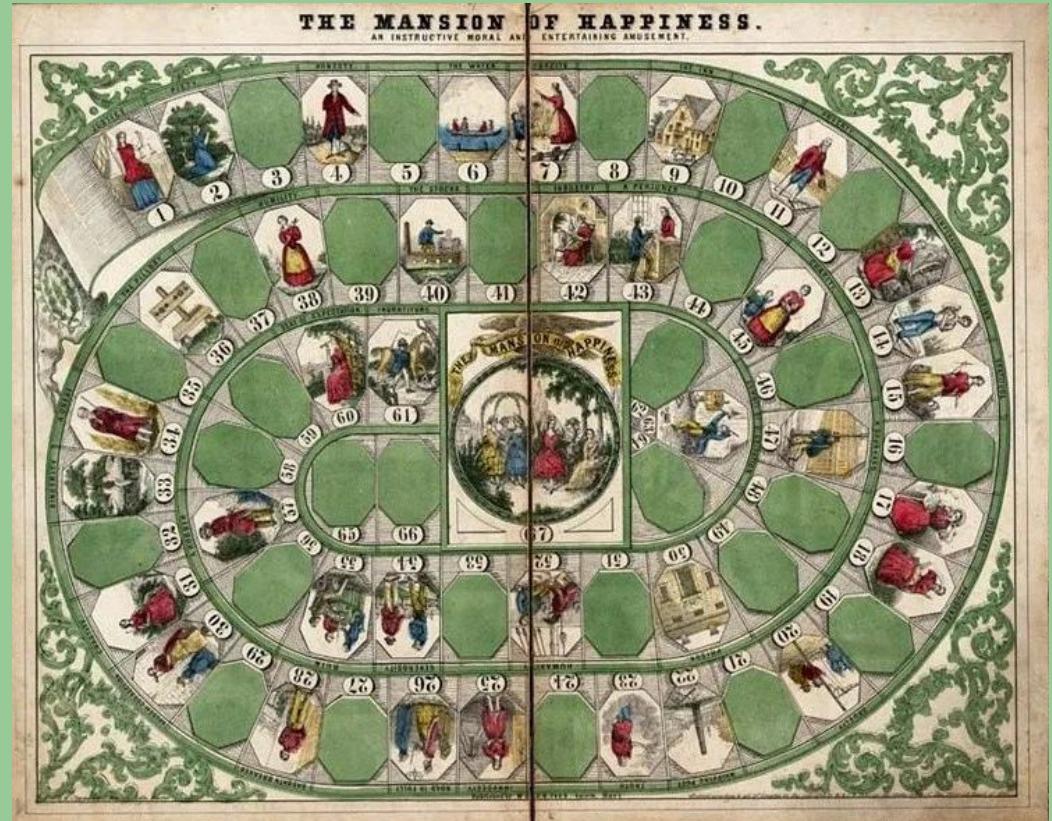
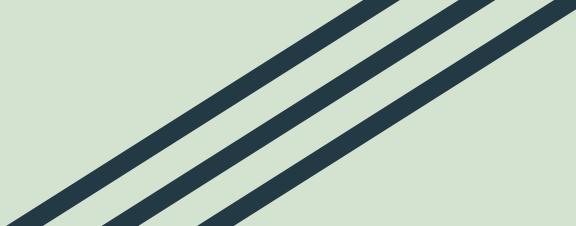


The Historical, Cultural, and Social Significance of Games:

- Early forms of play and games
- Cultural analysis of games
- Representation in games
- Impact of games on social interactions and relationships



The Mansion of Happiness was the very first board game to be produced commercially (i.e., on an industrial basis).



Johann Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: The Play Element in Culture*, 1938

Chapter 2: THE PLAY-CONCEPT AS EXPRESSED IN LANGUAGE

Chapter 3: PLAY AND CONTEST AS CIVILIZING FUNCTIONS



Miguel Sicart, *Play Matters*,
2014

Chapter 2: Playfulness

Play vs. Playfulness; Ludology vs. Narratology

Play, according to Huizinga:

"... play is a voluntary activity or occupation executed within certain fixed limits of time and place, according to rules freely accepted but absolutely binding, having its aim in itself and accompanied by a feeling of tension, joy and the consciousness that it is 'different' from 'ordinary life.' Thus defined, the concept seemed capable of embracing everything we call 'play' in animals, children and grown-ups: games of strength and skill, inventing games, guessing games, games of chance, exhibitions and performances of all kinds. We ventured to call the category 'play' one of the most fundamental in life." (28)



Peter Bruegel the Elder, detail from Children's Games,
Tug-of-War

Play vs. Playfulness; Ludology vs. Narratology

Playfulness, according to Sicart:

"Playfulness is a way of engaging with particular contexts and objects that is similar to play but respects the purposes and goals of that object or context. Colloquially, playfulness can be associated with flirting and seduction: we can be playful during sex, or marriage, or work, though none of those are play. We can be playful with language through satire and puns, and even in the way we engage with our productive labor. However, those activities are most certainly not play; they are flirting, sex, and labor, and thus they have other purposes."

