The Society for Creative Anachronism: a living history group that reenacts select aspects of medieval life, including jousting and mock warfare.


Isaac Bonewitz, Authentic Thaumaturgy (Austin, TX: Steve Jackson Games, 1998).


Once the basic idea got into the world it quickly mutated into the vast proliferation of [games] that exist today: Ken St. Andre interview conducted via email on October 11, 2020.

“It was a child waiting for the right parents to come along and give birth to it”: Interview with Jennell Jaquays conducted via email on June 29, 2021.

“The time was ripe for it, all the influences were in place”: Interview with James Wallis conducted via email on May 12, 2021.

7 Tunnels & Trolls: The fifth edition box set was standard from 1979 to 2005, an astonishing shelf-life in the industry. It was also edited by Liz Danforth who, as an editor for Flying Buffalo Inc., was one of the earliest women to work prominently in the hobby.


critics believing it would be trampled by a succession of ever-more complex RPGs: Eric Goldberg, “Tunnels & Trolls,” Ares 3 (July 1980): 33-34.

“T&T came from literature and comics and fantasy movies”: Ken St. Andre interview conducted via email on October 11, 2020.

“I began to have feelings that this roleplaying stuff would turn into my life's work”: Ken St. Andre interview conducted via email on October 11, 2020.

“To roleplay a rabbit, you had better think like a rabbit, in a world of a thousand enemies”: Dennis Sustare interview conducted via email on November 10, 2020. Regardless of whether the panicky feel was intentional, Sustare refers to the original combat system as “unwieldy.”

“thinking this might be a reasonable pursuit of intelligent rabbits with their fine noses”: Dennis Sustare interview conducted via email on November 10, 2020.
“a few of them would come to love it”: Dennis Sustare interview conducted via email on November 10, 2020.

with everything in one box or book and no supplemental products: Shannon Appelcline, Designers & Dragons: The ’70s (Silver Springs, MD: Evil Hat Production, 2014), 233.

the overriding belief at TSR in the early days was that players wanted to buy games, not adventures and campaign worlds: TSR’s early disdain for adventures and campaign settings is laid out in the Appelcline’s chapter on Judges Guild (pages 190-211). The foreword to the gods supplement states that TSR considered D&D “finished.” Their early product line also supports this, as they only put out tools for making adventures (geomorphs, hex paper), not actual adventures. Even when they do start making stuff, the empty map philosophy persists into the ’80s.

Go ahead and lose more money was TSR’s response, basically: Shannon Appelcline, Designers & Dragons: The ’70s (Silver Springs, MD: Evil Hat Production, 2014), 190-201.

they had to bring customers out into the parking lot along the Lake Geneva Horticultural Hall to sell copies: Bill Owen, Judges Guild’s Bob & Bill: A Cautionary Tale (self-pub, Createspace, 2014), 41.

Their methods of encouragement include hurled filth, dousing in yellow paint, and the occasional non-lethal thumping with maces: I suspect that one of Bledsaw’s players were so obsessed with plate mail that it drove Bledsaw’s annoyance or amusement, or some mixture of both, to manifest into the game world.

so much so that TSR stopped laughing and demanded royalties in late 1976: Appelcline, Designers and Dragons: The ’70s, 190-211.


While the game was scheduled to come out at that year’s Origins convention, it wasn’t ready: Origins Game Fair is a gaming convention, held annually since 1975. Starting in 1996, it has been based in Columbus, Ohio. Prior to that, moved venues. In 1976 it was held in Baltimore, Maryland.

Starfaring running in The Space Gamer that summer and Metamorphosis Alpha ads appearing in Dragon Magazine that winter: Howard Thompson, ed. The Space Gamer 7 (August/September 1976); Timothy J. Kask (and others), ed. Dragon Magazine 4 (December 1976).

Starfaring didn’t make a big splash: Shannon Appelcline, Designers & Dragons: The ’70s (Silver Springs, MD: Evil Hat Production, 2014), 233.

