

As a means to those ends, the authors compiled a bibliography of the professional literature of the past thirty years and made a critical review of much of it. This report describes their bibliographical and classification system and presents indexes and abstracts of the publications entered in it.

Two companion studies are: R-732-ARPA, Reviews of Selected Books and Articles on Gaming and Simulation and R-1060-ARPA, Models, Simulations and Games---A Survey, by the same authors.

This Bibliography is an invaluable reference tool to the serious student.

Each of the above documents is well worth reading, some are worth including in your own gaming library. Those marked with an "*" are of special importance.

Those interested in RAND and its activities will find most of the information they need in RAND's documents. However, those doing serious research or wanting to have a balanced view of gaming activities must consult other sources in addition to RAND's publications. For instance, the Shubik Bibliographies, as complete and useful as they are, are still incomplete; they fail to list many major publications from sources such as the Research Analysis Corporation. Anyone comparing the bibliographies in Alfred Hausrath's Venture Simulation in War, Business and Politics will quickly discover that the elephant when seen from RAND is not the same as the elephant when seen by RAC.

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RAND's sins may not be sins of commission, they may merely be sins of omission. It seems likely, to us, that no one, not even RAND, can keep up with everything going on in the gaming and simulations field today. It is proof of its rapid growth and demonstration of its lack of organization. But, if anyone is going to bring organization out of the confusion they will have to start where RAND has left off, there is no other way.

Hopefully, this brief introduction to RAND's publications will encourage some of you to acquire some of RAND's other publications and, in due course, submit some reviews of those documents for publication. We can't read everything RAND publishes but if we all work at it perhaps we can keep up with some of their important work.

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"Within all this lies a familiar message that daily becomes more relevant: science and technology are immensely powerful instruments of cultural evolution. Our laboratories contain the seeds of social revolutions so overwhelming that, when they begin to sprout, we find ourselves quickly dwarfed by our own inventions. After twenty-five years of the technical arms race only now are we beginning to understand that it promises not to lessen the impact of the age-old problem of war but rather to seal conflict into our society as a universal way of life that promises a universal way of death."

Two portions of Clarke's book especially interested me; his comments on military oceanographic research and his comments on "peace gaming." San Diego is a center of both activities and as best I was able to determine his facts are correct, although his interpretations may be open to challenge.

If Robin Clarke's The Science of War and Peace is the antithesis of Lord Clark's Civilisation, then our second book for review is the antithesis of Robin Clarke's book.

***The Strategy of Technology, Winning the Decisive War
Stefan T. Possony and J. E. Pournelle
(Cambridge, Mass.: University Press, 1970)
189 pp., \$7.50.

The Strategy of Technology represents the views of our "hawks" on the same materials and subjects that Clarke covers. Stefan T. Possony, now at the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace at Stanford University, is one of the group that has long been the chief spokesman for, and defenders of, the American Warfare State. Others in this group include Robert Straus-Hupe, whose Protracted Conflict is the Bible of American hawks, and William R. Kinter, the co-author of a book reviewed below. The co-author of The Strategy of Technology is a well-known figure in wargaming publications and needs no introduction.

This book is, I think, an attempt to add a scientific dignity to what is, in reality, a "gut issue." Questions of war, and peace, are, more often than we care to admit, value judgments, gut reactions, and other non-scientific assessments of different problems and possible solutions. Maxwell Taylor writes the Uncertain Trumpet, and Curtis LeMay rattles SAC's bombers and missiles. The attempt is impressive, until one really begins to look at what the authors are saying. They have superimposed the Principles of War on the Technique of Systems Analysis and, voila, created the Strategy of Technology. The structure looks sound but when broken down into its component parts and its examples are examined carefully the structure does not appear so solid.

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A good example of this is the section entitled: "Systems Analysis and Military Decisions: The TFX," which to the layman may appear reasonable. However, anyone who has read the serious literature on the TFX would be aware of the fact that Possony and Pournelle have over-simplified the situation to make it fit their own scheme. If this book has one fault it is one that it shares with most books dealing with these types of matters: An over-emphasis on one single aspect, theory, idea, or force which becomes so central, so important, etc. to the subject that an artificial balance is created; the real relationship between the affecting force and the affected object is obscured.

Still, the Possony and Pournelle book is worth reading; although probably more to those who would disagree with it than to those who already accept its principles.

The thesis, as stated by the authors, is: "As a consideration of technology in the totality and as a foremost national and international security task, this book is the first of its kind in emphasizing that American objectives, including the prevention of war and catastrophe, can be achieved only if America optimizes technology to fit its purpose. The authors compare the technological strategy of the U.S.S.R. with that of the United States and highlight the strengths and weaknesses of both approaches, investigating with special care such key problems as technological breakthroughs and technological races, strategic and tactical nuclear weapons, surprise attack and arms control."

****The Nuclear Revolution in Soviet Military Affairs
Translated and Edited, with Introduction and Commentary, by
William R. Kinter and Harriet Fast Scott
(Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967)
420 pp., \$6.95

Every so often someone publishes a book about Soviet military affairs and, rarely, sometimes someone publishes a book about Soviet military doctrine. Anyone who read Military Strategy: Soviet Doctrine and Concepts as edited by Marshal V.D. Sokolovsky and published in two editions in this country, has probably read the Kinter book which is a successful and complimentary follow-up to the Soviet original. Although now five years old the Kinter work is, still, timely and interesting; especially in light of the continued and deepening feud between the Soviet Union and Peoples' Republic of China.

The editors are William Kinter, deputy director, Foreign Policy Research Institute, University of Pennsylvania, a graduate of West Point with a Ph.D. from Georgetown University. Harriet Fast Scott did the bulk of the translating.

"While the Russians exhibit an almost pathological concern for secrecy about their nuclear weapons, their plans for using those weapons have been published, though little translated and virtually ignored by the English-speaking world. Avoiding "propaganda and disinformation" sources,

Vol. I, 3.0

7 September 1971

PEERINALIS

PEERINALIS is the journal of Politico-Military Wargaming. A TTT Publication, edited by Larry Peery, 816 24th St. San Diego, California, 92102 (714-233-8321). Subscriptions are \$2.00 for six issues, beginning with issue one.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE COLD WAR GAME:

The Cold War Game was originally developed by Dr. Herbert Goldhamer, now a specialist in Latin American affairs for the RAND Corporation, and it was originally tested in 1954. It was not until 1961 that it really became popular when it was adopted by the Joint War Games Agency of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for use by its Third Division (Cold War Division) as a training aid. The Third Division is concerned with the anticipation of high-level crises rather than actual hostilities.

The Cold War Game, described as a "Frankenstein Monster", by Dr. Goldhamer after observing how the Pentagon had adopted it for its own purposes is the primary tool of the Cold War Division which conducts politico-military wargames. Five or six of these games have been held every year since 1961.

Players come from every department of the Executive Branch of the Government: White House, State, CIA, Pentagon, etc. About three games a year are high level affairs involving members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, assistant secretaries of the Defense and State Departments, deputy heads of agencies, and the President's national security affairs advisors. Although President Kennedy took a keen interest in these games, as did Secretary of Defense McNamara, it is not known that either of them ever participated in any. President Nixon's current national security affairs advisor, Dr. Henry Kissinger, has been involved in many of the games and has a reputation for a aggressive yet subtle player.

In general the contents of the games have remained secret but it is reliably reported that many of them have anticipated later cold war crises that actually occurred although such an effect or event as the building of the Berlin Wall or the introduction of offensive missiles into Cuba by the Soviet Union was rejected by planners as being too far-fetched or, in some cases, not even anticipated.

Nevertheless, from reading memoirs of leading figures who took a part in the Cuban Missile crisis, especially the "President's Executive Committee of the National Security Council", it becomes clear that the type of arrangement, structure, decision-making pattern evolved in these games had a profound effect on the decisions made during the crisis. Kennedy was advised by an ad hoc committee left free to consider all possibilities, free of individual ties of loyalty, and without a strict regime imposed by the President. It was this "collective effort" that produced the solution of the Quarantine.

Peerinalis 3 - September 7, 1971. This is Larry Peery's write-up of Goldhamer's *The Cold War Game*, and his adaptation of it to the rules of play-by-mail *Diplomacy*. Page one of eight.

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In general the proven durability of the Cold War Game, and its apparent contribution to success in one field of American foreign activity, suggests that the game is of more than academic interest.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Wilson, Andrew. The Bomb and the Computer. Delacorte Press of New York. 1968.

Giffin, Sidney. The Crisis Game: Simulating International Conflict. Doubleday of Garden City, New Jersey, 1965.

Politico-Military Division, JWGA, OJCS. JCS Politico-Military Desk Games. A Presentation to the Washington Operations Research Council.

The Wilson and Giffin books may be ordered from the publishers. The PMW, JWGA, OJCS presentation can be obtained from me in xerox form for \$3.00

THE RULES OF THE COLD WAR GAME (AN OPERATIONAL OUTLINE)

/The following represents a brief outline of the procedures of The Cold War Game. A description of the formal rules, available from me, is given below./

1. Preparation is in the hands of seven or eight field officers, all with active field experience.
2. Their work begins with the day to day study of interagency confidential reports.
3. When a game situation suggests itself, it is put up to the JCS for their approval.
4. The preparation of the game takes about 3 months.
5. First, there are interviews with JCS operations and intelligence officers, and specialists inside and outside the government, particularly in the university community.
6. Next, if the game involves an overseas area, officers fly out to gather information locally and, if possible, arrange for the return of the US ambassador, and other field officers to take part in the game.
7. After this, one officer is assigned to preparing a "fact book" on the area, covering armaments, physical characteristics, technology, resources, etc. while another draws up on paper a "Problems, Issues, and Questions", which is expected to lean heavily on experts with forcefully opposed feelings.

Peerinialis 3 – September 7, 1971. This is Larry Peery's write-up of Goldhamer's *The Cold War Game*, and his adaptation of it to the rules of play-by-mail *Diplomacy*. Page two of eight.

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8. From these and other sources a third officer compiles a game "scenario"--- a detailed history of hypothetical events leading up to the crisis situation which the game is to examine.

9. When this is completed the game teams are assembled.

10. As a rule each team consists of five to ten players, and represents a single country; the maximum number of teams is about seven.

11. Inside teams there are no individuals playing roles as head of state, chief of staff, etc. Instead decisions are reached collectively, rather like those of President Kennedy's "executive committee" during his Cuban crisis.

12. The differences between Blue (American) and other teams is that "American" players are free to pursue whatever policy they think best, whereas others are expected to act in accordance with the recognized ideologies or national attitudes of "their" countries (how realistically they do this is one of the points of interest in FHW) "Our Russian players," I was told in the Pentagon in 1967, "could play the game in Russian," which meant that they were largely composed of military Kremlinologists and the former ambassadors and military attaches in Moscow.

13. The playing of the game generally takes three working days.

14. It begins with the presentation of the opening scenario, and proceeds in "cycles" of three to six moves each. The essence of each move is a discussion by each team of the options available to it.

15. At the end of four hours, often the time that might be available for a crisis decision making in real life, the team has to decide on a plan, which is normally projected two days to one week ahead in "real time."

16. The outcome of events in the light of each team's plan is decided by a director who, by his interpretation and the occasional interjection of arbitrary events, must carry the scenario forward to the next cycle.

17. His task is not to be impartial but to steer the game in such a way that attention is kept focused on the important issues.

18. For the exacting task directors are usually chosen from the military-academic community outside the Pentagon: Schelling, Wohlstoetter, Bloomfield.

19. When the game is ended it is followed by an analysis, and in due course a whole scenario is worked up into a thirty minute movie which is shown to selected "policy making groups" in the Pentagon and State Department, together with a critical commentary pointing out where Blue may have erred.

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That concludes the outline of the game presented in PEERINALIS.

THE COLD WAR GAME (RULES)

For this game only I am not providing a working set of the rules as part of the game fee. There are two reasons for this. First, I have no idea how much the postage is going to run for this game but I believe, although the game will be shorter in time than a normal postal Diplomacy, it will be high because of the bulkiness of the materials involved. Also, I intend to use the money raised by charging for the rules in this game toward the purchase of a commercial set of I-NS rules and forms from SRA, which markets them. The cost of the kit is \$60.00 plus \$1.40 for each additional participants manual. The important thing about buying a kit is that it gives us legitimate rights to use the game for our purposes. In addition, these funds will be used toward establishing a xerox fund so that copies of forms, etc. can be xeroxed rather than dittoed. This will be much more convenient than using dittoed forms, which vary greatly in quantity.

Therefore, the rules for The Cold War Game cost \$2.00. Since all PMW games will be printed in the same format it might be wise to note the organization of these rules since they will be the same for I-NS, TEMPER, SPARC, etc.

Each game will contain:

1. Introduction
2. Pattern of Operation of the Game
3. Problems of the Game
4. Conclusion
5. The Game in Outline
6. The Game Plan
 - A. Preparation
 - B. Participants
 - C. Mechanics
7. Glossary

To cover this material, as outlined above, may require anywhere from 10 pages, as in The Cold War Game, up to forty or more pages, as in I-NS. At the moment all rules are dittoed, on both sides of a sheet. Eventually, I hope to go to one side of a sheet only, and hopefully, someday, to xerox. I am attempting, even at this stage, to set a system up which others can readily understand and really use without difficulty. As I have said I am more than willing to provide others with sets of rules, forms, etc. so that they can run games on their own. However, for the moment I want to control things so I can see what problems develop and work them out before turning more wolves loose in the pastures.

THE COLD WAR GAME ROUND ONE "SUEZ"

Having gone through considerable debate I have decided to make certain changes in the formal structure of The Cold War Game for the first section of the game. I will be incorporating into it several features of I-NS to create a highly systematized game that can be more readily controlled for postal play. After we have seen how the thing works we can then revert to the formal Cold War Game methodology. For the moment, these changes seem necessary to me.

First, we will have a hierarchical decision-making structure using a chief decision maker, foreign affairs decision maker(s), an alternative chief decision maker, technological decision maker in place of the collective decision-making group. This will allow control more control over the players and provide teams with a built-in decision-making structure.

Second, Countries will be identified by their real names.

Third, All countries will follow their literal policies and not interpretive or ideal policies.

As you will see when you read the rules these are optional decisions in the rules. However, for this game I have decided not give an option but to make them myself. I think things will be hard enough without this added confusion.

For the first game of The Cold War Game I have selected the Suez, 1956, crisis as the setting for the scenario. I chose this because it can readily be researched, I have some knowledge of the crisis myself, and have several excellent advisors on hand to help me with it. I trust this will meet with your approval. In another consideration I already have, from the game SUEZ, prepared bibliographies and chronological tables which can be used for this game in preparing your national positions.