"There is an important distinction to be made here. Playfulness is a physical, psychological, and emotional attitude toward things, people, and situations. It is a way of engaging with the world derived from our capacity to play but lacking some of the characteristics of play. Intuitively, we can feel the difference between play and playfulness. We can also have the vague idea that we can be playful even when playing. Somehow these two concepts are overlapping, but they are not referring to the same thing."

"The main difference between play and playfulness is that play is an activity, while playfulness is an attitude. An activity is a coherent and finite set of actions performed for certain purposes, while an attitude is a stance toward an activity—a psychological, physical, and emotional perspective we take on activities, people, and objects." (21-22)

Play vs. Playfulness vs. Ludology vs. Narratology

Difference between *play* and *playfulness* (Sicart):

“Play is autotelic, an activity with its own purpose. We play for the sake of playing. Since playfulness is an attitude, a projection of characteristics into an activity, it lacks the autotelic nature. Playfulness preserves the purpose of the activity it is applied to: it’s a different means to the same end.” (26)



Zach Gage
#fortune, 2013-2016
Postmasters Gallery



Zach Gage
Best Day Ever, 2009-2016
Postmasters Gallery

Playfulness through appropriation:
Zach Gage's Google screen-scraping experiments (2015-present)

Play vs. Playfulness vs. Ludology vs. Narratology

Difference between *play* and *playfulness* (Sicart):

"Play is autotelic, an activity with its own purpose. We play for the sake of playing. Since playfulness is an attitude, a projection of characteristics into an activity, it lacks the autotelic nature. Playfulness preserves the purpose of the activity it is applied to: it's a different means to the same end." (26)



Zach Gage
i never want to..., 2015/2016
Postmasters Gallery



Zach Gage
why..., 2015/2016
Postmasters Gallery

Playfulness through appropriation:
Zach Gage's Google screen-scraping experiments (2015-present)

Ludic (adj.) and *Ludology* (n.):

Of or pertaining to undirected and spontaneously playful behaviour.

1940-

- 1940** This excess-energy must be expended (without purpose) in some way, most usually in play-activity, called *ludic* activity.

L. E. Hinsie & J. Shatzky, *Psychiatric Dictionary* 323/2 ...

Summary

A borrowing from French.

Etymon: French *ludique*.

< French *ludique*, < Latin *ludēre* to play.

Narratology (n.):

The study of the structure and function of narrative, esp. (in structuralist and post-structuralist theory) as analogous to linguistic structure; the examination and classification of the traditional themes, conventions, and symbols of the narrated story.

1971-

1971 The typological remarks which I have just offered..pertain less to *poetics* than to a discipline which seems to me to have a solid claim to the right of existence, and which could be called **narratology**.

translation of T. Todorov in *Diacritics* vol. 1 44 ...

...

2000 In terms of **narratology**, the author is almost a pioneer of post-modernism in his use of cyclical narrative.

Guardian Weekly (Nexis) 8 November ...

THE MANSION OF HAPPINESS.
AN INSTRUCTIVE MORAL AND ENTERTAINING AMUSEMENT.