Is it really science fiction, though?: It is maybe worth noting that fantasy is largely a marketing term coined by editor Lin Carter in the late 60s. Prior to that, much of what we call fantasy and science fiction was lumped together as Science Fantasy.


tended to alienate players who loved the version of the *Imperium* they were already playing in: Appelcline, *Designers and Dragons: The '70s*, 160.

“Reactions among remaining *Traveller* players for The New Era were particularly mixed”: Appelcline, *Designers & Dragons: The '70s*, 176.

by then West End Games' *Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game* was the top-selling science fiction RPG: Appelcline, *Designers & Dragons: The '70s*, 171.


so outside of a few key details, the landscape is left roughly sketched: Appelcline, *Designers & Dragons: The '70s*, 192.


Hargrave finally runs down the rules for playing Phraints: I wouldn’t be surprised if you told me that Phraints directly “inspired” D&D’s Thri-kreen, mantis-like humanoids that would be popularized in the *Dark Sun* (1991) campaign setting. Considering Hargrave’s hard-to-believe claim in *Welcome to Skull Tower* that he killed over 480 player characters in the four years running his campaign, it makes sense that killer kittens were a feature.


Getting the box, with its looming, almost garish dragon, painted by David C. Sutherland III, onto bookstore shelves drove tremendous sales: Appelcline, *Designers & Dragons: The '70s*, 30-31.

it also succeeded in bringing a younger crowd of fresh players: Appelcline, *Designers & Dragons: The '70s*, 30-31.


“This is our last attempt to delineate the absurdity of 40+ level characters. When Odin the All-Father has only (7) 300 hit points, who can take a 44th level Lord seriously?”: Timothy J. Kask, “Foreword,” *Dungeons & Dragons Supplement IV: Gods, Demi-Gods, & Heroes* (Lake Geneva, WI: TSR Games, 1976).
“We received hundreds of letters asking for a planet-based game,” says Ward, “and I delivered Gamma World”: James Ward interview conducted via email on February 17, 2021.

“I was appalled when I saw murder chickens in my game”: James Ward interview conducted via email on February 17, 2021.

Dana Holm, in a review in Space Gamer (September/October, 1978), was fairly baffled, saying RuneQuest was, “a strange dicotomy [sic]—different and good”: Dana Holm, “RuneQuest: A Review,” Space Gamer 19 (September/October 1978), 22-23.


as a test for all the folks who bragged about how awesome their D&D characters were: E. Gary Gygax, “Foreword,” Return to the Tomb of Horrors, Bruce R. Cordell (Renton, WA: Wizards of the Coast, 1998), 3.

Players can’t puzzle through them like Indiana Jones in the Grail temple: Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade is one of very few portrayals of a dungeon-like environment on film.

"asked for the name and address of their [dungeon masters] so as to pass on the news of the sad loss": Gygax, “Foreword,” in Return to the Tomb of Horrors, 3.


Dark Tower: All quotes from in this chapter are from interview with Jennell Jaquays conducted via email on June 29, 2021.

“Final manuscripts were often cut and paste monstrosities of section of type glued or taped to a carrier sheet rather than reorganizing and retyping the entire document”: Jennell Jaquays interview conducted via email on June 29, 2021.

“He told me to edit it, organize it and write a few sections that he hadn’t gotten around to finishing”: Interview with Lawrence Schick conducted via email c. 2014.


Authorial confusion aside, along with *Tunnels & Trolls*, this is one of the earliest examples of a pared down RPG system: Schick confirmed this in conversation on June 20, 2022; the dungeon map for the mini-game is taken directly from the sample dungeon included in the Holmes Basic Set, though redrawn by Greg Irons and populated with a more varied selection of monsters. The dungeon map for the mini-game is taken directly from the sample dungeon included in the Holmes Basic Set, though redrawn by Greg Irons and populated with a more varied selection of monsters.

“I loved the map at the center of the book, I remember staring at it and imagining myself as one of the adventurers trying to navigate it”: ZOG interview conducted via email on January 13, 2021.


