

Remember the Good Old Days?: Nostalgia, Retrosapes, and the Dungeon Crawl Classics

Greg Gillespie
Brock University
ggillespie@brocku.ca

Abstract

This paper examines the aesthetic construction of nostalgia in tabletop fantasy adventure games. Specifically, I examine a set of *Dungeons and Dragons* (D&D) adventure modules called the *Dungeon Crawl Classics* (DCCs) published by Goodman Games between 2002-2008. Despite their recent publication and modern rule-set, Goodman Games based the visual style of the DCCs on Tactical Studies Rules (TSR)-era *Dungeons and Dragons* from the late 1970s and the early 1980s. The paper deconstructs the nostalgic retrosapes of the DCCs by drawing attention to the discourse of past and present in their branding, design, and cover art.

Author Keywords

Dungeons and Dragons; Role-Playing Games; Nostalgia; Retrosapes; Aesthetics; Art

Introduction

As you enter the 30x30 foot room, you are overwhelmed by the smell of decay and death. The room feels damp and cold. Your torchlight reveals that the walls, floor, and ceiling are covered with moss and mildew. In the center of the room you see a large pile of garbage dotted with patches of mould. Perhaps this chamber served as a dump for the former inhabitants of the dungeon? Sticking out of the pile you can see all manner of refuse including mud, broken wood, and the glint of something shiny. The slow, solitary trickle of water echoes throughout the room – drip, drip, drip.

This narrative above describes a typical dungeon crawl-style encounter from the *Dungeons and Dragons* (D&D) fantasy Role-Playing Game (RPG). Played with paper, pencils, and polyhedral dice, D&D emerged during the early 1970s from a combination of two seemingly divergent sources: miniature war-games and fantasy fiction (Bowman, 2010; Cover, 2010; Mackay, 2001; Fine, 1983). Through their enthusiasm for these pastimes, the co-creators of D&D, Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson, developed an idea for a new genre of game. Instead of moving miniature Napoleonic armies across the battlefield, players adopted individual fantasy roles such as a warrior, wizard, halfling, elf, or dwarf (Chrulaw, 2005). The characters set out on quests, typically leading to a dungeon crawl where player-controlled adventurers explored a labyrinth-style environment and killed monsters for their treasure. Gygax called the new game *Dungeons and Dragons* and sold the game through Gygax's company Tactical Studies Rules (TSR) (Mona, 2007). Since the publication of the original *Dungeons and Dragons* in 1974, the game has undergone five major revisions - the first two by TSR in 1978 (*Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* or AD&D) and 1989 (*Second Edition AD&D*) and the last three by Wizards of the Coast (WotC), now a division of Hasbro, in 2000 (*Third Edition*), 2003 (*3.5 Edition*) and 2008

(*Fourth Edition*).¹ The release of *Third Edition* D&D, published not long after WotC purchased TSR, sparked a brief renaissance in the game's popularity. Building on this resurgence, Joseph Goodman founded Goodman Games and began publishing a supplementary module series called the *Dungeon Crawl Classics* (DCCs). Rather than publishing the series using AD&D-style rules, the DCCs employed the *Third Edition* D&D rule-set published in 2000, but employed a retro aesthetic reminiscent of AD&D from the early 1980s.

This paper examines the nostalgic retrosapes of the *Dungeon Crawl Classics*. By “retroscape” I refer to the use of historical images, styles, and aesthetics to sell contemporary products as idealized representations of the past (Cruz, 2007; Brown, 1999). Employing perspectives from cultural history and cultural studies, I examine the retrosapes of the DCCs by deconstructing their branding, design, and cover art. In doing so, I draw close attention to the genre and period-inspired aesthetic codes used in their construction. This paper argues that the idealized retrosapes constructed by the DCCs – which were published between 2002-2008, but based on an emergent visual style reminiscent of TSR D&D from decades before – are ultimately confounded by a discourse of past and present. Nonetheless, Goodman Games' publication of over 50 *Dungeon Crawl Classics* and other gaming supplements over this period speaks to the renewed interest in tabletop RPGs and the effectiveness of the DCCs as nostalgia products.