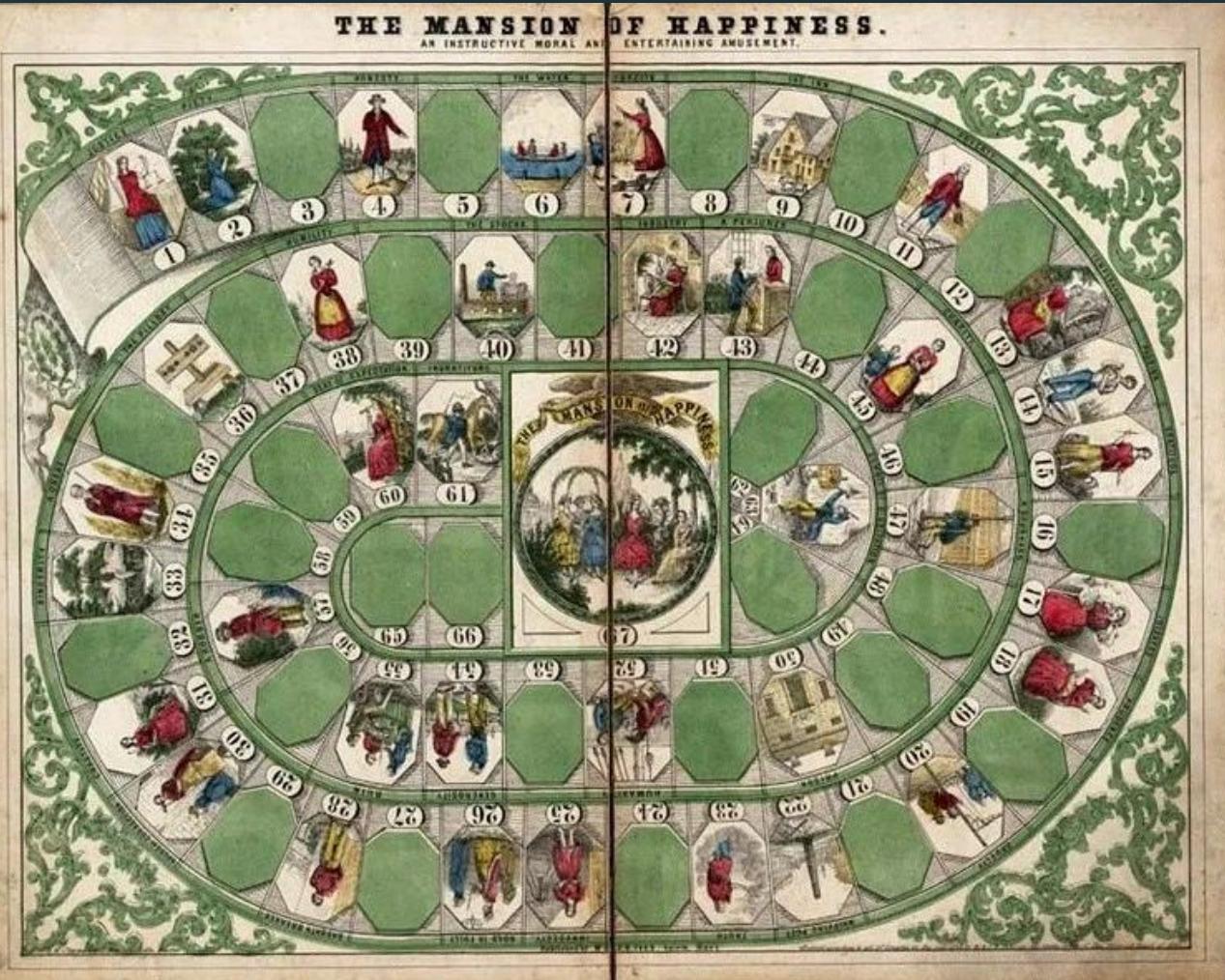


The Mansion of Happiness (ca. 1850)

Narratology emphasis:

Players race about a 67-space spiral track depicting virtues and vices with their goal being the Mansion of Happiness at the track's end. Instructions upon virtue spaces advance players toward the goal while those upon vice spaces force them to retreat.

This game demonstrates how “good children” who vie for the moral way of life succeed, while those who are not lose access to the “Mansion of Happiness” (e.g., Heaven).



The Mansion of Happiness (ca. 1850)

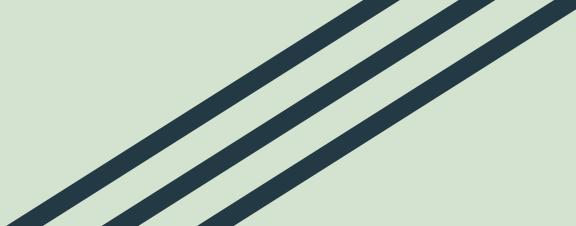
Ludology emphasis:

The mechanics of the game are simple enough that young children can play (and thus be instructed on virtue and vice).

While virtues propel a player forward, the vile acts punish players. More libidinous/vicious acts result in more spaces being deducted.

The “random” spin of the teetotem (a dreidel-like spinner) results in new permutations of play, thus maintaining player interest.