The release of *The Fantasy Trip* was eagerly awaited. The buzz can be charted in “A Letter from Gigi,” an industry gossip column running in Chaosium’s *Different Worlds* magazine; Gigi D’Arn, “A Letter from Gigi,” *Different Worlds* (June/July 1979): 31-32.

The following month, Gigi shared speculation that the box set was scaled back to a $20 dollar version (still a hefty sum in 2022 at $78 dollars): Gigi D’Arn, “A Letter from Gigi,” *Different Worlds* (August/September 1979): 38.

his aim had always been to produce uncomplicated, inexpensive games: Appelcline, *Designers & Dragons: The ’70s*, 217.

Thompson and Jackson had already been at odds: Shannon Appelcline, *Designers & Dragons: The ’80s* (Silver Springs, MD: Evil Hat Production, 2014), 27-28.

A look at “Appendix N” of the *Dungeon Masters Guide* reveals there is no shortage of science: *Three Hearts and Three Lions*, by Poul Anderson, the first book on the list, features a main character magically transported from a battle in World War II into a fairytale Europe (not unlike a certain Connecticut Yankee), who then spends much of the novel hypothesizing about the underlying science of seemingly magical effects. Other authors, like Fritz Leiber, spent their careers nonchalantly switching genres with every story, while guys like Michael Moorcock and Roger Zelazny often swapped genres in the middle of a story.

People wanted to know more. Gygax was hesitant to oblige: Appelcline, *Designers & Dragons: The ’70s*, 40. “[…] it was made deliberately vague in many areas so that individual [GMs] could impress their own ideas and personalities upon it”: Lawrence Schick, *Dragon Magazine* 46 (February 1981): 50.

Original *Greyhawk* fans tend to hate this period: see comments on this VintageRPG post: https://www.instagram.com/p/B9p8yarh2BS/.

Long time players have expressed a degree of shock at the betrayal of two mages: The upset is in part because several of those characters were originally player characters: Robilar was Rob Kuntz’s fighter, the first character to survive the *Tomb of Horrors*; Tenser, an anagram of Ernest, was Gygax’s son Ernie’s character; Rary belonged to Brian Blume (who only played him to third level, to get the Magic-User title Medium – Medium Rary. Get it? The corny humor of *Castle Greyhawk* has ancient origins).


SPI’s established audience of wargamers “widely loathed” the game, according to Lawrence Schick in *Heroic Worlds*: Schick, *Heroic Worlds*, 262.

It has been speculated that *Dallas* dealt SPI a mortal blow. Simonsen disputed that, saying whether or not the game killed the company is beside the point; the important fact is that *Dallas* failed to save the company: Redmond Simonsen, “Why Did SPI Die?” *Grognardia: Musings and Memories from a Lifetime of Roleplaying*, August 24, 1988, https://grognard.com/zines/so/so43.txt.

decades later, the idea that he somehow pilfered Lovecraft and Moorcock’s work still chafes Ward: James Ward interview conducted via email on February 17, 2021. “in the spirit of the ’60s/’70s when it seemed to many of us that we were sharing in a common culture”: James Maliszewski, “Michael Moorcock on D&D (and More),” *Grognardia: Musings and Memories from a Lifetime of Roleplaying*, June 18th, 2009, http://grognardia.blogspot.com/2009/06/michael-moorcock-on-d-and-more.html.


The reason why isn’t clear. Shannon Appelcline says in *Designers & Dragons* (2014) that TSR removed the material to head off accusations of Satanism in the wake of the James Dallas Egbert III scandal (see page 122), but that doesn’t jibe for me: Appelcline, *Designers & Dragons: The ’70s*, 256.


“Therefore, they pay money to tout their sophomoric ideas, criticise [sic] those who are able to write and design, and generally make themselves obnoxious”: E. Gary Gygax, “Role-Playing: Realism vs. Game Logic; Spell Points, Vanity Press and Rip Offs,” The Dragon 16 (July 1978): 16.