The following countries will participant in this game:

- United Kingdom (5 players)
- France (5 players)
- Israel (5 players)
- United States (5 players)
- Soviet Union (5 players)
- Egypt (5 players)
- Jordan (2 players)
- Iraq (2 players)
- Syria (2 players)
- Saudi Arabia (2 players)
- UN Secretariat (2 players)

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For the six teams using five players the following roles will be assigned: Chief Decision Maker, Foreign Affairs Decision Maker (two), Alternate Chief Decision Maker, Technological Decision Maker. If more than five people in one area wish to participate on a team additional specific assignments can be made.

For the five teams having two members the following roles will be assigned: Chief Decision Maker and Foreign Affairs Decision Maker.

In addition certain positions are offered through control provided by the Game Historian. These are Game Historian, Monitors, and Advisors.

Each team will also have a reporter to report to the Game Historian on the actions of his country.

Each team may have its own publisher to prepare and distribute a propaganda zine.

For the moment Control consists of:

- 1) myself, as Director and Publisher of the Gamezine.
- 2) Dr. Issa Khalil, Professor of Religion, San Diego State College. Dr. Khalil is a product of the American University in Lebanon, a native of Palestine and a well-known scholar in Middle Eastern history.

- 3) Dr. Charles Smith, Professor of History, San Diego State College. Dr. Smith has just returned from a year lecturing in Cairo at the invitation of the Egyptian Government. He normally teaches Near Eastern and Middle Eastern History at the College and is an expert on Islam.

It was my feeling that for a first game a used and known situation such as the Suez 1956 crisis would provide a useful beginning. We have an interesting situation, still open to a variety of approaches, yet one that we can all handle without difficulty and in a reasonable manner.

I trust you will find this an interesting and exciting experience.

PLAYERS:

Based only on information contained in response to PERINALIS I and not on vol. 2, I have tentatively decided certain areas and individuals can support teams (in this case five or more members) and certain individuals can form the nucleus of individuals (two or more members).

Hopefully, the following can provide a team for this game:

ROCHESTER, NEW YORK: This would be centered around Bill Jarvin's group and would consist of some of his face to face group there.

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INDIANA (Tri-State): This would center around Rick Brooks group at his school.

CHICAGO: Lenard Lakofka and his friends in IFW have had some experience with I-NS and can probably field a team without much difficulty. Perhaps two.

NEW JERSEY: Bob Johnson said he could raise a team in his area.

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE: The Ansoffs, whose Hypereconomic Diplomacy is one of my favorite variants, and Scott Huddleston can probably form a team.

KANSAS: Martin Campion, can you get up a team at your school?

CHICAGO: Paul Cote, suggests he can field at least one team, perhaps more, but I don't know if there is an overlap here between his group and Lakofkas. I would hope not.

The reasons I picked on these people is because I know that either they have played Diplomacy, and its variants extensively, have had experience with PMW type games before, or are located on or near a college or university where help can be obtained. By the way, if you are located at a school I suggest you talk over this project with a member of your history of political science faculty, you might be able to get some interest aroused. Many schools have special study programs which would buy participation in something like this I'm sure.

As for individuals, to take on the minor powers the following people expressed a desire to play, as individuals, although I would hope some of them, at least, could field a team of at least two people. They need not try to take on a major power role but if they think they want to by all means let me know and we'll discuss it.

Andy Phillips, Daly City California;

Yuihuen Chan, Milly Valley, California:

Perhaps you two could work together as a unit?

Axel Krigsman, New York

Bill Linden, New York

Perry Silverman, New York;

Perhaps you three could work as a unit? If Axel is going to Purdue perhaps he'd rather tie in with the Illinois people?

Burt Labelle, Maine: well, can you draft Bergeron into this too?

Bruce Coy, Los Angeles: you want to work with the San Diego people or go it alone? Or, are there more warmongers at Cal. Lutheran?

George Harter, San Diego: Hmmm, I don't know what you'll do yet.

Appendix D –Excerpts from TSR Hobbies’ Publications

This appendix reproduces the various articles referenced within The Dragon Magazine CD-ROM Archive. All of the articles reproduced here touch on the topics introduced throughout Chapter 6. I have also included the covers of the issues of *The Dragon* reproduced here as I feel that they help to offer a set of graphic examples that speak to the cultural interests of the communities discussed within Chapter 6. The articles reproduced here help to show how the communities involved with the play and design of *Dungeons & Dragons* exemplify ludic subjectivity through their work, while also demonstrating how key figures working at TSR Hobbies like Gary Gygax came to view the company less as a grassroots publishing endeavor and more as a corporate project.

The Strategic Review

MILITARY MINIATURES * GAMES * SWORDS & SORCERY

SUMMER 1975

Single Copy 50¢

Vol. 1, No. 2

IN MEMORIAM

THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF DONALD R. KAYE, CO-FOUNDER OF TACTICAL STUDIES RULES, LONG-TIME FRIEND, AND FELLOW WARGAMER. DON WAS BORN 27 JUNE 1938 AND DIED 31 JANUARY 1975. WE DEEPLY MOURN HIS PARTING.

TSR --WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

Editorial Comment by Brian J. Blume

Tactical Studies Rules is not a giant company; it is not even a large one. But we are growing now, and in the future we might attain substantial size. While we must make a profit in order to remain in business, TSR is not around solely to make money. The members of TSR are long-time gamers who have found that there is a great deal of satisfaction in creating and/or publishing a good set of game rules or an enjoyable game, and please note the emphasis on the term gamers. Some attempt to down-grade the game aspect of our hobby and pretend to simulate reality. We at TSR believe that it is impossible to simulate real-life situations, although some of the excitement and challenge of reality can be reflected in a game, although a game always remains a game. Thus, we try to publish rules and games which are easy to play, logical, and still give some of the "flavor" of the particular era or battle or whatever it is they cover. This, of course, cannot apply to those fantasy and science fiction titles where reality is not usually relevant. In these cases the stress is on providing a framework which excites and challenges the players as they develop their own games. The keynote in all of our publications has been flexibility, tempered with playability, and mixed with the proper amount of "authenticity" so as to retain the sense of historical realism or game realism. We hope you will always find that we have succeeded.

Of course, whatever TSR does is meaningless without your support. We must know if we are providing what you, our fellow hobbyists, really like and want. Sales reports tell us that so far we have been coming pretty close to the mark, but we also welcome your letters telling us what rules or games you would like TSR to produce. Just to

make it easier we have included a short section listing a few possibilities, and if you see something you like -- or find we have missed your favorite -- drop us a line and give us the word. In a nutshell, we do not believe that we can ever work too closely with our fellow wargamers, for TSR's sole justification for its existence is to provide you with products which you desire. When I mentioned that the members of TSR were long-time gamers I was speaking of a combined total of about 50 years for the three of us -- that is 50 years of battle gaming, for if chess were to be included it would be more like 75 years! Such experience, even considering our past design work in addition to it, is not sufficient to make us in any way independent of the hobby. So we will always attempt to keep in touch with you as closely as possible. We know that we need your support, not vice versa. Thanks for the confidence you have shown so far!

THE STRATEGISTS CLUB

Because our first issue won't reach anywhere near the circulation of this one until sometime after you're reading this, we are holding off compiling the answers to the poll we ran in Number 1 of SR. If you haven't sent in a card with your choices there is still time to make your votes known. Here is the reason they are important.

THE FIRST ANNUAL STRATEGISTS CLUB AWARDS BANQUET will be held at 7:30 P.M. on the 22nd of August (Friday) 1975 at the Gargoyle Restaurant, only a block north of the Horticultural Hall. Trophies will be awarded for the categories named in SR 1 (BEST NEW GAME OF 1974, OUTSTANDING DESIGNER, OUTSTANDING WRITER, OUTSTANDING WARGAME MAGAZINE, BEST MINIATURE FIGURE RELEASE, FAVORITE S&S NOVEL OF 1974). The trophies awarded will be inscribed: "Strategists Club Awards, CREATIVITY IN GAMING," and then the category and year will appear. Naturally, the awards will be presented after the banquet -- this year sirloin of beef with a keg of ale to wash it down with. Members interested in attending should send a \$2.00 registration fee immediately, as a maximum of 50 persons will be able to attend. The \$2.00 will cover the entire cost of the banquet, as TSR plans to pick up the major portion of the tab. There will also be a ballot drawing after the awards are presented, and the SC member whose ballot is picked at random will receive a gift certificate good for \$20 worth of TSR publications, and that should provide all the incentive necessary for you to vote even if you won't be able to attend the banquet.

This time we are asking you to let us know what you think of the following possibilities for miniatures rules and game offerings. These questions are directed at Strategists Club members on the assumption that you are the more dedicated and active individuals amongst our

PUBLISHERS STATEMENT:

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Editor -- E. Gary Gyga
Associate Editor-- Brian Blume

Change of Address should be sent as soon as possible, and in any event not less than two weeks prior to the first day of April, July, October and January, as applicable.

The Strategic Review Volume 1, Number 2 – Published Summer 1975. Brian Blume's Article, "TSR – Why We Do What We Do."

Any readers try our D&D goodies at Origins I, CITEK, or GenCon? If so, we'd like to know how we could improve such tournaments, as another convention season will soon roll around. We noticed at all three of the above named events that not less than a quarter of the conventioners were there to get in some D&D gaming — made us feel good.

Heaps of material have been received, and we do plan to publish most of it. Here's how: Some will eventually be aired here in **SR**. We are also seriously considering the production of a D&D supplement authored by "DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ENTHUSIASTS EVERYWHERE", edited by Gyga, Arneson, and possible Kuntz also, for that will be a big job. Each contribution would be credited to the appropriate author, and contributors would receive several free copies of the booklet. Bear with us, and meanwhile keep on sending in all that excellent work! Even though there isn't any way we can acknowledge it, it is greatly appreciated.

An announcement of "The First Annual Convention for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Enthusiasts" has been received. DunDraConI is slated for 27-29 February. For details write to 386 Alcatraz, Oakland, CA 94618.

D&D oriented magazines:

ALARUMS & EXCURSIONS, 714 S. Serrano, L.A., CA 90005. \$1.00 should get you a sample issue by 3rd class mail.

KRANOR-RILL, 1545 Breton Rd. SE, E. Grand Rapids, MI 49506. 50 cents should get you a sample

Greg Costikyan, 1675 York Ave., NY 10028, publisher of GIG0 (scifigenzine) and URF DUFFAL (dippy variant zine) is planning a D&D fanzine. Write Greg for details. TSR appreciates his checking with us first for permission, and we hope you'll support him.

Scott Rosenberg, 182-31 Radnor Rd., Jamaica, NY 11432, publishes the Dippy fanzine THE POCKET ARMENIAN. Scott says that he'll be publishing an irregular D&D fanzine. Drop him a line for more information.

As an aside we must mention that GREAT PLAINS GAME PLAYERS NEWSLETTER, Box 137, Vermillion, SD 57069, generally carries a fair amount of D&D related material, and Len Lakofka has been sneaking in some interesting items in his Dippy 'zine LIAISONS DANGEREUSES (644 W. Briar Pl., Chicago, IL 60657). #61 contained about 6 pages on spells for table top battles, GPGPN goes for \$3/12 issues; LD \$2/10 issues.

Speaking of Dippy, Lew Pulsipher has a "Dying Earth" variant which looks fun (and eventually had the help of the staunch D&D master Scott Rich in working out the spells used in the game. I'm not sure how Lew is distributing the rules, or if he'll be running games of the variant, but Scott Rich will handle both ends, I think.

And speaking of Scott Rich, his KAM-PAIN game and connected 'zine RUMOR are most interesting — trouble is that Scott is too busy to take in more players (or so he claims, so you'll have to pressure him . . .). The writing in RUMOR is surprisingly good, and I'd like to see whoever is doing it put pen to paper and whip up a fantasy novel. Send Scott a shiny new 50 cent piece for a sample of the goods he offers if you are interested.

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If you wish to be listed as a Dungeonmaster, taken off the list, or we have somehow screwed up just drop a post card letting us know. Be sure that the card contains only that information pertinent to the above, for otherwise it might go into some other file (or on top of Gyga's desk which is the same as consigning something to the lowest floor of the nethermost hell).

CASTLE & CRUSADE

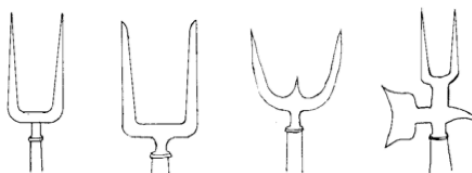
A FEW MORE WORDS ON MEDIEVAL POLE ARMS

by Gary Gyga

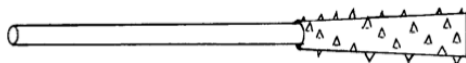
There was such a wide variety of pole arms used during the Middle Ages, and a wide variation within each specific class, that a really exhaustive treatment is just not possible here. However, to answer a few questions asked, and to touch on a few points which the article on pole arms in **SR #2** omitted, I offer the following additional information:

Couteaux de Breches should be treated as Glaives, a **Scorpion** is a form of Bill-Guisarme, a **Bohemian Ear-Spoon** is a form of Partisan, treat a **Korseke** as a Spetum, and a **Chauves Souris** is a Ranscur. The **Bec-de-Corbin**, by the way, corresponds to a Lucern Hammer only with regard to its effect on plate armor, with or without shield, for its thrust and hook sections were not as well developed. Its general usage was by two plate-armored knights "having it out" about on the field of honor. For this reason it can be generally ignored as unlikely in other combat situations. Finally, **Ranson**, **Rhonca**, **Roncic**, and **Runka** are all variations of the name Ranscur.

The **Military Fork** was ignored purposely, for it did not fit into the general category of pole arms as well as the others. It was basically a double spear which effectively held the opponent (typically horsed) at a distance if either of the tines failed to wound or kill him, and this (of course) either dismounted him or at least prevented him from delivering a blow in return. I do not consider weapons with a fork end to necessarily be Military Forks. There are examples of Halberds with fork ends, but they are just that, Halberds. To claim otherwise is to fly in the face of common sense. One would not very logically call every pole that ended with a long sharp point a spear, and the same must apply to the nonnecature of Military Forks. Examples of this weapon are given below.