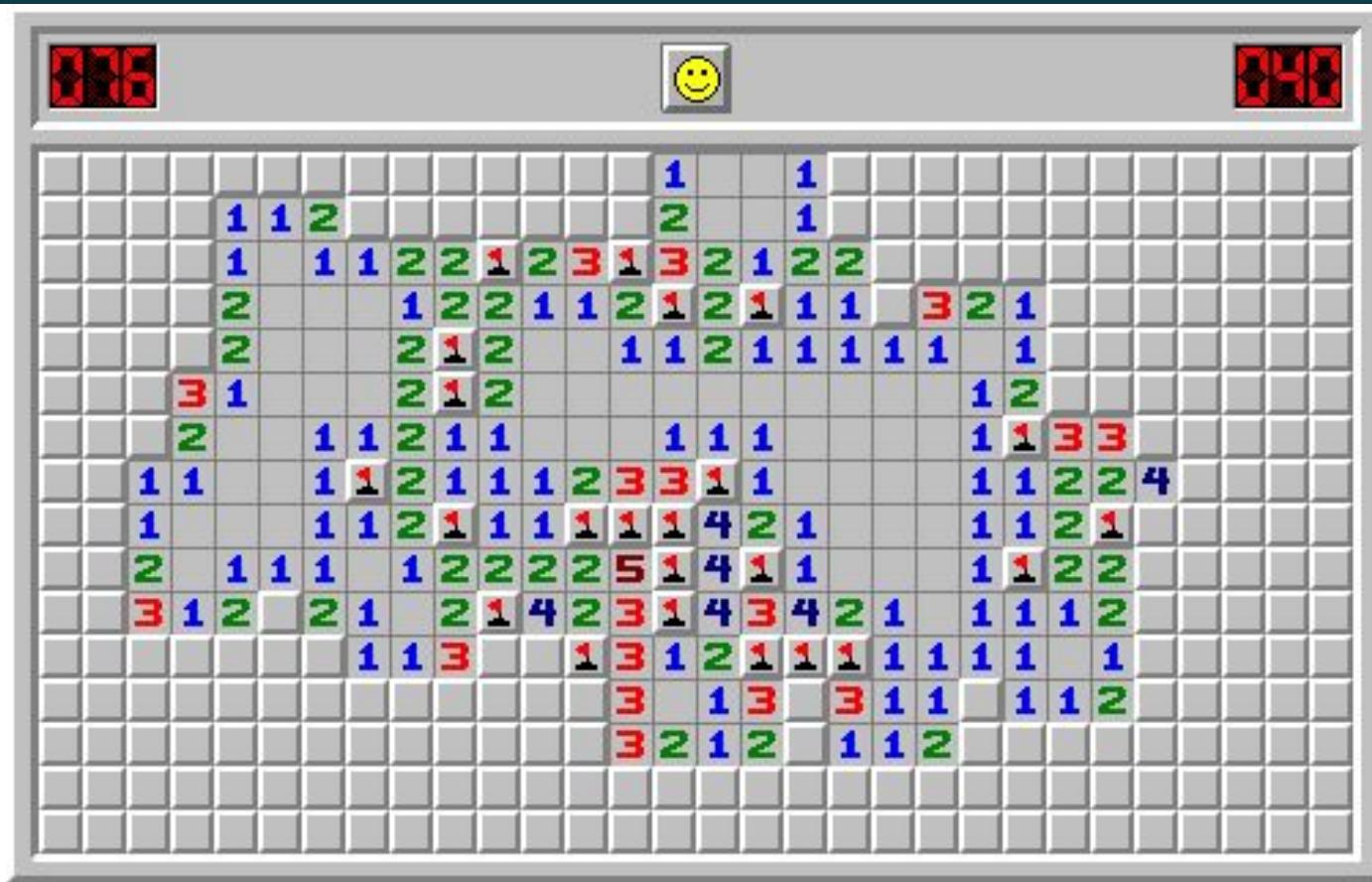


Miguel Sicart, “Play Is,” in
Play Matters, 2014

1. Play is contextual. (6)
 2. Play is carnivalesque. (11)
 3. Play is appropriative. (11)
 4. Play is disruptive. (14)
 5. Play is autotelic. (16)
 6. Play is creative. (17)
 7. Play is personal. (17)
- 



Candyland, board game, designed by Eleanor Abbott in 1948, first published in 1949 by Milton Bradley



Minesweeper, Microsoft, 1990s



<https://youtu.be/QkodnyiZiF0?si=e8XhJZLoYLwyeu2G>

The Historical, Cultural, and Social Significance of Games:

- Early forms of play and games
- Cultural analysis of games
- Representation in games and why it matters
- Impact of games on social interactions and relationships