I approach the topic of retrogaming from the position of the “acafan” - as a scholar who identifies as a tabletop gamer. Acafans employ a specific ontological approach to the study of fandom wherein we acknowledge and make explicit our personal relationship to the research.² This approach denies the privileged position of the scholar as the external “impartial” or “objective” observer.³ Instead, the acafan examines fandom from within and attempts to understand gamer subcultures on their own terms. Although some academics express anxiety over the label, ontology, and liminality of the acafan, I view the term as enabling rather than constraining. In my view, the position of the acafan in no way precludes the application of a critical academic approach toward an object of study. Instead, fandom provides acafans with a hybrid perspective similar to a fan-critic. In my specific case, I identified as a D&D gamer decades before I trained as an academic. I have played every edition of D&D since the early 1980s and continue to play in a regular home-game. I have attended gaming conventions like GenCon, participate in online fandom, published tabletop adventures, and in 2011 taught an undergraduate course on the history and culture of role-playing games at my university. My familiarity with D&D subculture, and my critical perspective as a cultural scholar in the humanities tradition, allows me to bring unique insight to this study of RPGs.

Nostalgia

Nostalgia, as an academic concept, has changed over the last thirty years. During the 1980s and the 1990s, scholars positioned nostalgia as a symptom of modernity (Shaw and Chase, 1989; Lowenthal, 1985). Early research suggested that nostalgia was a malaise that gripped obsessed consumers to collect trivial relics in an attempt to reclaim an idealized past. The nostalgic past, from this point of view, represented a counterproductive withdrawal from modern society (Shaw and Chase, 1989; Lowenthal, 1985). The present, in contrast, was too complex and carried little meaning. These responses to modern life, scholars argued, were symptomatic of a postmodern society. This approach positioned nostalgia in opposition to modern life because it over-

emphasized the past and expressed an anti-modern sentiment. However, research in anthropology suggests an alternative approach that encourages both a critical and constructive understanding of the concept. While studying nostalgia in Ireland, Ray Cashman (2006) called the conceptual positioning of nostalgia as “retrograde” or “counterproductive” and “untenable.” In addition to perspectives that draw attention to the use of nostalgia in rank commercialism, Cashman and game studies scholars like Zach Whalen and Laurie Taylor (2008) in *Playing the Past* argue that we need to examine the way communities and subcultures use nostalgia constructively to express their agency, such as to enlighten, liberate, or to come to terms with change. Similarly, I call for a more nuanced approach that notes the contexts of nostalgia and the voices of those involved, while being open to alternative understandings of the concept. In my view, studies must also highlight the multiplicitous, and at times, paradoxical, nature of nostalgia.

Although recent work from anthropology provides some direction, a survey of the secondary literature reveals that no single comprehensive theory or conceptual approach exists to inform the discussion of nostalgia. In attempting to combine both critical and constructive approaches, I begin with an understanding that nostalgia, as a cultural construct, reflects the social, political, cultural, economic, and historical context(s) of its renewal. In my view, students of nostalgia must address the discourse of past and present inherent in their objects of study. By connecting past and present, nostalgia politicizes both spaces. Nostalgia positions the constructed past, or an artifact that symbolizes the constructed past such as the DCCs, as stabilized, idealized, and simplified - but not simple. The use of nostalgia is selective and glosses over the complexities and inequalities of the past. The nostalgic past, to a degree, therefore represents a refuge from the present. The construction of the present is also value-laden and politicized. Retro-gamers construct the present, in this case embodied by the rules and aesthetics of *Third Edition* and *Fourth Edition* WotC D&D, as needlessly complex and unsatisfying. This gives rise to feelings of disappointment and uncertainty with a brand and a game they have played for decades (in some cases almost 40 years). To retro D&D gamers, constant change to the aesthetic and play-style of their game justifies a return to the familiarity and the consistency of the past. The broader the perceived gap between the past and present, the greater the yearning for nostalgia products like the *Dungeon Crawl Classics*.