Holy Water Sprinklers are Morning Stars, and they seldom were over three or four feet in length. A notable exception is that found in Japan where this was actually a pole arm. I have seen several pictures and one figure which show these weapons as being of unusual length by European standards. While one was about five feet overall, the other two were at least six feet. The one shown being wielded by the figure in the statue grouping had a weapon with a haft of about four feet and a head of some two and one-half feet in length. The latter is sketched below.



CHAINMAIL WEAPONS ADDITIONS

Steve Marsh sent in an interesting discussion of the Japanese **Jo** stick (about the size of a cane or walking stick), its larger cousin, the **Bo** stick (slightly smaller and lighter than a quarter staff) as compared to the quarter staff.

Simple sticks were commonly utilized as weapons by the Medieval peasants in all lands, and with training often used to great effect. I have modified Steve's matrix a bit, and I do not agree that the **Jo** stick would operate at any greater efficiency against a sword as compared to a battle axe, but I hope that subsequent discussion from readers will allow further details to be given here.

Weapon	Factor*	Armor Class									
Jo Stick	4/2	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2		
Bo Stick	5/5	5	8	6	9	10	12	-	-		
Quarterstaff	8/4	6	7	5	8	9	11	12	-		
		7	7	6	8	8	10	12	-		

*length/speed as compared to weapon factor of CHAINMAIL

What Price Gold & Glory?

By Jim Hayes

A thin, cold wind stirred the brittle grass and rattled the branches of a fire-blasted tree beneath which a group of fur-wrapped barbarians were huddled. They had kindled a small fire and were warming fatty strips of meat over the meagre flames. The drippings hissed and splattered on the hot coals, occasionally drawing curses from those who were stung by the hot grease. Their leader, a dark, strongly-built man, sat apart from the men, staring broodingly down the slope of the hill where they rested. A tiny figure, wrapped in a crudely made fur cloak, pressed closer to him and touched his forearm.

"What think you, my brother?" it said in a high, piping voice.

Hagar looked down, a sad, faraway look in the darkness of his eyes. He saw the tiny face and wide pupilless eyes of a wood sprite, and his thoughts turned to a certain moonless night some months before. He had stood in a certain secluded chamber in the Hall of Magicians in Landkhemer, watching a hawk-nosed, shaven-headed Shemite necromancer prepare to evoke a sorcerous spell. The man drew an intricate pattern on the floor, stood within it, and began a melodious chant. Hagar scowled at the memory; he suspected that it was gaudy ritual for superstitious fools. Still, one did not needlessly provoke the powerful, and he had remained silent.

Great beads of sweat stood out on the magician's knotted face, and his voice became a harsh, grating shout. He seemed to writhe in agony, then abruptly dropped to the floor. Two attendants in pale ochre robes silently entered and removed the unconscious Shemite. A bent and aged Khematite wizard, with thin white beard drooping from his wrinkled, yellow cheeks, had then entered, bowed towards Hagar and took his place in the center of the pentagram. He went through the same chants and rituals, ending when he fell to the floor in a flurry of ancient limbs and swirling robes. The attendants had hurriedly removed his still form, and a gong sounded. Without warning, the form of the High Wizard, Cardor, had appeared in the center of the room. Hagar had been greatly startled, but with an immense effort, gave no sign of it. Cardor was a short, grossly fat, bow-legged man, clad in shimmering blue silk tunic. His smile was warm and open, but his jet-dark eyes were endlessly cold and inhuman.

"It is finished, my good friend," the mage said, his voice as oily as his pale skin. "Your comrades who fell so valiantly in battle are returned to you. This spell, as you have seen, is most difficult, as it involves calling up the Blind Rider of Utter Darkness and sending it to tear the living soul from some — ahem — unfortunate Then it must retrieve the soul force of your companions from whatever paradise or hell they reside in and place them in the vacant body or bodies provided. Well! It is finished now. Your friends await you outside the Great North Gate of the city. You have brought the 'man's weight' of gold?"

Hagar had nodded towards two of his followers, who stood, hand on sword hilt, guarding a leather-covered chest. Two blank-eyed attendants entered at some unspoken command, took the chest and removed it. Other servants motioned for the warriors to follow.

Hagar's scowl deepened as he recalled the wild hope and anticipation, as his band of men crossed the darkened streets of the sleeping city to the North Gate, where two bribed guardsmen pulled the massive door ajar sufficiently for the party to slip out. They had walked slowly along the stone-paved roadway, calling softly for their companions. Hagar had felt anger rise in a slow, burning flood at the seeming deception, when a slight sound to his right caused him to whirl about and draw his sword.

A great man-shape had arisen from the brush to the side of the road and lumbered towards them, powerful muscles bunching and flowing beneath a shaggy-furred pelt. The features were a furry, distorted man-face, glistening canines showing in the powerful jaws. The dwarf, Pax, had cried out, "Shape-changer! Were-creature! What would you have of us?"

The werebear had rolled its tongue about, finally mouthing words in a growling fashion. "Brothers," it said, "it is your comrade Demian. How am I here among the living? I cannot think, the mists of death surround me still." He faltered and would have fallen, had they not gathered and held him. A stir of air and sensed movement had caused Hagar to look down. The tiny form of a wood-sprite wavered and became visible before him. It had spoken in a high, trembling voice, "Hagar, oh Hagar. What has happened? It is as a dream — a dream of unknown worlds and endless roads. I have traveled far since the great snake struck and devoured me. Yet now am I returned to you, carried on the back of a nameless horror." It had raised tiny arms to him, and Hagar had numbly lifted the pixie and cradled it to his broad chest. It was only hours later, when the shock had worn away, that he could shout and curse the magicians and their blind demon who chose whatever creature was nearby, not caring that the soul of brave men would be entrapped in the body of a beast.

A deep, booming voice drew Hagar back to the present. "Why do you look so sad, little brother?" the werebear asked. "I sense that your soul is desolate. There is no need. We are strong and well, there is food and drink, a warm fire and the chance of worthy combat when this cursed darkness lifts. I have scouted the hillside, and to the northeast I have found a sunken plaza, where I surprised a fender and fed well. There is a passable stair that leads down into the plaza. I did

not enter, for the darkness can hide many things."

Hagar smiled. "The coming of Father Sun is many hours away. Tell the others to sleep. I will keep watch." The werebear bared its fangs in a grin, cuffed him playfully, and left to join the others. The pixie crept beneath Hagar's robe and soon slept contentedly. The long night drifted by with the slow movement of the stars, and the pale-washed dawn found Hagar still staring watchfully down the hill. Raton, a slender, quick-moving man with sharp, inquisitive eyes, blew on the coals and rekindled the fire. One by one, the others arose and went up the hillside to their nature call. Demian grumbled and slapped himself with blows that would have felled a man, his breath forming clouds of vapor in the chill air. The men warmed their strips of dried meat and ate, following with a long swallow from their tekela-filled flagons.

Demian led the band around the westerly slope, the only sound being the wind and the thud of iron-shod boots on the frozen ground. They scrambled over a tumbled-down stone fence and stopped for a moment, looking up the northern slope where the abandoned battlements of LesCoque Castle were becoming visible in the mists of early morning. Demian pointed to a jagged spur of cracked and fissured granite that divided the hillside from the outer castle wall to the narrow valley hundreds of feet below.

"The plaza lies beyond that," he growled.

Hagar nodded and motioned the men on. They cautiously crept up the rock outcropping, and at a sharp command from him, they crouched close to the frost-covered stone. Hagar turned to Demian and whispered, "You said nothing of that!" He gestured at a plume of smoke or vapor that lifted from one corner of the depression. The werebear sniffed the air and snarled, "It's not smoke, whatever else it might be."

The two crept silently to the edge of the plaza and peered down the broad flight of cracked marble steps. On the opposite and adjoining walls, there were portals and passages that led back into the hillside. The tiles of the floor were moss-covered and broken, and piles of leaves and debris had drifted against the walls. Ornate bronze torch holders, green and tarnished with age, spoke of once-festive times when gaudy dancers whirled about on warm summer nights. Over all seemed to hang an aura of ancient decay.

Hagar pointed to the foot of the steps, where a clump of shrubs and grasses were green and growing despite the winter chill. "It's a natural hot spring," he said. "The wild creatures of this hill-land must water here at dusk. It should be safe to pass in the day. Only the great marsh-bear hunts then, and this is the season of winter-sleep."

He motioned for the rest to approach and when they were gathered, he led them down the steps, Demian moving silently beside him. At the bottom they saw that the spring was a shallow pool which had formed before the opening to a natural grotto. Each warrior moved cautiously by, their weapons drawn and held ready. They had approached to within fifteen feet of the first portal when a sound from the grotto drew their attention.

A gigantic scorpion emerged and charged into the group with a sound like a hundred swords clashing. The grey-clad acolyte magic-users, who had been coaxing the string of mules down into the plaza, screamed and fled back out. Demian roared with rage, and Hagar leapt aside and slashed with his sword. The force of the blow numbed his forearm, but seemed to have no effect on the scorpion. It caught up Pax in its pincers, and the dwarf screamed as he felt his ribs cracking.

El Gato shouted and ran at the monster, whirling his morning star in great sweeps. The heavy, studded ball crashed between the faceted eyes, shattering a section of the horny, black armor. The scorpion shrielled and seized him, the mobile sting whipping up and over and piercing his iron breastplate. The venom struck him like a blow, and his weapon slipped from his nerveless fingers. He fell limply to the ground as the paralyzation took effect.

Demian closed with the creature, his muscles standing out in corded bands, as he strained to overturn it and limit the range of the deadly tail. The clashing mandibles raked bloody strips across his chest, and he screamed with the pain. The scorpion reared, lifting the werebear off his feet. He smashed desperately with both paws, crushing one of the glistening eyes. The monster uttered a shrill, high-pitched chatter, and a second scorpion emerged from the grotto, its body moving like sleek, black plate armor. Pax and Raton dashed towards it, dodging aside at the last second. Pax's battle axe glanced aside, throwing him off balance, but Raton's sword flashed in a quicksilver thrust, piercing a joint in the armor and drawing a gush of greenish, milky body fluid. It whirled to the other side, driving Pax to the ground, the powerful mandibles digging deep gouges in his plate armor. The dwarf writhed and screamed beneath the crushing weight.

Three young and untried warriors, their eyes wild with fear and battlelust, struck the scorpion from the rear. It spun about and caught the first in the clashing mandibles. He cursed and fell to the ground, one arm dangling uselessly. The great claws caught up the remaining two, tossing them almost thirty feet against the wall. A squat, muscular fighter in ancient plate grabbed the fallen Pax and tried to draw him clear. The sting swept over and pierced his neck between helmet and armor. He shrieked and fell paralyzed. The scorpion charged blindly over them, catching another young warrior in its pincers, breaking his back like a brittle twig. A tall, lithe fighter, his helmet lost in the confusion and his long, black hair sweeping about his shoulders, severed one of the creature's legs with a mighty loup.

Raton called to him. "Arros! Strike after me!" He ran in from the side and buried his sword to the hilt in the juncture of head and thorax. The scorpion shrieked weakly and scuttled towards the grotto. Arros leapt lightly onto its back and drove his sword down into the central nerve center. The monster abruptly collapsed in a quivering heap.

Hagar and the werebear had baited the first scorpion from one to the other, until it weakened to the point that Demian could batter it down with shattering blows. They stood wearily over the inert body of their foe, drawing deep, wracking breaths. The werebear's fur was matted with blood and ichor from the monster, and his chest and arms were criss-crossed with deep gouges and tears. A slow welling of dark, venous blood dripped steadily from Hagar's armor, but he waved away a concerned cleric. He smiled at Demian, "A battle to remember, eh, great one!" Then they looked about and were silent.

Two warriors, Wyl and Aron, carried the bodies up to ground level and moved the two paralyzed fighters to a soft drift of leaves, where an ash-faced cleric ministered to them. Hagar stood before the grotto and called to the pixie.

"Gogo, little one, I must ask you to be brave. I need for you to fly within and find what lies in the darkness," he said. The pixie stared at him with trusting eyes. Then it nodded and abruptly became invisible, only a stir of air marking its departure. Long minutes passed as Hagar waited and watched. He strained forward at a sound, and then the pixie was back, clutching at his neck and sobbing.

"There are two more of the devils," it sobbed, "and beyond a stack of gold bars and a great sword and scabbard. One sensed my passing and almost caught me. Oh! I'm so afraid!"

He patted the small creature and tucked it into a fur-lined saddle bag on one of the mules that was munching contentedly on the lush grasses that grew around the pool. He called together the fittest of his fighters and described what lay within. The bear growled in anticipation.

Zerahx lifted his grey woolen robes and waded through the warm water to the entrance. He gestured with his right hand and a small glowing globe of light grew on his fingertips. He threw it into the darkness, where it burst, lighting the entire length of the underground chamber. Hagar and Demian led the attack, charging into the two, huge, enraged scorpions. The fighting in the narrow space was a confusion of milling bodies, numbing blows and counterblows, screams and groans of the wounded and dying. The floor became slippery with blood and greenish-white ichor, making firm footing impossible. Men slipped and fell and died in the crunching mandibles. In desperation, the magic-users attacked with daggers and bare fists. Zerahx died instantly from the flailing sting, and his fellow medium, Incant, died in the grasp of pincers that tore him in two. Demian dragged himself out, severely wounded. The warriors fought on desperately, silently. One scorpion fell mortally wounded, but the other fought on. Lagrimas, a half-grown youth on his first expedition, made a daring dive beneath the creature in an attempt to pierce its underbelly. The scorpion caught him up in its claws, reared, and stung him repeatedly. Pax and Aron struck at the exposed underside, bringing the monster down in a crashing heap. Pax swayed and slumped against the wall, bleeding from a dozen wounds.

Aron picked up the scabbard and drew out the sword. It glittered and flashed as he held it aloft, and he felt the tingle of enchantment. Then he looked back along the length of the grotto, at the scattered, twisted bodies and blood-splattered walls. He watched Arros panting, his back to the wall and his eyes dark with pain and shock. He saw Raton on his hands and knees, bleeding from the nose and mouth and shaking his head dazedly. He saw the still forms of the strong young men he had shared many campfires with and marveled at the price that men are willing to pay for gold and glory.

Con News

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Hints for D & D Judges Part I: Towns

by Joe Fischer

When talking to new D & D judges, the one phrase most often heard from them is: "Help!"

These players turned judges are usually crammed full of ideas for new types of traps, monsters, and treasure to spring on their unsuspecting players, which is great. The trouble, in most cases, seems to be that they aren't quite sure where to start, which isn't so great. Hopefully this article will not only get you started, but show you which way to go once you are started.