It has won piles of awards and is regularly cited by virtual tabletop services, like Roll20, as one of the most-played RPGs worldwide: n.a., “The Orr Report Q4 2021,” Roll20, February 28, 2022, https://blog.roll20.net/posts/the-orr-report-q4-2021/.

The game grew out of some tinkering with new powers for Superhero: 2044: Appelcline, Designers & Dragons: The ’80s, 127.

Like Chaosium, Hero Games was also open-minded about licensing and collaboration: Maybe it’s a California thing – both were based in the Bay Area; Chaosium was originally based in Oakland and Hero Games in San Mateo.


The fourth edition, a softcover book featuring an amazing painting by Michael Whelan, compiles the best material from various companion books: this originally used for the cover of the DAW Book’s edition of Moorcock’s novel Stormbringer, 1977, as well as the debut album Frost and Fire, 1981, by metal band Cirith Ungol.

It was originally supposed to be released by Games Workshop under license—GW was distributing and reprinting TSR products for the UK market so successfully that the two companies considered merging: Appelcline, Designers & Dragons: The ’70s, 38.


Taken with that book and the Pavis-centric box sets, Glorantha of the early ’80s was the richest, most detailed campaign setting on the shelves: I can’t help but wonder if there is a bit of joking on Chaosium’s part here, publishing a box set called Borderlands that involves the founding and staffing of a fort on a frontier, that eventually leads to a minor confrontation with the forces of chaos in a cave. Nah, probably a coincidence.

Bill Slavicsek says that in the mid ’80s, FASA Corporation convinced Parker Brothers to give up the hobby games portion of the Star Wars master game license so they could snap it up and develop Star Wars wargames: Bill Slavicsek, Defining a Galaxy: Celebrating 30 Years of Roleplaying in a Galaxy Far, Far Away (Self-Published, 2018): 44.

"[West End Games] made a bid of $100,000. We later learned that TSR had tried to get the license too, but they only bid $70,000": Chris Baker, “How a Tabletop RPG Brought ‘Star Wars’ Back from the Dead,” Rolling Stone, December 21, 2016, https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-news/how-a-tabletop-rpg-brought-star-wars-back-from-the-dead-123926/.

penned by Jackson (not to be confused with the Texan behind The Fantasy Trip and GURPS): In a case of maximum chaos, Steve Jackson the Texan DID write three Fighting Fantasy novels, Demons of the Deep, Robot Commando, and Scorpion Swamp.

the beautiful, doomed Cleric, Aleena: OK, only sort of doomed – information in later material about the Known World seems to indicate that her order raised her from the dead, which was nice of them

was essentially a vehicle to sell miniatures and went unsupported beyond the initial rules: Appelcline, Designers & Dragons: The ’80s, 65.


brand recognition propelled Bond to the top of the heap: Appelcline, Designers & Dragons: The ’80s, 218.

Avalon Hill took their time wading into the pool: Avalon Hill would eventually croak, in 1998, but from a bad case of videogames and pogs, of all things, rather than RPGs.


is often credited as the first aesthetically-driven campaign setting: Appelcline, Designers & Dragons: The ’70s, 94.


predictably, it’s a centaur with bull horns, which is actually a step up from the design of the one that appears in Conan the Barbarian King-Size Annual, July, 1978): Robert E. Howard, Conan the Barbarian: King-Size Annual #4 1978 (Marvel Comic Group, New York, 1978).


the Universal Table grew to allow for more results: TSR also shoved the Universal Table into other games, like Gamma World, page TK, and Star Frontiers, page TK, to the detriment of those games.

Toon was an evolution in roleplaying and it helped us — players, GMs, and especially designers — to see more clearly the essence of roleplaying": David “Zeb” Cook, “Toon,” in Hobby Games: The 100 Best, edited by James Lowder (Green Ronin Publishing, Seattle, WA: 2007): 329.