Dungeon Crawl Classics: Beginnings, Brandings, and Module Titles

Joseph Goodman created Goodman Games and entered the RPG publishing industry following the release of the Open Gaming License (OGL) and the d20 System in 2000. These legal documents allowed for the commercial use of the basic D&D gaming mechanic by third-party publishers to create game supplements to support the D&D brand. Goodman attends gaming conventions in the United States and, for several years, sponsored a popular Open Tournament each year at the GenCon Gaming Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana. Goodman entered into publishing agreements with other small publishers to convert their DCCs into different rule-sets such as *Castles and Crusades* by Troll Lord Games, the reprinting of Judges Guild adventure modules from the 1970s, and with fan-based Black Blade Publishing to convert the DCCs to an AD&D-compatible form.⁴ In 2012, Goodman Games published the *Dungeon Crawl Classics Role-Playing Game* (DCCRPG), a new game system designed to evoke the feel of early swords and sorcery fiction that provided Gygax and Arneson with the initial inspiration for D&D.

The name *Dungeon Crawl Classics* reveals much about these modules as nostalgia products. For decades, gamer subculture used the term “dungeon crawl” to describe a specific style of play. A dungeon crawl is a gaming style that focuses on a group of adventurers set within a labyrinth style environment such as ancient ruins, old mines, or the temples of long-forgotten gods. The adventurers battle monsters that include goblins, orcs, or trolls and ultimately kill the monsters and loot their treasure. A dungeon crawl involves little setup or “plot” and emphasizes the “hack and slash” of combat. Within gaming subculture this style of play is sometimes referred to as “roll-playing,” because it emphasizes the dice rolling that occurs during combat rather than the “role-playing” of acting out an alternative persona in a fantasy setting. Gary Gygax established the dungeon crawl as the primary style of play in the 1970s and early 1980s. Early published dungeon crawl modules, now considered iconic within D&D subculture, include the B Series such as B1 *In Search of the Unknown* (Carr, 1978) and B2 *The Keep on the Borderlands* (Gygax, 1979), the G Series with G1 *Steading of the Hill Giant Chief* (Gygax, 1978), G2 *The Glacial Rift of the Frost Giant Jarl* (Gygax, 1978), and G3 *The Hall of the Fire Giant King* (Gygax, 1978). These adventures, among many others, established the dungeon crawl as foundational to *Dungeons and Dragons* gameplay. In an issue of *Dragon* magazine, the primary periodical for the game, Gygax stated in 2000, “The dungeon crawl is classic and undying” (Gygax, 2000).

By branding their adventure modules with the title *Dungeon Crawl Classics*, Goodman situated the DCCs firmly within the history and culture of the game. The term dungeon crawl carries specific meaning within this subculture, but so too does the label “classic.” A classic is something that encodes a discourse of past, present, and future in a product. On one hand, the *Dungeon Crawl Classics* look backward and lean on the foundations of the genre, during a time when modules were played simply as games. However, a classic also looks forward; a classic endures the test of time. Labeling these products as classic suggests that these adventures should be held with a particular reverence not afforded other games. The name of the module series emphasizes their value as future collectables and as items worth preserving. Something that is classic should be collected and preserved, bagged, boarded, and sealed for posterity, much like a comic book. Labeling these dungeon crawls as classic encourages a sense of nostalgia and helps solidify their cultural value in the subculture of gamers.

Alongside the brand name, Goodman establishes the nostalgic tone and direction of his DCC module series through a unique ethos that appeals to retro gamers and neatly embodies the adventure series. This philosophy is printed on the cover of all the DCC modules and reads:

Remember the good old days, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Those days are back. *Dungeon Crawl Classics* don't waste your time with long-winded speeches, weird campaign settings, or NPCs who aren't meant to be killed. Each adventure is 100% good, solid dungeon crawl, with the monsters you know, the traps you fear, and the secret doors you know are there somewhere.
(www.goodman-games.com)

What exactly is an ethos? An ethos makes a claim and establishes something as sacred. An ethos establishes a belief-system, a body of values and practices - in this case the dungeon crawl style of play made popular in the early history of the game. The DCC ethos also invokes a spirit. This

spirit invites the reader to reminisce about the halcyon days of playing D&D in the early 1980s when the game and its players were young, when commonplace monsters like orcs were new, and before players had lit torches and descended into their first half-sunken crypt. This gaming *zeitgeist*, this spirit of the time, is fundamental to understanding the nostalgic attraction to D&D retrogaming. By prompting us to “remember” the “good old days” and by declaring that “those days are back”, the DCCs connect the spirit of the past with the present and construct a retroscape that encourages a sense of familiarity and shared experience unique to D&D in the early 1980s.