When starting a new "castle," there is one necessity that every judge should fulfill; that is giving the players a base of operations where all equipment for out-door and dungeon expeditions can be bought, and a place where player-characters can stay in (comparative) safety between adventures.

The best way to do this, besides just giving the equipment to the players, is to plan out a hamlet or town (or a small city for those with ambition and graph paper in plenty). In this way not only do the players have a base to work from, but now they can go on occasional "town adventures" to break the monotony of dungeon adventures, yet not risk their necks in the wilderness.

If a town sounds like too much work, with a little imagination, a judge can come up with his own type of supply base. In the now defunct castle "Black Star" (one of my first attempts at castle building) the first level was given over to inns, pubs, and shops — including the shop of a slightly crazy high level wizard who seemed to have a little bit of everything, including a chest of Gondorian Red, a chest of Mordorian Black, and a balrog butler named Boris (who "Black Star's" ex-players should remember well).

Should a judge decide on building a town, he'll have as many options as a new Cadillac.

One of the first decisions to be made is whether or not magical items are to be sold in town. Actually most items shouldn't be sold but traded. (i.e. A magic-user, having no use for a magic shield, could trade it in for a scroll.) If so, remember that the non-character selling them must be powerful enough that the players can't acquire the magic by force. Also note that a complete plan of the seller's domicile should be done. The magic should be sold or traded at prices several times their real value; the non-character is in business to make money, not to help weak characters.

Another feature of any town or city is the local pub. Here player-characters, at the cost of a round of drinks, can find out latest happenings and more importantly, local legends. Of course the judge should decide first if he wants legends in his game. If he does, then it is a good idea to slip in an occasional "bummer" legend, in with the rest. That way players are a little more leery about following up legends, and the bartenders don't get overworked.

It is a good idea to sketch out one or two of the major bars simply because literally hours of gaming time can be killed by players "trying" to sit on a barstool while picking up information and getting drunk at the same time. (Remember, all those mugs of ale add up.) And don't forget those barroom brawls. (But sire, I'm innocent. If he hadn't called you a son of a pink dragon . . .)

Should the judge decide on a town for the starting point of his game, he should first map out the general area surrounding his town and dungeon entrance(s) on hexagon graphpaper, the scale depending on the amount of detail the judge desires. This way more than one entrance to the dungeons can be made available, and also player-characters can, once they have the gold for it, pick an area to build their castle homes.

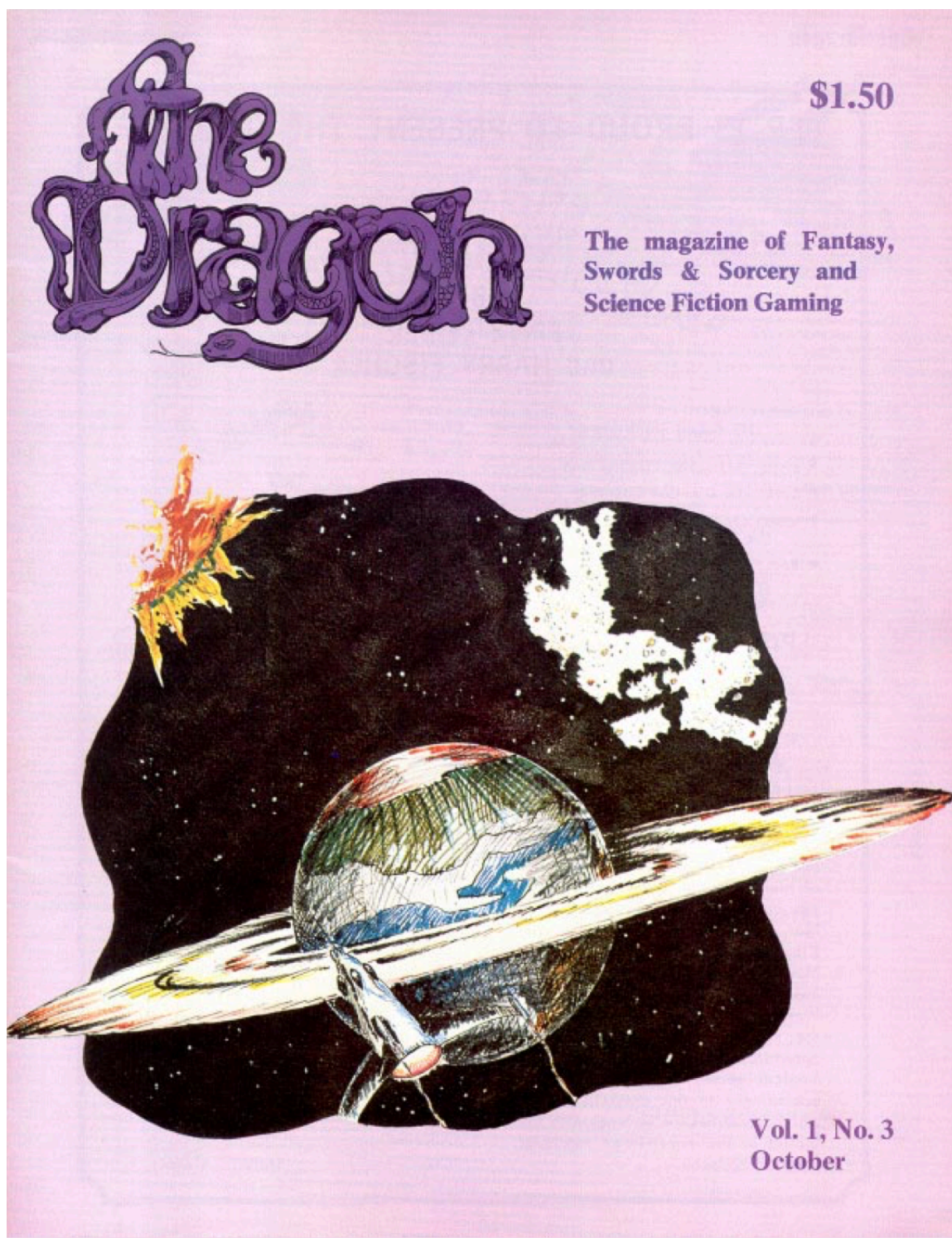
The next part is, basically, setting down some facts about the town. Population, type (whether just a normal town, walled city, port or a district capitol, etc.) alignment of the government, and so forth. At the same time, any special town non-player characters should be written down, along with any magic or special items they might have. This can be as simple or as complex as the judge wishes. Naturally the more complex this is, the more realistic and enjoyable town adventures will be to the players.

Once this is all down on paper, the next move is the mapping of the town itself. This should be done with standard graph paper: one square equals twenty feet. (This can be modified for larger towns.) And for ease of understanding, the judge should develop some form of symbol and color code should be used.

First map out the town's walls, any bodies of water, and any geographical features that are outside the walls. This should be done first in pencil, then in color after the judge is satisfied with his handiwork.

Next, any interior walls, such as the palace walls, should be mapped out. Make sure to make these different from the main wall.

Then the town (if large enough to make it necessary) can be broken down into sections, (Thieves' Quarter, Temple Precinct, Peasants' District, etc.) and each section done one at a time. First, the major buildings (temples, palaces, guild halls, etc.) should be marked. Some of these you might want to enlarge on a separate map. Then, in order, major roads, minor roads, minor stores, back alleys, and lastly the homes of the lowly peasants should be drawn in.



The Dragon 3 – Published October 1976. An example of the magazine's science fiction cover artwork.



Someone once said that all you needed to play fantasy games was a willing suspension of disbelief. This philosophy goes far to succinctly sum up fantasy gaming, but only on the surface. What is most essential is an active imagination; without one there can be no "fantasy."

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 1975 Edition, defines fantasy as — 2) *FANCY*, esp: *the free play of creative imagination* 3) *a creation of the imaginative faculty*. It defines imagination as; *the act or power of forming a mental image of something not present to the senses or never before wholly perceived in reality*.

As is obvious from the above, the two are integrally interconnected. The Dictionary goes even further into that fact because it credits imagination, fancy and fantasy with a "shared meaning element"; *the power to form mental images of things not before one*. To ask a Bushman of the Kalihari to describe a clipper ship would be folly. Even if you told him how it worked and what its purpose was, he wouldn't be able to describe anything that you would recognize as a clipper ship. He would be able to describe it only in terms of or comparisons to things he knew. Even the concept of an ocean would be unbelievable to him.

As the preceding example illustrates, imagination is dependent upon background, at least in terms of visualization. To a 14th Century AmerIndian, a ship that sailed from the East Coast of North America to Europe was just as fantastic as a ship that sailed to the specks of light in the night sky. Everything we perceive is subconsciously compared to what we've seen before.

All of these points have been made in defense of including "fiction" within the pages of THE DRAGON. The complaints have not been numerous by any means, but most are marked by their vociferousness and vehemence.

All the games we play are fiction; historical battles are historical fiction at best. I include fiction in TD so that the reader's fictions will be better: fuller, more complete and better founded. Some of the fantasy campaigns now extant rely entirely upon the work of one author, or are centered around only one cycle or mythos. If *that* suits you, fine. As for myself, I'd rather play in a campaign that blends many cycles, mythos' and authors' work. It seems to have a richer flavor.

Subconsciously or consciously, every bit of fantasy, s-f or S&S you have read has contributed to how you perceive and deal with fantasy gaming. Even if you read a concept that you violently dislike, it has affected your perception of gaming; chances are you will overreact in the opposite direction. The more concepts you explore, regardless of whether you agree with/accept them, or not, the more raw material you have for your own imagining process.

In response to these letters, fiction will no longer take up nearly as much space. The Niall story in the last TD took up so much space because of a lack of communication between myself and the typesetter; it was set too large. In the future, though, I will still include what I think is worthwhile fiction. A good proportion of material printed is submitted by the readers, and occasionally I'll print something that might not be top-flight writing, but contains worthwhile ideas or concepts. (As a side

note, I will be printing a new Gardner Fox-Niall story in TD #6 — "Beyond the Wizard Fog.")

You can see the new format in this issue that I will use for fiction. I feel that THE DRAGON should and will be more than a variant magazine, as it is meant to deal with all aspects of Fantasy, Swords & Sorcery and Science Fiction Gaming. If a reader adopts just one idea, gimmick, concept, etc., from a story, or adopts a measure in opposition to one, then it will have served the purpose of furthering fantasy gaming.

Timothy J. Kask
Editor

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NOTES ON WOMEN & MAGIC — Bringing the Distaff Gamer into D & D

by Len Lakofka

There will be four major groups in which women may enter. They may be FIGHTERS, MAGIC USERS, THIEVES and CLERICS. They may progress to the level of men in the area of magic and, in some ways, surpass men as thieves. Elven women may rise especially to high levels in clerics to the elves. Only as fighters are women clearly behind men in all cases but even they have attributes that their male counterparts do not!

Characteristics;

Strength 18 sided die and 1 six sided die.

Wisdom, Intelligence, Dexterity and Constitution all use 3 6 sided dice. (Any woman scoring 13 or 14 in strength may add 1 to her constitution score.)

Instead of Charisma BEAUTY is rated on 2 20 sided dice numbered 1-10 (so the range is 2-20, not 2-40).

Prime Requisites

Wisdom for clerics

Intelligence for Magic Users

Strength for Fighters (except that 'average' is not 7-10 and not 9-12)

Dexterity for Thieves

Intelligence is important to upper level **thieves** when magic is used

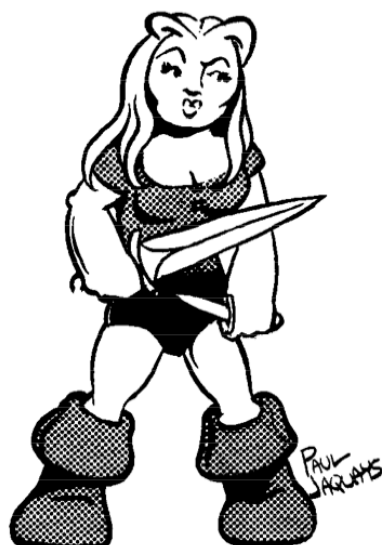
Beauty and exceptional Beauty (15-18) (19-20) are important to **thieves**, **fighters** and **magic users**. Clerics may not use beauty if they are lawful or neutral. Chaotic Clerics may use their beauty score.

Experience Points for Advancement

Title

FIGHTERS

Fighting Woman.....	0
Swordswoman.....	.1600
Gladiator.....	.3200
Battle Maiden.....	.6400
Shield Maiden.....	12800
Myrmidon.....	25000
Heroine.....	50000
Valkyrie.....	100000
War Lady.....	200000
War Lady 10th level.....	300000



CLERICS

Novice.....	0
Initiate.....	1200
Postulant.....	2400
Apostolate.....	4800
Sister.....	9600
Deaconess.....	20000
Canoness.....	40000
Prioress.....	80000
Superiress.....	160000
Matriarch.....	240000
Matriarch 11 level.....	320000
Matriarch 12 level.....	400000

THIEVES

Wench.....	0
Hag.....	1000
Jade.....	2000
Succubus.....	4000
Adventurer.....	8000
Soothsayer.....	16000
Gypsy.....	35000
Sibyl.....	70000

MAGIC-USERS

Medium.....	0
Seer.....	2400
Sage.....	4800
Mystic.....	9600
Oracle.....	20000
Enchantress.....	40000
Illusionist.....	65000
Sorceress.....	90000
Witch.....	180000
Witch 10th Level.....	270000
Witch 11th level.....	360000
Witch 12th level.....	450000
Witch 13th level.....	600000
Witch 14th level.....	700000
Witch 15th level.....	800000
Witch 16th level.....	900000
Witch 17th level.....	1000000
Witch 18th level.....	1200000
Witch 19th level.....	1400000
Witch 20th level.....	1600000
Witch 21st level.....	2000000
Witch 22nd level.....	2400000

FIGHTERS

	Hit Dice	Fighting Spells Capability
Fighting Woman	1+1	Man none
Swordswoman	2	man + 1 none
Gladiator	3	2 men + 1 none
Battle Maiden	4	3 men special for beautiful women
Shield Maiden	5	hero special for beautiful women
Myrmidon	5+2	Hero + 1 special for beautiful women
Heroine	6+2	Hero + 2 special for beautiful women
Valkyrie	7+2	7 men special for beautiful women
War Lady	8+2	Superhero special for beautiful women
War Lady 10th level	9+2	Superhero + 1 special for beautiful women

If the Chainmail system (not man to man) is used the tables are wholly correct. If the "Alternate Combat System" is used subtract one level from all levels over one in every combat. If this is not done females would fight as well as a man at the same level for far fewer experience points.