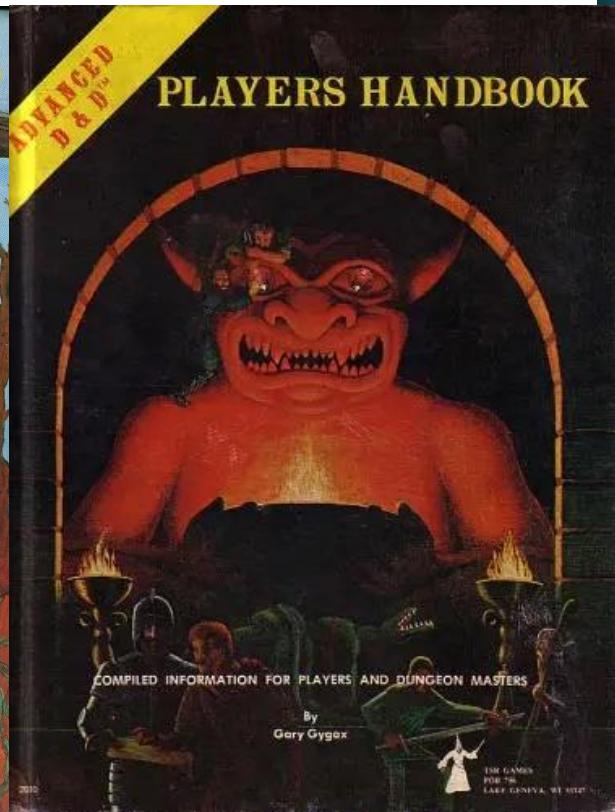
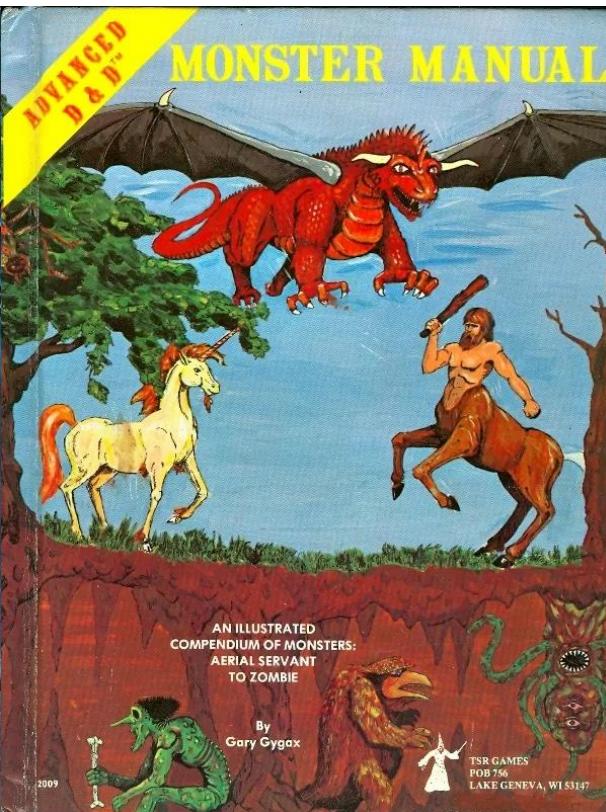
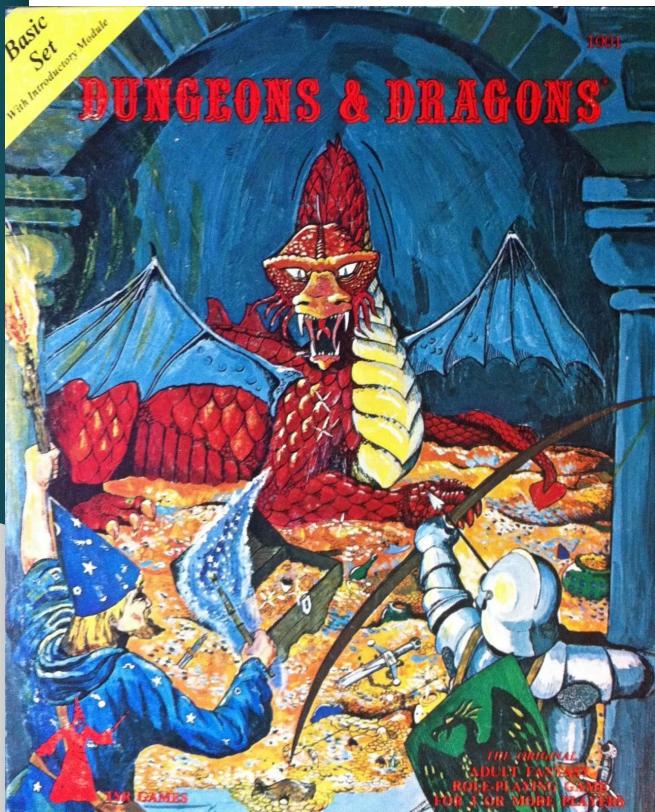
Game History Example: Tabletop Role-Playing Games (or TTRPGs)