The titles of the DCC modules further the nostalgic tone of the series and draw inspiration from early AD&D adventures published by TSR. The titles of TSR modules leaned on a formulaic set of guidelines. For example, C1 *The Hidden Shrine of Tamoachan* (Johnson and Leason, 1980) or C2 *The Ghost Tower of Inverness* (Hammack, 1980) followed a “The [adjective] [noun] of the [noun]” format similar to fantasy fiction. Simpler variations included “[noun] of the [noun]” such as D3 *Vault of the Drow* (Gygax, 1978) or “[adjective] [noun]” like I7 *Baltron’s Beacon* (Meyers, 1985) or N2 *The Forest Oracle* (Smith, 1984). The titles of the *Dungeon Crawl Classics* emulate TSR’s formulaic style while periodically employing the TSR module lexicon. Although different in focus and content DCC#5 *The Aerie of the Crow God* (Hind, 2004) and DCC#21 *Assault on Stormbringer Castle* (Stiles, 2005) are intended to recall the title of A3 *Assault on the Aerie of the Slave Lords* (Hammack, 1981). Similarly, DCC#7 *Secret of Smuggler’s Cove* (Doyle, 2004) and DCC#49 *The Sinister Secret of Whiterock* (Stroh, 2007) recall U1 *Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh* (Browne and Turnbull, 1981). DCC#15 *Lost Tomb of the Spinx Queen* (Doyle and Crow, 2005) will remind gamers of I5 *Lost Tomb of Martek* (Hickman, 1983). The largest adventure published by Goodman Games, DCC#51 *Castle Whiterock* (Doyle and Pommier, 2007), draws inspiration from Gygax’s first unpublished homegame, the megadungeon *Castle Greyhawk*. These titles, similar to the *Dungeon Crawl Classic* brand name, encourage an approach that connects TSR’s legacy with the DCCs produced in the early 2000s. The use of TSR module vocabulary situates the DCCs firmly within the history of *Dungeons & Dragons* and contributes to the construction of the DCCs as idealized representations of the past.

Retro Design: Maps and Monochromes

Several of the *Dungeon Crawl Classics* employ a TSR-like monochrome aesthetic. Monochrome module covers are a small but crucial aspect of nostalgia construction in the DCCs and include adventures such as *Saga of the Witch Queen* (Stroh, 2007) and Figure 1 *The Golden Auroch/Tower of the Black Pearl* (Hind and Stroh, 2008). When TSR published the first AD&D modules in 1978, printing costs precluded multi-color covers for the young company.⁵ Instead, TSR opted for a monochrome aesthetic (perhaps best described as two-color) that employed black and shades of another color. TSR published 11 monochrome modules between 1978 and 1981 - all written by Gary Gygax - and include G1 *Steading of the Hill Giant Chief* (Gygax, 1978), D1 *Descent into the Depths of the Earth* (Gygax, 1978), and S1 *White Plume Mountain* (Schick, 1979).⁶ The covers were illustrated by TSR art director David Sutherland III, as well as Erol Otus and Dave Trampier, and were critical to the foundation of the early D&D aesthetic. With the rapid growth of D&D, TSR subsequently reprinted these monochrome modules in color.

Goodman's modules are also known for blue dungeon maps printed on the interior cover. TSR used blue maps early in their publishing history and, like the monochrome aesthetic, are central to the 1980s retroscape constructed by the DCCs. Why did TSR use blue for their maps instead of simple black and white? TSR used blue to discourage illegal copying and sharing of their copyrighted material in the late 1970s. Frank Mentzer, an early employee of TSR (1980-1986) and founder of the Role-Playing Game Association (RPGA), wrote:

One point that few recall, however, was the maps. We were having problems with folks illegally copying and sharing. At one point there were probably more photocopies of OD&D than originals. So the maps were done in a specific shade of blue that was problematic for the photocopiers of that time. Electronics advanced. Photocopiers got better, so we dropped that technique (in favor of black and white maps). (www.acaeum.com)