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	Hit Dice	Fights	Spells						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
CLERICS									
Novice	1	man-1	-						
Initiate	2	man	1						
Postulant	3	man + 1	2						
Apostolate	3+1	2 men	2	1					
Sister	4	3 men	3	1	1				
Deaconess	4+1	3 men+1	3	2	1				
Canoness	5	hero -1	3	2	2	1			
Prioress	6	hero	3	3	2	1			
Superioress	6 + 2	Hero+1	3	3	3	2	1		
Matriarch level 10	7+2	Hero+2	3	3	3	3	1		
Matriarch level 11	8+2	Hero+3	3	3	3	3	2		
Matriarch level 12	9+2	superhero	3	3	3	3	3	1	
THIEVES									
Wench	1	man-1	-						
Hag	2	man	-						
Jade	3	man + 2	-						
Succubus	4	2 men	1	limited and special					
Succubus	4	2 men	1	limited and special					
Adventuress	4+1	2 men +1	2	limited and special					
Soothsayer	4+2	3 men	2	1 limited and special					
Gypsy	5	3 men +1	2	2 limited and special					
Sibyl	5+2	hero-1	2	2 1 limited and special					
MAGIC USERS									
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7 8 9
Medium	1	man-2	1						
Seer	1+1	Man-1	2						
Sage	2	Man	2	1					
Mystic	2+1	Man+1	3	2					
Oracle	3	2 Men	3	2	1				
Enchantress	3+1	2 Men+1	3	3	2				
Illusionist	4	3 Men	3	3	2	1			
Sorceress	5	3 Men+?	3	3	3	2	1		
Witch	6	Hero	4	3	3	3	2		
Witch 10th level	7	hero+ 1	4	3	3	3	3		
Witch 11th level	8	Wizard	5	4	3	3	3	1	
Witch 12th level	8+1	Wizard	5	5	4	3	3	2	
Witch 13th level	8+2	Wizard+ 1	5	5	5	4	4	3	1
Witch 14th level	9+2	Wizard+ 1	5	5	5	5	5	3	2
Witch 15th level	9+3	Wizard+1	5	5	5	5	5	3	1
Witch 16th level	10+2	Wizard+1	5	5	5	5	5	4	1
Witch 17th level	10+3	Wizard+1	6	6	5	5	5	4	2
Witch 18th level	10+4	Wizard+2	6	6	6	6	6	5	2
Witch 19th level	11+3	Wizard+3	7	7	7	6	6	5	3
Witch 20th level	11+4	Wizard+2	7	7	7	7	7	6	4
Witch 21st level	11+5	Wizard+2	7	7	7	7	7	7	5
Witch 22nd level	11+7	Wizard+3	8	8	8	7	7	7	7

THIEVES — Women Statistics — see BLACKMOOR

Female thieves same as male except that higher level female thieves can learn some limited magic, and Beautiful thieves are capable of the spells of seduction and Charm Men. On page 11 of Blackmoor are additional statistics regarding thieves. Copy the 6 classes of female thieves down next to Apprentice through Master Pilferer. Dwarf, Elven and Hobbit Women may act as thieves.

Spells. To cast spells the Thief's intelligence score must be 12 or higher for all spells except Seduction, Charm Men and Charm Humanoid Monster where intelligence need only be 9. To cast Seduction, Charm Men or Charm Humanoid monster (I) the thief must have a Beauty score of 13 or better (plus intelligence of 9+).

Spells thieves may cast by level.

1st level	2nd level	3rd level
Charm Man I	Seduction I	Charm Men II
Light	Sleep +	Seduction II
Read Languages	Mirror Image	Charm Humanoid
		Monster I
Tarot Reading	Detect Magic +	ESP +
		Knock +

Note that some spells are at different levels for thieves than for regular magic users. These are marked with a +.

Charm men, Seduction and Charm Humanoid Monster will be explained in the magic user section.

Tarot Reading. The Tarot (78 cards) may be asked simple yes/no question ONLY. More complex divinings are beyond the highest level of thief given here. If you wish to have higher level thieves you might consider complex "Cross & Staff" readings also.

Yes/no questions must be precise and exact. They must relate to the very immediate future (1 day at most) of the present. Every question must be answerable by a yes or a no — there will be no embellishment. (Sibyl level 9 and beyond can tell something from the three cards used in answering yes/no questions but Sibyl level 8 and below can not.) The card replies will be Yes, Probably Yes, Probably No and No. The judge will cast a 12 sided die. He must weigh the most correct answer of those 4 choices with the numbers 1-6. 7-10 must be assigned to the remaining affirmative/negative and 11-12 to the remaining "probably" opposite.

Fighting Women

Fighting Women (warriors) may incorporate the spells of Seduction, Charm Men or Charm Humanoid Monster depending on their level and beauty scores (see spells of seduction, et al). Women's strength scores range from 2-14. Thus some weaponry and types of armor are too difficult for them to wield/bear without undue fatigue. Women are allowed 1000 points of encumbrance plus 50 times Strength rating at no movement loss. Anything over that weight reduces figure to half speed. Maximum load is 1.8 times encumbrance score. Women of ST 10 or lower wield Flail Battle Axes, Morning Stars at -1; Pole Arms, Halberd, Pike and Two Handed Sword at -2. Women of ST 12 or lower wield only the latter group at -1. Plate armor has a 20% greater fatigue rating in women of ST 10 or lower 10% in ST 11 or 12. Chainmail has a 10% greater fatigue factor in women of ST 11 or lower. ALL WOMEN wield a dagger at an additional +1.

MAGIC USERS

There is no limit to the levels to which a female may go in magic. Experience points above 13th level are comparable to male magic users and powers are nearly equal. You may make them equal, in fact, with no problem, beginning with Witch Level 13 = Wizard Level 13.

The spells of female magic users are the same as with male magic users with these additions. ("*") spells are for women only. "+" spells can be used by men or women.)

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Charm Man I*	Charm Man II*	Charm Humanoid Monster I*	Charm Humanoid Monster II*	
Seduction I*	Seduction II*	Seduction III*	Seduction IV*	Seduction V*
Level 6	Level 7	Level 8		
Seduction VI*	Seduction VII*	Seduction VIII*		
Charm Humanoid Monster III*	Magic Mount+	Charm Men III*		
	Mind Meld + Charm Humanoid Monster IV*			
Poison +	Spirit +	Horrid Beauty*		

Seduction I-VIII. This spell may be used on living humanoid unharmed males only by women with the proper beauty score.

Woman's Race	Male's Race				
	Men	Elves	Orcs	Hobbits	Dwarves
Elf	10	11	10	10	10
Woman	11	12	11	12	12
Hobbit	12	14	13	11	12
Orc	15	20	11	14	17
Dwarf	13	15	14	13	11

Women with a lower beauty score than given in the chart can not Seduce the given man of the other race.

For Thieves add 2 to each score. For Fighters add 4 to each score.

Note that Female orc thieves can not seduce an elf nor can a fighter. The spell enchants the victim. He will remove his armor and lay down his weapon(s) (only talismans & Rings will not be laid aside) and attempt an encounter with the lady. While so enchanted he will defend as with no armor-1, will attack at 3 levels lower (use subtractions if he is a level 1, 2 or 3 figure). If weapon characteristics are used (per GREYHAWK) also subtract -5 from his die roll. He is at this lower rate of ability for two full turns if a first level seduction succeeds. On the turn after the seduction spell wears off he may try to escape and retrieve his weapon (but not his armor save for shield or magic helm). Cast a 20 sided die: 1-10 is locked in melee (this is with ANY foe who attacks while charmed unless he drives off/kills the attacker(s)), 11-15 obtain weapon but attack at 1 level below normal for next two turns, 16-20 obtain weapon (and shield/helm) and fight at full ability. Only if unmeled may he don his armor again! He is attackable by ANYONE while under the spell of seduction — range 6" — 1 figure at a time (please!)

Duration of a Seduction spell:

Level of Magic User	Seduction lasts
1 or 2	2 turns
3 or 4	1+ (1-2) turns
5 or 6	1+ (1-3) turns
7 or 8	2+ (1-3) turns
9 or 10	3+ (1-4) turns
11 or 12	3+ (1-6) turns
13 or 14	4+ (1-6) turns
15 or 16	4+ (1-8) turns
17 or 18	5+ (1-8) turns

Saving Throws against seduction. The Saving Throw is based upon **seduction level** (spell # — not level of seductress), **Beauty score**, **Wisdom** of person being seduced, and **type** of figure being seduced.

Sum seduction level and beauty scores.

Subtract the Wisdom of the Target Figure and add that product to a 20 sided die roll.

A Fighter needs a score of 13 or higher to be saved (That is NOT laid — is that being saved???)

A Thief needs a score of 12 or better to be saved
A Paladin needs a score of 10 or better to be saved
A Magic User needs a 9 or better to be saved
A Cleric needs an 8 or higher to stay celibate.

Charm men

Charm men is used versus hirelings and low level fighters. Thieves and Magic Users (it is ineffective on clerics). The men affected are those with 3 or fewer hit dice for Charm Men I, 4 or lower for Charm Men II and 5 or lower for Charm Men III. The Charmed Men will either 1) attack men with more hit dice if those men are within 12" or 2) become catatonic for:

Charm Men I	3+ 1-4 turns	4 + (1-4) affected
Charm Men II	4+ 1-6 turns	6+ (1-6) affected
Charm Men III	5+ 1-8 turns	8 + (1-8) affected

Catatonia occurs if no figure with more hit dice (or unaffected men with fewer hit dice — weakest figures are always affected first) is within

12" of the charmed man (men). The Spell's range is 16". Men so charmed, if and only if hirelings, may be taken over by the Charmer after 2 turns of catatonia. A figure with more Hit Dice (The captain of the Hirelings, their Boss, etc.) may attempt to prevent the Charm through the use of his Charisma. his Charisma score must be equal or greater than the Charmer's Beauty Score. Cast an 8 sided die and add the difference (if any) between Charisma and Beauty scores. A 6 or higher will dispel the Charm. Note: The stronger figure(s) must be with the weaker figures at the time the charm is cast. His Charisma can not break the Charm once it is in effect but the saving throw can prevent the Charmer from taking over the men. If she does not take them over they will stay in a state of catatonia for the full number of turns. Magic Users require a Beauty Score of 11 to Charm Men, Thieves 13 and Fighters a 16.

Charm Humanoid Monster

This spell may be used on the following male monsters: Hobgoblins, Ogres, Trolls, Giants, Mummies, Vampires, Gargoyles, WereWolves (either shape), Werebear (man only), Lizard Men and Centaurs. The Charmer must have a beauty score of 11 or higher for Magic Users and a 13 or higher for Thieves or Fighters.

The effect of the Charm is to prevent battle. The monster will disarm his victim but not try to harm/kill her. If the Charmer tries to use her weapon(s) and does not proffer it she may break the spell and he will try to kill her. The Charmed male monster either 1) Will become catatonic for 1-4 turns only if not attacked by anyone. Any attack may break the spell, 70% of breaking it. 2) Disarm and carry off the woman to his lair. The spell will last indefinitely. If she tries to fight an 8 or higher on a 20 sided die will mean that he'll try to kill her or if a 9+ he will try to grapple her and may harm her (50% chance).

Sum Beauty and Spell level, subtract his level and add to a 20 sided die roll. A 12-16 he will carry her off. 17+ is catatonia. Note: Vampires,



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Gargoyles and Centaurs add 2 points to their level for intelligence/wisdom.

Poison

Any food or water (by choice) may be poisoned from up to 18" away. The poison is deadly inflicting 3 hits/turn and he will become unconscious at once. Purify Food & Water will rid the affected food/water only 40% of the time. Neutralize Poison will succeed only 60% of the time. Cure disease will succeed only 10% of the time. A Detect Magic spell will detect the spell as it is being cast 30% of the time.

Magic Mount

The magic user, through the use of any long thin piece of cloth, may summon a Wind Horse. He holds the cloth aloft and as the air catches it (any draft or air movement is sufficient) a horse will appear. The MU must place the cloth about the horse's neck as a bridle at once or the horse will dispel. The horse fights as 3 Heavy Horse and runs at 1½ times the speed of a light horse. Spell ends when the cloth is removed. Two people may ride the horse at full speed.

Mind Meld

This spell can be used by any two magic users. Only the stronger actually casts the spell the other does nothing (must be within 6" of each other when casting). After 1 full turn the level of the lower ranked MU increases by half the difference in their levels and the stronger MU's level goes up by 1. The MUs must be within 12" of each other at all times while the meld is in effect. To break the spell neither must move or be damaged for two full turns. If either receives damage points (note more melee is not sufficient) there is a 85% chance of insanity of the MU actually damaged and 50% for the other. Duration is for 1-12 weeks (insanity). The Meld may stay in force for from 6 +(1-8) turns and the spell must be broken. Any spell in effect at the time of breaking the meld is also broken.

Spirit

This allows the MU to have a non-corporeal body that can pass into and through solid objects — the MU is visible but he can be seen through. Movement can be lateral only at a rate of 12"/turn. Duration is from 4 + (1-8) turns. The judge will inform the player one turn before

the spell is to run out that it is coming to an end. While in spirit form normal weapons and missiles have no effect. Magic Weapons do only 50% damage. Spells are only 30% effective. Combat is possible with certain other non-corporeal forms; wraiths, specters, elementals of the type in which the MU is moving, and Shadows.

Horrid Beauty

This may be cast by any witches regardless of their beauty score but beauty will affect how the spell will act. Direct sight of the witch within 16" is required to have an effect.

Grotesque witches — beauty score 2-5

Ugly Witches — beauty score 6-9

Ordinary witches — beauty score 10-12

Beautiful witches — 13-16

Gorgeous witches — 17+

Grotesque Witches will scare the victim! Those with 3 or fewer hit dice will be scared to death! 3+1 or more hit dice will flee as from a fear spell with morale lowered by 2 points for 4+(1-6) turns.

Ugly Witches will scare those with 2 or fewer hit dice to death. Others will flee as from a fear spell with morale lowered by 1 point for 2-(1-4) turns. Beautiful Witches will Seduce all with 4 or fewer hit dice as with a 6th level seduction spell, no saving throw. 4+1 hit dice figures may have a saving throw. Gorgeous Witches will seduce all with 5 or fewer hit dice as with a 7th level seduction spell no saving throw. 5+1 may have a saving throw at -1.

Ordinary witches may have either effect on a 50/50 basis. Cast dice for every figure individually. Duration — 6 turns (longer in the case of seduction spells).