They assumed, correctly, that these books would appeal to and should be marketed primarily to players of Dungeons & Dragons [...] a significant portion of Middle-earth sourcebook sales continued to come from D&D players and casual readers: Appelcline, Designers & Dragons: The ‘80s, 101

so much so that plenty of online “wikis” list the name of the Witch-king of Angmar as Er-Mûrazôr: see https://the-world-of-arda.fandom.com/wiki/Er-M%C3%BBraz%C3%B4r; https://tolkiengateway.net/wiki/Tar-Ciryatan; https://wiki.mepbm.com/1650/witch-king


already in dire financial straits due to the collapse of the collectible card game bubble, being forced to shelve in-production designs and pulp their existing MERP inventory drove Iron Crown into bankruptcy: Appelcline, Designers & Dragons: The ‘80s, 117.


It turns out that people really like dragons and enjoy buying books about them: Jamie Chambers, “Dragon Lance Bozak Draconian Characters,” Dragon Magazine 315 (January 2004): 43.

making it one of the largest and most popular shared fictional worlds: Joyce G. Saricks, The Reader’s Advisory Guide to Genre Fiction (Chicago, IL: American Library Association, 2001), 49.

now that he seems to be in the public domain: This is not a settled issue. He officially enters the public domain in 2023 (the original story was 1928). Arkham House had, for a time, claimed ownership, but there is a real possibility the copyright lapsed in the early ’40s.


It was TSR’s biggest seller in 1985: Appelcline, Designers & Dragons: The ’70s, 67.


Oriental Adventures was met with praise and high sales from an audience that was predominantly white: Appelcline, Designers & Dragons: The ’70s, 67.

Golden Heroes: Simon Burley and Peter Haines, Golden Heroes (Nottingham, UK: Games Workshop, 1982).


it wound up serving as an important introduction to RPGs for many players: Appelcline, Designers & Dragons: The ’80s, 162.

The agent who brokered that deal: Appelcline, Designers & Dragons: The ’80s, 161.

the massive success of the cartoon and subsequent toy line evaporated the cool factor for teens who had been playing the game: Appelcline, Designers & Dragons: The ’80s, 168.

“without doubt, the nicest RPG ever published”: Schick, Heroic Worlds, 398.


Learning of this situation, TSR, under the leadership of the Blume Brothers, resolved to sue Leiber: Rick Meints interview via Zoom on July 19th, 2022.


that its profits handily funded the company’s other lines: Appelcline, Designers & Dragons: The ’80s, 183.

"And its success led the company to pivot from a boardgame company to an RPG company": Bill Slavicsek interview conducted via email on March 21, 2021.

‘Star Wars? Why’d you take that license? That property is dead.’": Bill Slavicsek interview conducted via email on March 21, 2021.

“... he had to go and make the Second Edition of Advanced Dungeons & Dragons a full-color hardcover book”: Slavicsek, Defining a Galaxy, 55-56.

Del Rey’s Star Wars: Essential Guide (1995-2012) series: And if all of that wasn’t enough to satisfy your desire for thrilling adventures in a galaxy far, far away, there was a mail order offer in the back for a Han Solo commemorative plate!

Lucasfilm gave him a box of West End Games sourcebooks for reference, which he used to great effect: Slavicsek, Defining a Galaxy, 122.

Most of the Star Wars universe, as detailed by West End, is no longer canon: Slavicsek, Defining a Galaxy, 144.

TSR wanted a new, unified game world to serve as its home: Appelcline, Designers & Dragons: The ’70s, 72.

I twisted my existing-for-my-own-fiction-only fantasy world to ‘match’ AD&D when the first Players Handbook came out": Ed Greenwood interview conducted via email on August 29th, 2015.


The isles he described were actually part of a setting he had pitched, called Albion: Shannon Appelcline, "FR2 Moonshae (1e),” Drivethrurpg, n.d., https://www.drivethrurpg.com/product/16803/FR2-Moonshae-1e.

recalls Andrew Whitmore, a regular visitor to Ravens Bluff: Andrew Whitmore interview conducted via email on February 11, 2021.