- Sometimes called “pen and paper games”
- Often (but not always!) has a Game Master (or GM) that organizes play
- Often uses different randomization methods to create more “unpredictable” play
- Much of play is for the interpretation of the GM, who guides (and is guided by) player action
- Important terms:
- PC (player character) and NPC (non-player character)
- GM (Game Master, often has different names in different game systems)
- Critical (rolling the best or worst, interpreted as “critical fail” or “critical hit/success,” or “crit”)

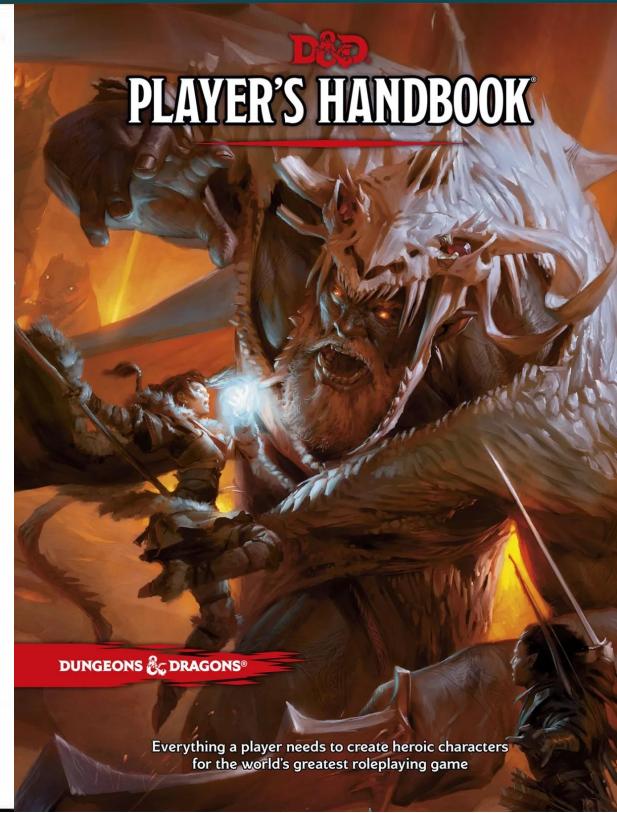
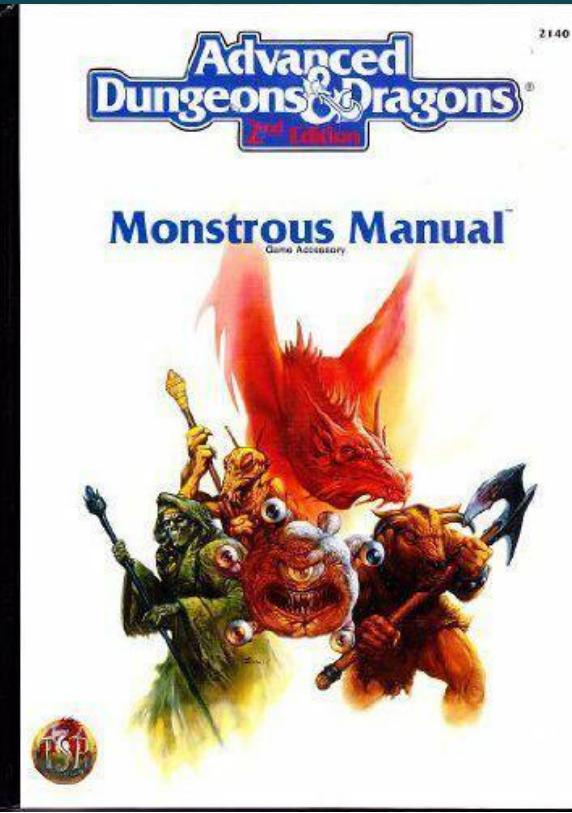
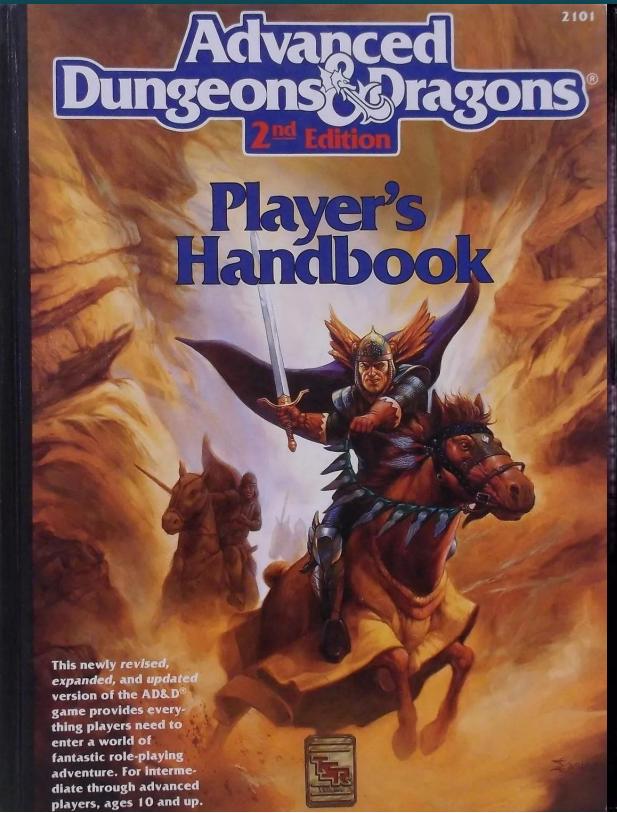