CLERICS

Neutral & Lawful clerics are never permitted to use their female charms. Chaotic clerics, however, are allowed the spell of **worship**. For neutral & Lawful clerics rate Charisma instead of beauty.

Spells & Abilities are the same as male clerics.

Worship is a 4th level cleric spell used by chaotic clerics of beauty score 11+. All men will idolize the cleric (within 12") — there is no contact and she has no power over them save to prevent combat and keep them in a trance for from 4+(1-8) turns. Those with 4+1 Hit Dice may have a saving throw as in a 4th level seduction.


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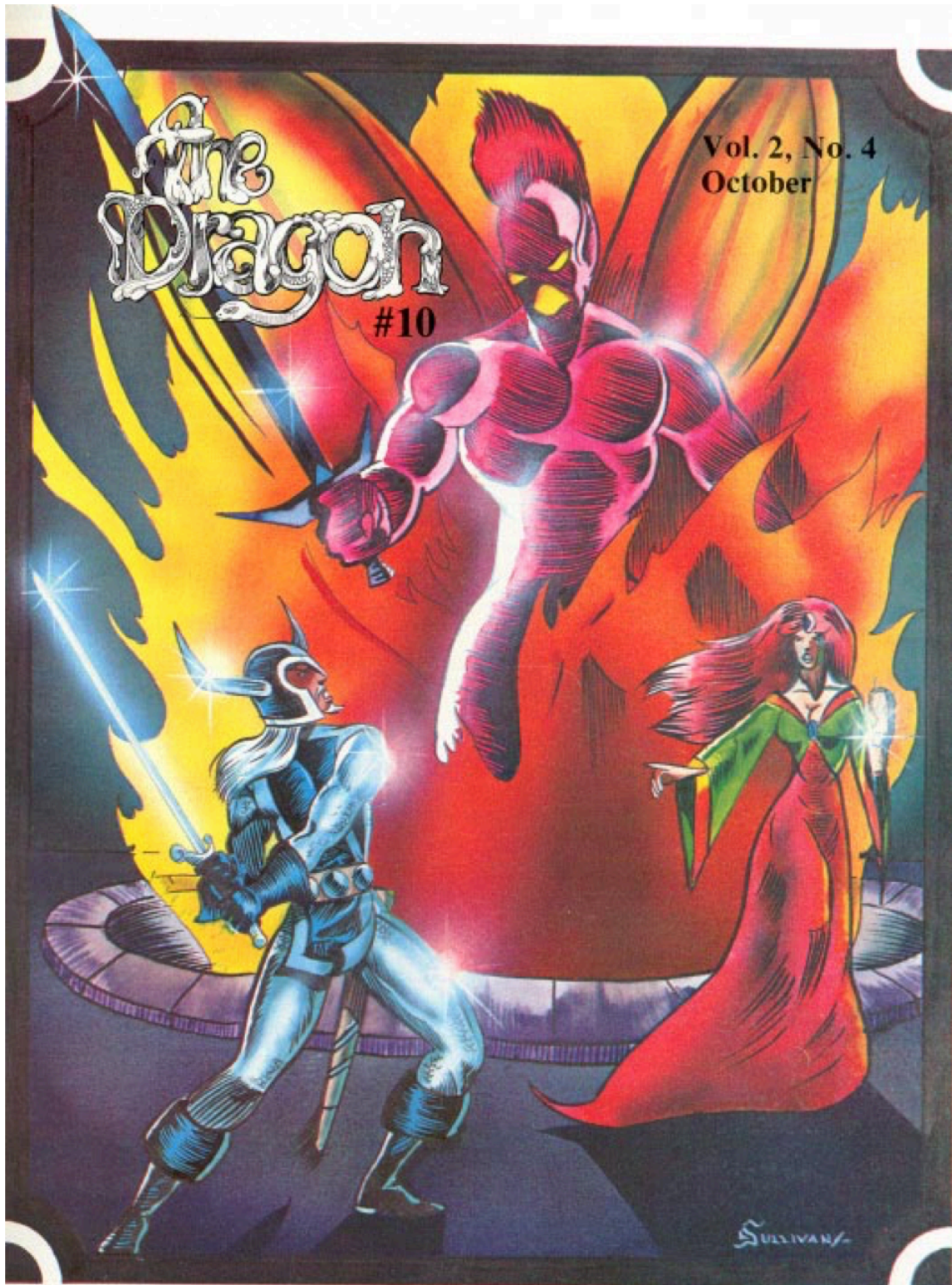
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Crabaugh, P.M. "Weights & Measures, Physical Appearance and Why Males are Stronger than Females; in D&D." *Dragon* 10.



The Dragon 10 – Published October 1977. An example of the magazine's more fantasy oriented cover artwork.

October, 1977

The Dragon

Weights & Measures, Physical Appearance and Why Males are Stronger than Females; in D&D

by P.M. Crabaugh

Nothing too ambitious. In one article, I hope to provide a new way of handling encumbrance, a way of describing the physical appearance of your characters, and — hopefully! — provide an equitable and reasonable method of handling sexual differentiation. Should space allow it, I will also give you working blueprints for a warp drive and a one-page synopsis of the Mind of God. Oh, well.

I'll start off by saying that I borrowed some of this from the Warlock rules printed in the *Spartan*, #9 — the idea of a Size characteristic, at least. But the concept is here heavily modified and made more rational. (I hope.)

Size is an additional characteristic rolled on 3 six-sided dice. In addition, all characters should also roll Build on one six-sided, with a 1 indicating a Light Build, a 2-5 meaning a normal build, and a 6 indicating a heavy build. Build is functional only for human beings, but roll it up for non-humans anyway. (I'll get to that.)

Now that you have your Size and Build, and have presumably chosen the sex of the character, you consult the following tables for your height and weight. Weight is given in pounds; one pound is presumed to equal 10 GP.

HUMANS (male)

Size	Height	Weight (lb)	Weight (mdm)	Weight (hvy)
3	5-1	120	135	145
4	5-2	120	135	150
5	5-3	125	140	155
6	5-4	130	145	155

7	5-5	130	145	160
8	5-6	135	150	165
9	5-7	140	155	170
10	5-8	140	160	175

11	5-9	145	160	180
12	5-10	150	165	185
13	5-11	155	170	190
14	6-0	160	175	195

15	6-1	160	180	200
16	6-2	165	185	205
17	6-3	170	190	210
18	6-4	175	195	215

HUMANS (female)

Size	Height	Weight (lb)	Weight (mdm)	Weight (hvy)
3	4-10	100	110	120
4	4-11	105	115	125
5	5-0	105	115	130
6	5-1	110	120	130

7	5-2	110	125	135
8	5-3	115	125	140
9	5-4	115	130	140
10	5-5	120	130	145

11	5-6	120	135	150
12	5-7	125	140	155
13	5-8	130	145	155
14	5-9	130	145	160

15	5-10	135	150	165
16	5-11	140	155	170
17	6-0	145	160	175
18	6-1	150	165	185

ELVES

HOBBITS

Size	Males		Females		Males	
	Height	Weight	Height	Weight	Height	Weight
3	5-0	105	4-11	95	2-6	35
4	5-1	110	5-0	95	2-7	35
5	5-2	110	5-1	100	2-8	35
6	5-3	115	5-2	100	2-9	40
7	5-4	120	5-3	105	2-10	40
8	5-5	120	5-4	105	2-11	45
9	5-6	125	5-5	110	3-0	45
10	5-7	130	5-6	110	3-1	50
11	5-8	130	5-7	115	3-2	50
12	5-9	135	5-8	120	3-3	55
13	5-10	140	5-9	120	3-4	55
14	5-11	145	5-10	125	3-5	60
15	6-0	150	5-11	130	3-6	60
16	6-1	150	6-0	135	3-7	65
17	6-2	155	6-1	140	3-8	65
18	6-3	160	6-2	145	3-9	70

HOBBITS

Size	Height	Weight	Height	Weight	Height	Weight
3	2-4	30	4-0	85	4-0	80
4	2-5	30	4-1	90	4-1	85
5	2-6	30	4-2	95	4-2	90
6	2-7	35	4-3	100	4-3	95

7	2-8	35	4-4	105	4-4	100
8	2-9	35	4-5	110	4-5	105
9	2-10	40	4-6	115	4-6	110
10	2-11	40	4-7	120	4-7	115

11	3-0	45	4-8	125	4-8	120
12	3-1	45	4-9	130	4-9	125
13	3-2	50	4-10	135	4-10	130
14	3-3	50	4-11	140	4-11	135

15	3-4	55	5-0	145	5-0	140
16	3-5	55	5-1	150	5-1	145
17	3-6	60	5-2	155	5-2	150
18	3-7	60	5-3	160	5-3	155

Bonuses and Penalties: If a character has a Size greater than or equal to 16, he may add 1 hit per die. If it is less than or equal to 5, he may subtract 1 hit per die. It is highly recommended that you calculate armor weight as a fraction of body mass. Specifically, leather armor weighs 15% of the body mass; chain mail 30%; and plate mail 60%. The only other mods are for being female: Females add 2 to their Constitution score and 1 to their Dexterity score.

That and body mass are the only differences between male and female. Before somebody throws a rock, let me explain. As Jacob Bronowski pointed out, as well as, no doubt, many others, there is remarkably little difference between male and female humans (the term is here extended to include the Kindred Races), compared to the rest of the animal kingdom. There is little physiological difference, no psychological difference (Think about it. Consider that human societies have been both matriarchies and patriarchies. Don't let your own experience blind you to history.), and so forth. (For example, we are one of a ridiculously tiny number of species that mate face-to-face, accentuating the lack of difference.) (Most of us, anyway.)

Therefore, rolling female strength with a six-sided plus and eight-sided, or any other method that causes gross differences to occur, must be rejected as incorrect. (Although you are free to include what you want in your own fantasies, as the Kindly Editor has pointed out.) Why have any differences at all? Well . . .

At last count, the Constitution bonus should be there because it happens to be true. The last reports I saw showed that females are more resistant to Disease, are better-suited to endurance events, and so forth, than males — strongly suggesting a higher Constitution. The Dexterity bonus is because I assume that a somewhat lighter build overall, with associated somewhat more slender fingers, would make females more suited to picking locks and such than us thick-fingered clods with facial hair.

Why not have every character female? Because a moment, I'm going to define carrying capacity in terms of body mass, putting females at a disadvantage. It seems to me that there are really two kinds of strength: How well muscled a person is, in the of how developed the musculature is, and physical force, which is largely dependent on the former seems to be to be reflected in Strength characteristic, and females have no penalty there; the latter should be reflected in Carrying Capacity. (I myself am in terrible shape but I weigh more than anyone else I know, and somewhere in that mass there are enough cles, however poorly developed, to cause me the one used as a pack mule by my friends.)

To get on with it, to determine maximum carrying capacity, check your strength against the following table and find your multiple, by race. This multiple is applied against your body weight to get your maximum carrying capacity.

Strength	Human	Elf	Race Dwarf	Hobbit
3	1.0	1.0	1.5	2.0
4	1.2	1.2	1.7	2.2
5	1.3	1.3	1.8	2.3
6	1.4	1.4	1.9	2.4

7	1.6	1.6	2.1	2.6
8	1.7	1.7	2.2	2.7
9	1.8	1.8	2.3	2.8
10	2.0	2.0	2.5	3.0

Strength	Human	Elf	Race Dwarf	Hobbit
11	2.0	2.0	2.5	3.0
12	2.2	2.2	2.7	3.2
13	2.3	2.3	2.8	3.3
14	2.4	2.4	2.9	3.4

15	2.6	2.6	3.1	3.6
16	2.7	2.7	3.2	3.7
17	2.8	2.8	3.3	3.8
18	3.0	3.0	3.5	4.0

After you get through multiplying, you have the maximum amount the character can carry and still stagger along at speed 3. He can carry ½ the maximum and move at speed 6; 1/3 at speed 9; and ¼ at speed 12.

That takes care of the functional distinctions. Now, if you want to get a mental image of your character, start rolling on the following tables. If an image clicks before you reach the end, go ahead and stop rolling — although I suggest that you write down the rest of the categories. This can help your identification with the character in question enormously, I've found. Note that these tables are intended for humans, and work poorly to not at all for non-humans. I'm sorry, but I simply haven't seen enough elves to be aware of the range of physical appearance they have.

The first thing is Build — which you already rolled. This does not only affect body mass, it can affect appearance. A Light Build generally means someone who would be described as "slender". A Heavy Build, well, for a Heavily Built male, think of Conan. For a Heavily Built female, think of Wonder Woman.

The rest is located on these tables:

Eyes (20-sided)		Hair (20-sided)	
Die	Color	Die	Color
1-7	Brown	1-8	Brown
8-13	Blue	9-10	Black
14-17	Green	11-16	Blonde
18-19	Steel-Gray	17	White
20	Golden	18-19	Gray
		20	Red
Hair Length (10-sided)		Skin (20-sided)	
Male	Female	Die	Complexion
1-5	1-2	1-3	Pale
6-9	3-7	4-6	Fair
10	8-10	7-11	Normal
		12-14	Tanned

Gygax, Gary. "View From the Telescope Wondering Which End is Which." *The Dragon* 11.



The Dragon 11 – Published on December 1977. The cover is reproduced here to offer of an example of the fantasy artwork that had interested the community.

December, 1977

Guest Editorial

The Dragon



VIEW FROM THE TELESCOPE WONDERING WHICH END IS WHICH

E. Gary Gygax

It is not uncommon to read tirades in amateur press association magazines and semi-irate letters in the letter columns of "small" journals berating TSR in general and — at times, anyway — me in particular for uncharitable (to phrase it politely) attitudes regarding use of our copyrighted material by others. Shocking! What villains we are to resent infringement on our legal rights by others! After all, all these *Good Fellows* wish to do is to *steal* from us — just a few crumbs or a *small* slice which we wouldn't miss anyway. Pretty nervy, huh? What the hell do we mean by trying to protect our rights and deny some enterprising plagerist a windfall, anyway?! Permit me to move backwards in time a ways, and put the whole affair in perspective.