“It was a really immersive way of playing, the whole Living thing made sense”: Cody Eastlick interview conducted via email on February 11, 2021.

“... run and wrapped in four hours (more like four and a half)”: Dylan Myers interview conducted via email on February 11, 2021.

Those adventures were played by tens of thousands of players worldwide: Interview with Colin Marco conducted via email on February 11, 2021.


one extremely unfortunate promotional video: Watch this at your own peril - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8GPGQoR6f6w.

the folks at West End referred to it as "The Other Roleplaying Game" to differentiate it from Star Wars: Slavicsek, Defining a Galaxy, 118-119.

"There is so much to tell about Rifts that we don't know where to begin": n.a. “Rifts, from Palladium Books,” Dragon Magazine 160 (August 1990): 14.

No wonder creator Kevin Siembieda was keen to distribute the sourcebooks to comic books stores: Appelcline, Designers & Dragons: The '70s, 164-165.

it is no surprise that the game found its initial audience among comic book-reading teenagers who had never previously played RPGs: Appelcline, Designers & Dragons: The '70s, 164-165.

to the point that an advertisement for Trash and Vaudeville wouldn't feel out of place: Trash and Vaudeville is a punk rock and counterculture fashion shop in the East Village.

TSR decided they'd rather not have authors sharing characters: Allen Varney” ProFiles: R.A. Salvatore, Dragon Magazine 252 (October 1998): 120.

The marching orders during the early years of AD&D Second Edition were to avoid controversies: James M. Ward, “The Game Wizards: Angry Mothers from Heck (and what we do about them),” Dragon Magazine 154 (February 1990): 9.

They are both edgy (at least for the young audience TSR was courting at the time): Ward, “The Game Wizards,” 9.


"[...] as I have often noted, a paladin can freely dispatch prisoners of Evil alignment that have surrendered and renounced that alignment in favor of Lawful Good. They are then sent on to their reward before they can backslide": Gary Gygax, “Q&A with Gary Gygax, pt II,” Dragonsfoot Forums, June 22, 2005, https://www.dragonsfoot.org/forums/viewtopic.php?t=11762&start=77.

Coming as it did in 1991, a year after activists brought the 20th anniversary of Earth Day to the international stage with a multi-million-dollar awareness campaign: n.a.


with dice enthusiasts dramatically swearing off the game: Shannon Appelcline, Designers & Dragons: The '90s (Silver Springs, MD: Evil hat Production, 2014), 112.


“Smooth and logical way for the character to grow in experience”: Steffan O’Sullivan, “Net.rpg.freeform: Post 1 of 2,” rec.games.design, November 17, 1992, https://groups.google.com/g/rec.games.design/c/UKm1psxF0yw/m/b3a8vypmwk0J.


“that characters and theme aren’t just something to be pasted on top of some mechanics, and creating a story is as satisfying as playing through a pre-written one”: Interview with James Wallis conducted via email on May 12, 2021.


“people devoted to their completely crazy ideas. I created the drunken barroom equivalent of philosophy class and really tried to take the ideas to the outer edges”: Zeb Cook interview conducted via email on March 16, 2015.


Shannon Appelcline cites Gerald Brom’s cover painting for the Wraith: The Oblivion sourcebook, Necropolis: Atlanta (1994), as providing the immediate inspiration for creator Shane Lacy Hensley: Appelcline, Designers & Dragons: The '90s, 281.

TUO’s most important contribution to the world of horror roleplaying came in the Fall 1992 issue, in the shape of “Convergence”: John Scott Tynes, “Convergence,” The Unspeakable Oath 7 (Fall 1992): 58.


“The rules came in a sudden rush during a shower”: Interview with James Wallis conducted via email on May 12, 2021.

Once you've read *Violence*, you can't look at old-school *D&D* the same way again*: Interview with James Wallis conducted via email on May 12, 2021.