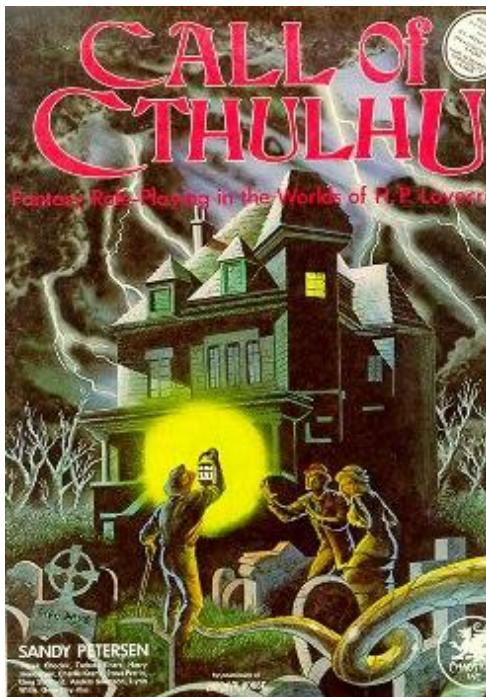
Chaturanga, Kriegspiel, Stratego, war miniatures, “serious gaming,” a U.S. Marine Corps wargame exercise, war reenactors



Early editions of published Dungeons & Dragons (and “Advanced Dungeons & Dragons)

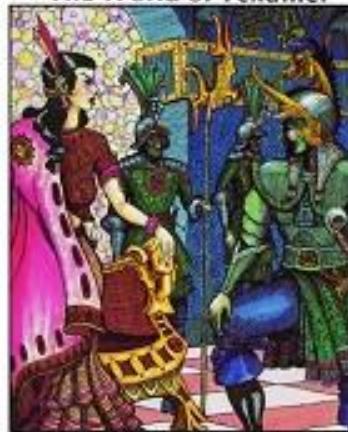


My first entrance into D&D (Advanced Dungeons & Dragons 2nd Edition); the current 5th Edition



Empire of the Petal Throne

The World of Tékumel



This is Free Trader Beowulf,
calling anyone. . .
Mayday, Mayday. . . we are under
attack. . . main drive is gone. . .
turret number one not responding. . .
Mayday. . . losing cabin pressure
fast. . . calling anyone. . . please help. . .
This is Free Trader Beowulf. . .
Mayday. . .

TRAVELLER™

Science-Fiction Adventure
in the Far Future

Game Designers' Workshop

Other influential early TTRPG systems: Empire of the Petal Throne, Call of Cthulhu, Traveller

Critical Analysis: TTRPG Strengths

- Encourages collaborative storytelling and problem solving
- Allows Huizinga's "non-reality" space where it's safe to experiment without judgment
- Often serves as the first space a pre-teen or teenager has prime agency over events, and can show mastery
- Often can serve as a way to develop deep friendships
- Most TTRPGs—D&D included—have non-human characters that allow for a more diverse, less rigid play experience than other traditional games