D&D was designed and developed when Guidon Games was a thriving entity. As Lowry's "Miniatures Rules Editor", I urged him to immediately publish the game, for I viewed it as something really new and different and envisioned it as having great potential — just how great I must admit I did not conceive at that time. Don turned it down. When Guidon ceased active publishing, I mentioned *D&D* to Avalon Hill, but the reception was a trifle chilly. The reaction to fantasy battle reports in such magazines as *WARGAMER'S NEWS LETTER* and *PANZERFAUST* had stirred up a good deal of controversy, and one fellow had gone so far as to say that not only was fantasy gaming "up a creek", but if I had any intelligence whatsoever, I would direct my interest to something fascinating and unique; the Balkan Wars, for example. Nonetheless, I persisted, but the "establishment" was not about to jump into something as different and controversial as fantasy — neither *D&D* nor *DUNGEON* were salable commodities. Having aspirations of forming my own wargaming company anyway, rejection did not daunt me. Tactical Studies Rules was founded, and the second title published by that firm was *D&D*. Don Kaye, Brian Blume, and I staked the whole of our company on this venture, for it took every bit of capital we had to produce the game. We also spent hundreds of hours readying it to print — hours we could not spend gaming, or with our families, or in pursuit of some other form of relaxation and enjoyment. It was long, hard work done late into the night and on weekends. It was nobody else but the three of us who stood this hazard. One thousand copies of the game were printed, and it took some eleven months to sell those first sets of *D&D*. Although this was not exactly a "hot" reception, we were satisfied, for it was a start. Wargamers were not exactly *flocking* to fantasy role playing, but a few came into the fold, and we were "recruiting" players from outside the hobby. The next thousand run sold out in a tad under six months . . .

From then on the events surrounding the growth of *D&D* are pretty well known. We did a supplement to fill the gaps in the initial booklets, and more of them followed due to a very great demand. *D&D* became a very hot property, for the game attracted devoted players. Players were so devoted that they would buy virtually anything with the *D&D* name on it or which might be somehow usable by them to improve their campaign or playing ability. TSR is proud that it did not

take advantage of this tendency in its *D&D* players by sending forth a stream of junk products to attract more money. We have never believed that the sale of shoddy products can be justified by a fat profit. While some of the material we have produced is less than perfect, the overall content has always been as good as we could make it. Thus, more supplements could have been produced, demand was there, but we thought it better to refrain because the content of such works would not improve the game but only tend to confuse an already cluttered system. Mind you that the profitability of additional supplements to *D&D* was never in doubt; all of them we produce make money for TSR; the object was to not do a disservice to *D&D* enthusiasts, foregoing profits was not too much to expect.

Imitation is claimed to be the sincerest form of flattery, and *D&D* has ample reason to be flattered. Foolish imitations are demeaning however, and shoddy ones are worse still in that to the extent that they are associated with the imitated, they lower its character and repute. Similarly, *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* is an entity with excellent repute, and we stringently protect it. This is done from both paternal pride and profit motivation. Not surprisingly, we take the view that the creators and publishers know best how to develop the creation. To this end we have promoted and advertised the game. Two years ago we determined to revise the whole of *D&D* in order to clean up the errors and fill in the holes. The project is a long and complicated one, a task not accomplished overnight. Some players have impatiently demanded immediate release of such material, but we are not about to step into that mess again — *D&D* originally came out as it did because of demands from those who had tested it and fallen in love with the concept. "Basic" *D&D* was the first step, and the release of *ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, MONSTER MANUAL* is the next. I am personally developing the next two volumes, and perhaps they will be ready for release in summer. So while care is being taken, TSR is by no means resting on its laurels. We, too, recognise *D&D* as a true innovation in gaming, a game which added a whole new series of vistas to the hobby. But we are by no means satisfied with what has been accomplished, and work at improvement is constantly being done. This brings me to our detractors once again.

Quite a few individuals and firms have sought to cash in on a good thing by producing material from, or for, *D&D*. Others have parodied the game. For most of these efforts TSR has only contempt. For saying so we are sometimes taken to task quite unjustly, but I suppose that is to be expected from disgruntled persons prevented from making a fast and easy buck from our labors — or from those persons responsible for cheap imitations whose work we rightly label as such. This is not to say that we resent inspirational use of *D&D*. A notable example of such inspiration is *EN GARDE* by Game Designers Workshop. It is an excellent game, and I personally admire the application of role playing which they devised. Likewise, *TRAVELER* is an imaginative game, and if it was inspired by *D&D*, it can be considered an imitation by no

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possible stretch of the imagination. TSR respects GDW as an ethical concern which simply saw the possibilities inherent in role playing and went on to devise unique and interesting games from this concept. In fact, there can be no doubt that *D&D* in particular, and the success of other fantasy and science fiction games from TSR in general, was the prime motivation for many miniatures firms to begin production of figurines in the genre. The appearance of fantasy and science fiction games in the title lists of Avalon Hill and Simulations Publications Inc. can also find its proximate cause in the *D&D* success story as well. TSR is quite willing to face competition. We founded our company with a bit of money, a lot of ideas, and no outside help. Our growth has been because we furnished products which gamers found desirable, not because we got any help from anyone else, and possibly in spite of suppression of what we were doing by actively ignoring all we did. These days TSR is too big to be ignored, *D&D* is too popular to pass by. We feel that competition will only sharpen our collective face, and because of it we will furnish better products which will be more popular still. By no means do we desire suppression of fair and genuine competition!

Are we suppressing competition when we turn down schemes to compile or rehash copyrighted *D&D* material into some form which will be printed and sold by another firm? Not hardly. First, it is *our* material. Second, the proposed works have been of questionable value to players anyway — although their profitability to their publishers is unquestioned. Is it surprising that we do not wish to lend our name, or the *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* name, to “supplemental” books which have little or no merit? Which further confuse and diffuse the methods of playing *D&D*? TSR desires to maintain quality and consistency of play in *D&D*. We know the limits of the game and how best to expand its parameters without sacrificing uniformity from campaign to campaign. Imagination and variety are desirable, but a thousand variant games are anathema. Furthermore, we will not lend our name to accessory products which we do not find to be of high quality. We have spent thousands of dollars advertising the game, thousands of hours have gone into its development, handling, and growth. We are entitled to a just profit from such expense and effort. Recognising the need for certain playing aids and accessories, TSR took steps to license certain firms to produce accessory materials; furnishing art work and careful consultation to *Miniature Figurines Ltd.*, for example, so that what we considered to be the best figures for *D&D* miniatures gaming would be produced. Also, *Judges Guild* products now have TSR approval, for we review all material which bears the *D&D* logo before it is published by them. These products add to the enjoyment of playing the game and are helpful. Products which confuse things, which we do not view as falling within the game system of *D&D*, product offerings which rely upon our copyrighted material to sustain them — or attempt unauthorised use of our trade name for sales appeal — will meet with a jaundiced eye from us. Should it be otherwise?

I cannot resist the analogy of a lion standing over its kill. The vultures scream, and the jackals yap, when the lion drives them off without allowing them to steal bits of the meat. Perhaps a hyena will manage to successfully grab off a mouthful, but that is all. Other lions may also prey upon the same herd and make even bigger kills, but that is the law of the land. Pardon me, please, if you find the picture not to your liking. From my end it seems most *apropos*, for I hear a good deal of screaming and yapping. TSR was the lion which brought down the prey, and we intend to have the benefits derived therefrom. If we share with anyone, it will be on our terms. The hunter which fails to bring down its kill dies itself.

So to restate our position, TSR does not object to honest competition. We will not praise our imitators, but neither will we try to drive them out of business. Frankly, we are too busy running our own affairs to worry overmuch about competitors. TSR co-operates with certain firms in order to produce *D&D* associated products, offerings which add to the game. For this co-operation and for the right to display the *D&D* logo, we receive a small royalty to compensate us for our past and present expenditures in time and money. Under no circumstances will we permit individuals or companies to make unauthorised use of our materials. If changes or additions are in order, we believe that we are more capable than any other of handling the matter. Help in the form of ideas, suggestions, or even actual work such as J. Eric Holmes did for us is always welcome. We desire first and foremost to produce the best possible game for *D&D* enthusiasts, and in this regard we maintain

Cont. on pg 30

Judges Guild

CREATORS OF PLAY AIDS
APPROVED FOR USE WITH

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

WILDERLANDS OF HIGH FANTASY includes five 17x22" Wilderness Campaign Maps of the lands around and beyond the City State. Drawn from issues K, M & N of the Guildmember Sub, also included is 32 pages of description on the villages, castles, ruins and many campaign guidelines. \$8.50.

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FIRST FANTASY CAMPAIGN retells the background and history of the original 'dungeon adventure' campaign by Dave Arneson. The ninety-two page booklet includes campaign notes, the dungeons below Blackmoor Castle and many never before published rules & guidelines (Special Character Interests, Lair Generation in the Wilderness). Also included are Judge's & Players' maps of the Wilderlands of Blackmoor. \$7.98.

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CITY STATE OF THE INVINCIBLE OVERLORD PLAY AID includes a huge, detailed map of the City State and a players' map. Hundreds of NPCs, shops, rumors and guidelines are listed. Also included is Thunderhold, the Dwarven Castle and Sunstone Caverns. Rules include crimes & trials, social level, ads, beggars, poison, witticisms and much more. \$9.00.

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JUDGES GUILD JOURNAL SUBSCRIPTION, the newsletter included in every Guildmember sub below, is available separately for 4.50/next six issues (sent bimonthly). Recently expanded to 16 large (11x17") pages, the journal includes much general fantasy material and news.

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JUDGES GUILD

P.O. Box 773 Dept. N
Decatur, IL 62525

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at Bilbo's house, is a nifty innovation, but fell short of its intentions.

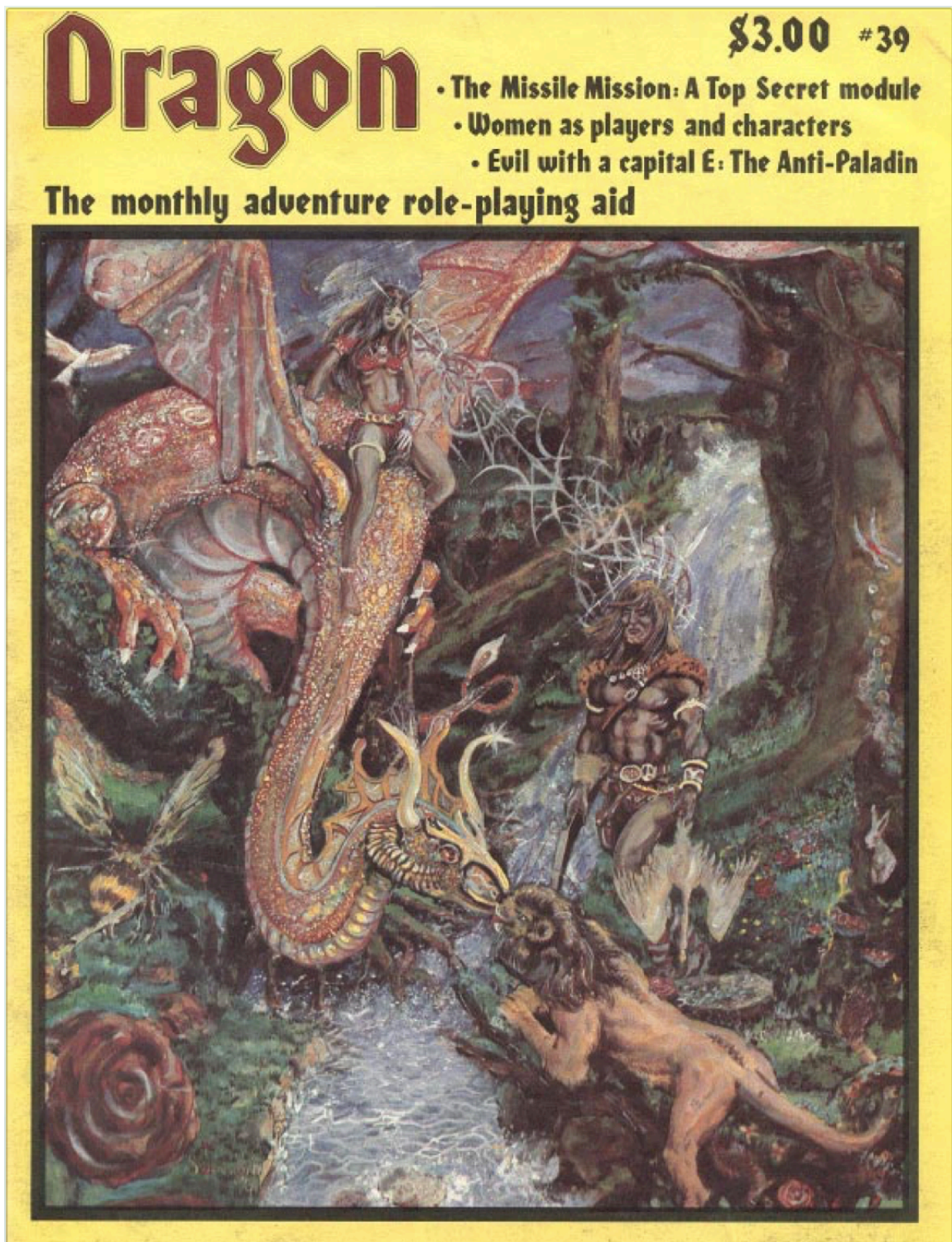
Some serious liberties were taken with the story. Some of these were necessary to get a 90 minute production; some were unforgivable. Beorn is one of the more interesting and mysterious characters, yet the writers excised all traces of him. Gandalf is depicted as calling up the dawn, rather than tricking the trolls into arguing until dawn. Not even the most vociferous of Gandalf's defenders have ever made the claim that he was powerful enough to summon the dawn. Gollum didn't look anything like the former Hobbit that he was. Instead, we had some oversized frog-like creature that seemed to bellow; a far cry from Tolkien's whining, sniffing wretch. The Arkenstone, that fabulous Dwarven treasure around which the entire confrontation between the men of Dale, the Elves, and Thorin's dwarves is resolved was also completely excised, along with all the attendant morality.

In summary, what we got was an inaccurate, poorly developed rehash of one of the finest fantasy novels ever written. Xerox, the sponsor, did not get its money's worth in material. They did, however, get great Neilsons. Pity . . . TJK.

an open mind. On the other hand, as the persons who pioneered the whole fantasy role playing game concept, the designers and developers of *D&D*, the best selling game in its field, we hold to our rights and also believe in our ultimate ability to maintain our premier position with respect to new fantasy and science fiction role playing games. The test of all this, however, will come with the release of *ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, GAMMA WORLD*, and various other projects still some time off as of this writing. The final arbiter of all such matters is the consumer, for if people do not buy, there is no appeal of the decision. Meanwhile, we will continue to be innovative and create our own material and designs. It is not too much to expect that others do the same. The next time someone complains about TSR not allowing them to publish or produce some *D&D* related item, perhaps you should ask that individual why he or she doesn't create their own game instead of trying to steal what is the property of another.



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Dragon 39 – Published in July 1980. Cover artwork representing fantastic representations of gender and sexuality.