In an op-ed for *Dragon* magazine (February 1990), James M. Ward explained that the makers of *D&D* wanted to avoid the wrath of angry mothers: Ward, “The Game Wizards,” 9.

Avalon Hill disliked the extra hurdle to publication: Appelcline, *Designers & Dragons: The ’80s*, 222.


Monte Cook Games provides a free PDF full of advice called *Consent in Gaming* (2019), and the *TTRPG Safety Toolkit* (2020), compiled by designers Kienna Shaw and Lauren Bryant-Monk, offers further resources: Sean K. Reynolds and Shanna Germain, *Consent in Gaming* (Monte Cook Games, 2019).


players stopped buying the original game, which tanked the company’s earnings: Appelcline, *Designers & Dragons: The ’90s*, 286.

“Westerns are my favorite but they have to decolonize or go to hell, *Dogs in the Vineyard* very much included”: Vincent Baker, @lumpleygames, 2018, “Westerns are my favorite but they have to decolonize or go to hell, Dogs in the Vineyard very much included.” Twitter, September 23, 2018, 6:57 p.m. https://twitter.com/lumpleygames/status/1044012985633640449.


which is a direct attempt to repair perceived mechanical issues with *Call of Cthulhu*: I personally think issue with the handling of clues and investigation are a matter of taste. I don’t jibe well with the ‘Trail mechanics—I tend to think they fix something that didn’t seem broken in the first place.

*Pathfinder* is still one of the most played RPGs according to the virtual tabletop reports: Thomas Weinberger, “What are the most popular TTRPGs in 2021?” *Drama Dice*, April 22, 2021, https://www.dramadice.com/blog/the-most-played-tabletop-rpgs-in-2021/.

It is also, perhaps, impossible to point to something he didn’t account for: Polti didn’t account for (within reason—Polti fails to predict the experimental plotless novels that would appear in the twentieth century, like B. S. Johnson’s *The Unfortunates*, 1969, for instance; arguably, they shouldn’t be included in an analysis of dramatic situations since they don’t have any)

don't account for is perhaps, impossible to point to something he didn’t account for: Polti didn’t account for (within reason—Polti fails to predict the experimental plotless novels that would appear in the twentieth century, like B. S. Johnson’s *The Unfortunates*, 1969, for instance; arguably, they shouldn’t be included in an analysis of dramatic situations since they don’t have any)


The intent was to design something that was easy to learn, first and foremost, so it uses pools of 6-sided dice to check skills, with each six counting as a success: Tomas Härenstam, “Year Zero Engine OGL SRD,” *frank-mitchell.com*, March 14, 2020, https://frank-mitchell.com/rpg/year-zero-engine-ogl/.


This isn’t a nostalgic romp in the way that *Stranger Things* is, although that show is often mentioned in the same breath as *Tales from the Loop*: Jordan Hoffman, “*Tales from the Loop* is Stranger than *Stranger Things*,” *Vanity Fair*, April 1, 2020, https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2020/04/tales-from-the-loop-tv-amazon-interview.

Games like *Mothership*, *World of Dungeons*, *Troika* and *Into the Odd* have almost nothing in common if you just look at the mechanics. But drop someone who enjoys any one of those into a game of the other and they’ll probably have a good time: pandatheist, “New School Revolution,” *The bone Box Chant*, December 21, 2019, https://boneboxchant.wordpress.com/2019/12/21/nsr/.


That might seem like an extreme overreaction, but this exhortation hints at the solid core of silliness buried deep in the game’s unhallowed heart: Burning the book, with all its specialty inks and materials is likely HIGHLY toxic.

“I don't even care about the game at this point, just looking at the book makes me want to set it on fire”: deleted, “Mork Borg has the worst layout I’ve ever seen,” Reddit, 2019, https://www.reddit.com/r/osr/comments/ejtdl8/mork_borg_has_the_worst_layout_ive_ever_seen/.

“That is a very strange question. No.”: James Ward interview conducted via email, February 17, 2021