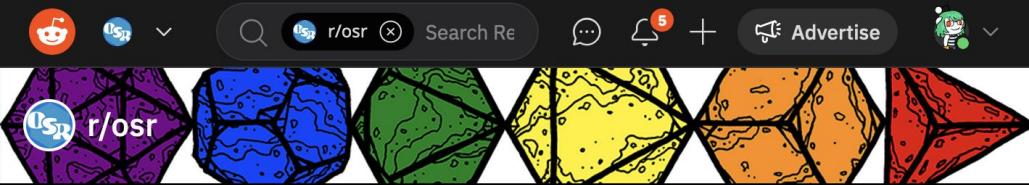


Critical Analysis: TTRPG Weaknesses

- Historical weakness: since D&D is based upon wargames and Tolkeinian folklore (and thus, solely northern european representation), themes of colonialism and racism have historically made TTRPG a predominantly white, male space
 - Often white, male-dominated spaces are the breeding ground for white supremacy recruitment (see: MMORPGs and radical recruitment)
 - Even non-D&D TTRPG systems have dealt with historical racism (see: Call of Cthulhu and its problematic relationship with H.P. Lovecraft)
- 1980s “Satanic Panic”

How can we get rid of these weaknesses, and/or turn them into strengths?





Posts Wiki

Posted by u/NextOutlandishness16 1 year ago

217 M.A.R. Barker, creator of Tékumel and Empire of the Petal Throne, wrote a neo-nazi novel in 1991.

The book was called Serpent's Walk, and was published by the same company that published infamous neo-nazi book The Turner Diaries. This has been known by a few people for a couple of years, or possibly longer. A former archivist for The Tékumel Foundation posted the following in 2020:

"I had had no idea that this book existed until I found the manuscript, the original publishing contract, the photocopy of the payment check, and the proof book in amongst Phil's papers. I secured all this material for the Tékumel Foundation in my capacity as an archivist, at that time under contract with them, and the last I still on their shelves when I did the photo inventory of Phil's collection in the October of 2012 after I did not renew my dollar-a-year contract with them. (I keep the data I collect; I set it in the context I find it, and let others evaluate it. My gut had been when Phil had done things like this in the past, was "Oh, Phil, WHY

The above post can be seen at a Tékumel themed forum here (registration required)

<https://chirinebakal.proboards.com/thread/544/amina-inloes-paper-profanity>

This is really a bummer, and it's ten years almost to the day since he died. It's intention to speak ill of the dead, but I think it's important to acknowledge the fans of Barker's work, or those who appreciate his significance to the hobby.

308 Comments Award Share ...



D&D Must Grapple With the Racism in Fantasy

And getting rid of it will take a lot of work.

"ORCS ARE HUMAN beings who can be slaughtered without conscience or apology." This damning assessment of one of fantasy's most ubiquitous villains comes from N. K. Jemisin, titan of modern fantasy and slayer of outdated genre tropes. As "kinda-sorta-people," she writes, orcs are "fruit of the poison vine that is human fear of 'the Other.'" The only way to respond to their existence is to control them or remove them.

What is an orc? To their creator, J. R. R. Tolkien, they are "squat, broad, flat-nosed, sallow-skinned, with wide mouths and slant eyes: in fact degraded and repulsive versions of the (to Europeans) least lovely Mongol-types." More than half a century after Tolkien wrote that description in a letter, here is how Dungeons & Dragons describes the orc in the latest *Monster Manual*, where all such demi-humans are relegated: "Orcs are savage raiders and pillagers with stooped postures, low foreheads, and piggish faces." Half-orcs, which are

TRENDING



And

Wizards
Gathering



I
NEED
DIVERSE
GAMES.



live on
sept 27th! ↓ ← ↑

FIRE SIDE

chats with artists
who make games

featuring
**Tanya
DePass**



Creative Director – Tanya DePass

Tanya DePass is the founder and Director of **I Need Diverse Games**, a not-for-profit organization based in Chicago, which is dedicated to better diversification of all aspects of gaming. I Need Diverse Games serves the community by supporting marginalized developers attend the Game Developer Conference by participating in the **GDC Scholarship program**, helps assist attendance at other industry events, and is seeking partnership with organizations and initiatives. Tanya is a lifelong Chicagoan who loves everything about gaming, **#INeedDiverseGames** spawn point, and wants to make it better and more inclusive for everyone. She's part of the **Rivals of Waterdeep** live play stream on twitch.tv/rivalsofwaterdeep, a **partnered Twitch variety broadcaster**; and often speaks on issues of diversity, feminism, race, intersectionality & other topics at conventions.



<https://ineeddiversegames.org>
<https://motherlandsrpg.com/>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-YeiDnEl8E&list=PLRiPKv_JavkF4Wir3RofdlXwnm42wzmP4&index=9