The Dragon

Vol. V, No. 1

Jean Wells and Kim Mohan

As other minorities have done throughout history, female players of *D&D*, *AD&D* and other role-playing games are finding it necessary to cope with discrimination and prejudice as they seek the satisfaction and fulfillment they are entitled to receive from playing a role in an adventure game.

Some of the obstacles set in front of women players by the structure of the *D&D* game system itself, as well as those barriers posed by male players with personal prejudices against women, will weaken or disappear with the passage of time. In fact, many aspects which women players have had reason to be upset about in the past have improved. But it is also apparent, from letters sent by women players around the country as contributions to this article, that many instances of unfair and degrading treatment of women players—and their characters—remain to be corrected.

In some circles of players, women are looked upon as “mavericks” when they try to join in the enjoyment of a campaign along with men. Why? Is it because these women enjoy using their imaginations, being creative and expressing themselves through their characters? If so, then male players rightfully deserve to be described in the same way. Role-playing games are rising in popularity all the

perhaps a different approach to, “life” in a fantasy campaign. Women who play female characters must be concerned about their characters becoming pregnant, or about their characters being “used” as sex objects to further the ends of a male-dominated party of adventurers.

One reader, Sharon Anne Fortier, related a story about a female dwarf character of hers that was forced by the males in the party to seduce a small band of dwarves so the party could get the drop on them and kill them.

Another reader wrote of being penalized by her DM because she was a Cleric and had the misfortune (as it turned out) to become pregnant. The DM said that Lawful Good Clerics didn’t do that sort of thing, he forced the character to undergo a change of alignment, and the player eventually had to roll up a new character.

The other side of this coin is that female players do enjoy having their characters flirt with male player characters and NPCs, showing a personality they might be too shy or too afraid to display in real life. One reader pointed out that playing a female character allows her to do things she thinks would be fun, but would never try to do in real life—like wearing a low-cut dress and bending down to brush some dirt off her ankle while watching the reactions of the men around her.

women want equality

and why not?

time, but even so, the total number of players of both sexes is still a very small fraction of the entire population.

Are women “mavericks” because they only comprise roughly 10% of all *D&D* or *AD&D* players? If so, the description is unfair because women have not always been afforded the same opportunities to become exposed to the game. For example, the Original edition of *D&D* stemmed from *Chainmail*, a set of rules for use with fantasy miniatures. *Chainmail* is, by a general definition of the word, a “wargame,” and women have never, as a group, been inclined towards those kinds of activities. Most female gamers (or potential gamers) can well appreciate the skill and enjoyment involved in moving figures around on ‘a tabletop, but do not enjoy doing it themselves.

A related cause for women’s lack of exposure to the game is the fact that, until quite recently, generally the only places *D&D*, *AD&D* and other such games could be found was in hobby shops and specialty stores of that general type. Other merchandise in hobby shops includes model railroading supplies, ship and automobile models, and wargames (as opposed to role-playing adventure games). None of those other products have been traditionally considered attractive to women. It is a safe assumption that, even in this day and age, most women who enter a hobby shop are there to buy something as a gift instead of for their personal use. There is a chance that a woman will see something that interests her personally, such as a *D&D* game or the *AD&D* books—and that’s how many females find out about role-playing. More women are entering the ranks of players and DMs all the time, but *D&D* and *AD&D* remain primarily men’s games, and most women who learn about the games are introduced to role-playing by their male friends.

Just as in real life, women have a different outlook on, and



Some DMs find it difficult or do not choose to moderate these types of encounters. But those who can and do discover that such episodes broaden the scope of their game beyond the level of a “Let’s go kill some monsters” kind of campaign. There is great potential for more than hacking and slashing in *D&D* or *AD&D*; there is the possibility of intrigue, mystery and romance involving both sexes, to the benefit of all characters in a campaign.

Naturally, women players (acting through their characters) will generally want to venture into a dungeon or out into the wilderness on dangerous adventures. But there will be, and should be, times when women want to pursue other particular aspects of their characters’ natures. The game offers many opportunities for players to try their hand at problem-solving without actually being involved in combat against monsters. Many of the female players who contributed information for this article indicated that the men they play with aren’t all that interested in solving problems except by fighting; they get upset when a woman player wants to try to talk to a monster instead of attacking it.

Laura Roslof said that the men she has been involved in gaming with seem to expect females to wait obediently by the door while they (the males) sort through the treasure. She said that wouldn’t be so bad by itself, but then the men usually refuse to provide females with a fair share of the loot.

Judith Goetz seems to be one of the more fortunate female players. She plays with family members and close friends, and said she encounters very few obstacles because of her sex. She also said that when she plays in tournaments, she does run into the “hack and slash” type of player, but most of them are adolescent males. These types of players not only aggravate her, but other, more mature male players as well.

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"Some of the 'downs' of *D&D* for me are in encountering men's collections of fantasy figures whose only females are the naked sirens who serve only as so much booty—and, for that matter, the cartoons run in *The Dragon* that present the same view."

Many women are understandably appalled by the appearance of female miniatures. They range from half-naked (possibly more than half) slave girls in chains or placed across horses or dragons, to women fighters dressed in no more than a bit of chainmail to protect their modesty and perhaps a backpack and a sword. Or, there are female Magic-Users wearing nothing but a smile and a bit of cloth draped over one arm.

The attire of the figures does not reflect the reality of the game. Female fighters wear just as much body protection as their male counterparts. Female Magic-Users wear robes, carry backpacks and have lots of pockets for material components, just like males do. But such figures are few and far between on the shelves of stores.

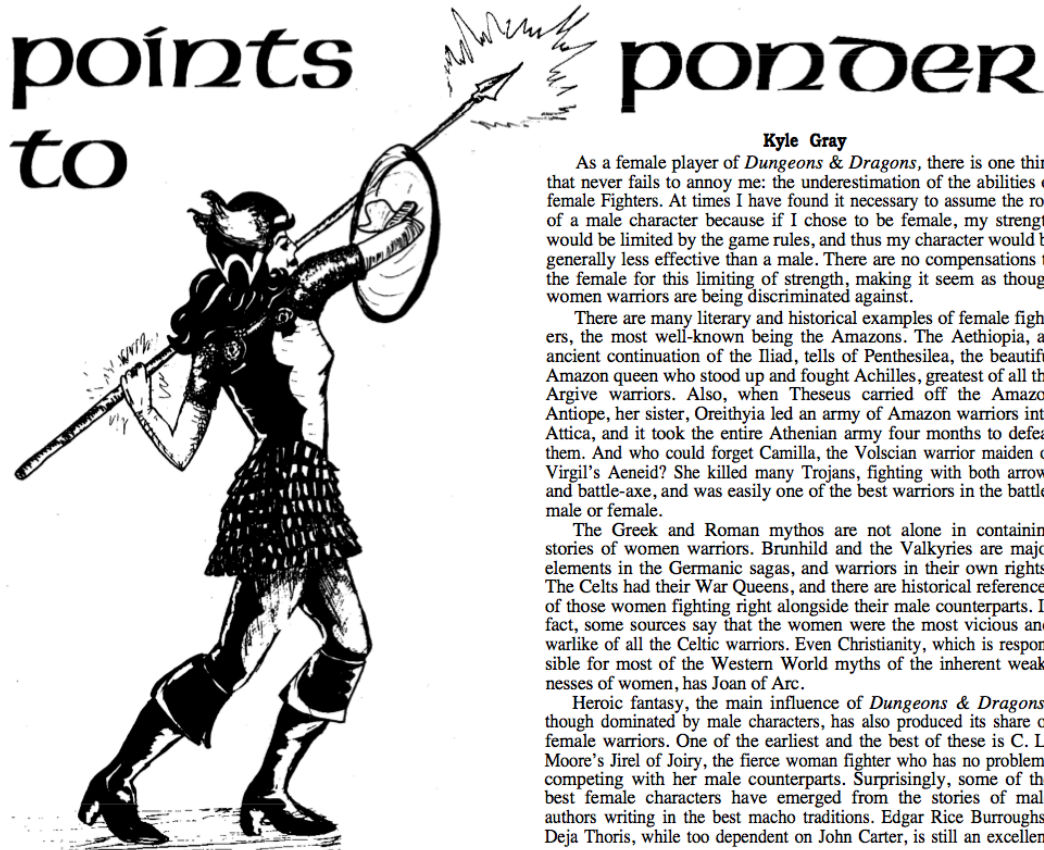
Then there is the *D&D* or *AD&D* game system itself. Another often-heard complaint from women concerns the built-in restrictions on maximum strength for female player characters. It does seem unfair to many women that human female characters cannot have Strength of more than 18/50, when men can attain 18/00. However, the reason for this is based in reality and cannot logically be argued against. Women are, as a group, less muscular than men, and although some women may indeed be stronger than some men (as in real life), the strongest of men will always be more powerful than the strongest of women.

An argument could be made, however, for raising the female Strength maximum to 18/75, for instance, which would make the "discrimination" less severe by at least affording women the chance to attain a +2 Hit Probability to go with the +3 Damage Adjustment that women of exceptional strength receive already for being between 18/01 and 18/50.

Many suggestions have been advanced for compensating women for the Strength limitation by giving them greater potential for high scores in other ability areas (Editor's note: Some of these suggestions are outlined in the article which accompanies this one.).

Until such time as an official rule change is enacted (which is not to suggest that a change is in the works), women players and those men who are concerned about women's welfare will be left to devise their own methods of strengthening female characters, if they think that such strengthening is necessary.

As with any other variant incorporated into a campaign, the only constantly important consideration is game balance. The *D&D* and *AD&D* game systems were designed with playability in mind, and the designers must necessarily sacrifice "realism" at times to achieve the playability and overall balance that the game needs to have, to be of maximum benefit to the greatest number of players. Perhaps changes do need to be made in the game structure, and perhaps they will be—but no change for the sake of one improvement is worth the damage it might cause to other aspects of the game. *D&D* and *AD&D* are *games*, and they're supposed to be *fun*—not just for men or for women, but for *everyone*.



Kyle Gray

As a female player of *Dungeons & Dragons*, there is one thing that never fails to annoy me: the underestimation of the abilities of female fighters. At times I have found it necessary to assume the role of a male character because if I chose to be female, my strength would be limited by the game rules, and thus my character would be generally less effective than a male. There are no compensations to the female for this limiting of strength, making it seem as though women warriors are being discriminated against.

There are many literary and historical examples of female fighters, the most well-known being the Amazons. The Aethiopia, an ancient continuation of the Iliad, tells of Penthesilea, the beautiful Amazon queen who stood up and fought Achilles, greatest of all the Argive warriors. Also, when Theseus carried off the Amazon Antiope, her sister, Oreithyia led an army of Amazon warriors into Attica, and it took the entire Athenian army four months to defeat them. And who could forget Camilla, the Volscian warrior maiden of Virgil's Aeneid? She killed many Trojans, fighting with both arrows and battle-axe, and was easily one of the best warriors in the battle, male or female.

The Greek and Roman myths are not alone in containing stories of women warriors. Brunhild and the Valkyries are major elements in the Germanic sagas, and warriors in their own rights. The Celts had their War Queens, and there are historical references of those women fighting right alongside their male counterparts. In fact, some sources say that the women were the most vicious and warlike of all the Celtic warriors. Even Christianity, which is responsible for most of the Western World myths of the inherent weaknesses of women, has Joan of Arc.

Heroic fantasy, the main influence of *Dungeons & Dragons*, though dominated by male characters, has also produced its share of female warriors. One of the earliest and the best of these is C. L. Moore's Jirel of Joiry, the fierce woman fighter who has no problems competing with her male counterparts. Surprisingly, some of the best female characters have emerged from the stories of male authors writing in the best macho traditions. Edgar Rice Burroughs' Dejah Thoris, while too dependent on John Carter, is still an excellent

Appendix E – Quote taken from *Alarums and Excursions* #5

Excerpt taken from *Alarums and Excursions* #5. Here is Eney's query, and Gygax's response reprinted in full:

There are mutterings of Discontent over your comment anent depriving Gygax of his fair share by Xeroxing *Dungeons and Dragons* and, by extension, *Greyhawk* and *Chainmail*. As I believe that I (hem hem) am unlikely to be tagged as one of the irresponsible hippie types trying to tear down the fabric of our Free Enterprise system, maybe I'd be the right one to state them.

Firstest, let us Define Our Terms. *D&D*, *Greyhawk*, and *Chainmail* are fanzines (and there are a more than a few fanzines with better artwork and proofreading). That is, they are something that is published in connection with Gygax' hobby and for fellow hobbyists; they are not his bread and butter and so we don't have to make a baseline calculation of what brings him in a descent annual salary, as we would with a full-time professional. On the other hand, we do have to do him justice and make sure that a work which has brought us so much pleasure doesn't wind up costing him something out of pocket. All X so far?

Now let's make a cost guesstimate. Volume I is 36 pages and a heavy cover, II is 40 pages and a heavy cover, and III is 36 pages and a heavy cover. Pages are four to a quarto sheet, so there are 28 standard-size sheets and three heavy covers. Let's assume something I don't really believe for a moment: that he hadn't the information to shop around for a price break or quality discount, and paid the prices for commercial insta-print lithography, i.e. got badly ripped off. Nevertheless, even paying premium rates like

that, 1000 sheets of D&D – that is, of all three booklets together – should have cost him about \$733.80. If he printed 2000 at once it would have been nearer \$1268.80 (or \$634.40 per thousand). *Greyhawk*, similarly, should have stood him \$341.20 per thousand; if he got 2000, then \$583.00 total (or \$291.50 per thousand). Any of you can check this with your friendly neighborhood insta-print lithographer, so I won't bother with the calculations here. I did run it past George Scithers, who gets similar-size print runs for AMRA; he gets distinctly better prices for the whole operation including commercial stapling, even though AMRA uses odd-size special order paper, runs half-tones, and is far superior in quality of repro to D&D.

Personally, I paid the full list price for *Dungeons and Dragons* and *Greyhawk* both, just as I did for other stuff like *Warriors of Mars* and intend to do for *War of Wizards* and *Empire of the Petal Throne* and probably more. Presumably many of the rest of us did or would do the same, as a point of honor. But when somebody charges me \$10 for an item that should have cost him less than 75¢, that's a markup of well over a thousand percent (unless I punched the wrong buttons, it comes to 1264% for D&D and 1366% for *Greyhawk*). All in all, I am not about to dump on Xerox fandom on the grounds that Gygax is being screwed every time that green light flashes. (Alarums and Excursions #5, pp.27-28)

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