Although TSR created the maps with blue ink specifically to deter illegal copying and sharing of their products, Goodman included blue-colored maps strictly to retroscape the DCC module series. He understood the nostalgic meanings the blue maps invoked and that TSR's early monochrome modules remain highly sought after by collectors. The unique aesthetic of these early modules informed the construction of nostalgia in the DCCs. From the first printing of DCC#1 *The Idylls of the Rat King* the DCC series employed blue maps (Figure 2). Goodman announced excitedly on the Goodman Games forum in 2003, leading to the printing of DCC#1: "I just confirmed with the printer that we can print the maps on the inside covers in that same blue color that the old 80s modules used. And the interior art is all in the style of the 80's greats - - Bill Willingham, Jeff Dee, and Erol Otus." (Goodman, 2003). Goodman understood that nostalgia gamers consider the blue interior maps a key component of their retrogaming experience.

In addition to monochrome modules and blue maps, the specific cover design used by the DCCs emulates an early tetralogy of TSR modules known by gamers as the A Series or "Slaver Series." These modules, generated first for D&D tournament play at conventions in the late 1970s, were rewritten and published for AD&D between 1980-1981.⁷ Due to the scarcity of published adventures in the early history of D&D, gamers fetishized the Slaver Series. The design emphasized bright background colors and evocative cover art. The cover art served as a window of suspended animation and depicted adventurers engaged in intense battles against hobgoblins, ant-men, and mushroom-men, backgrounded with scenes of dungeons and dungeon crawling. Within D&D subculture these adventures are so well known that gamers simply refer to them as A1 or A3 without referencing the title. A yellow cross bar, located in the top left corner, labeled the modules "For [the] Advanced D&D Game". The cross bar, replicated in the DCCs (Figure 1), appears as a seemingly insignificant part of the cover aesthetic. However, the bar became closely associated with early D&D adventures from the 1980s and signifies *Dungeons & Dragons* to gamers.

ALL NEW MODULE FOR
1E FANTASY CAMPAIGNS

Dungeon Crawl Classics The Golden Auroch

by Andrew Hind
AN ADVENTURE FOR LEVEL 1 CHARACTERS



Remember the good old days, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Those days are back. Dungeon Crawl Classics adventures don't waste your time with long-winded speeches, weird campaign settings, or NPCs who aren't meant to be killed. Each adventure is 100% good, solid dungeon crawl, with the monsters you know, the traps you remember, and the secret doors you know are there somewhere.

Evil has always blown upon the hot winds of Sumer, but never has there been a land as oppressive than Ur. For decades the city-state was held prisoner by its mage-queen, Nicrotis, and neighboring lands quivered whenever her armies marched. Central to Nicrotis' power, both at home and afar, was her possession – and mis-use – of a holy statue called the Golden Auroch, which she used to produce water for her armies. In time, the gods took notice and intervened, reducing Ur to dust in a fierce sandstorm. Now, a century later, the city-state of Akkad is in the midst of a drought of unimaginable intensity. The only hope for salvation lies in traveling to the cursed ruins of Ur, braving the Tomb of Nicrotis located below, and returning with the Golden Auroch.

If you enjoy this adventure, look for the rest of the Dungeon Crawl Classics series!



\$10.99
Flip me over!
GMGGC08-2

Figure 1: Hind, A. and Stroh, H. (2008). *The Golden Auroch*. Chicago: Goodman Games



Figure 2: Johnson, L. (2005). *The Volcano Caves*. Chicago: Goodman Games.

Similar to other studies of fandom, nostalgia gamers constantly re-read (and re-play) these adventures and are intimately aware of the fine details of early module design. Retrogamers focus on these details because they provide a form of subcultural capital for collectors. The arrangement and aesthetic, including such intimate details as the look and placement of the logo, indicates the edition and print run of a given module. Goodman explained the degree of exactness in re-creating the aesthetic of the TSR modules. He commented, “I actually got out my old modules and a ruler and measured the exact proportions of the old TSR modules and then I hunted down the original font. It was a very conscious attempt to conjure the good memories of those original modules and what they looked like” (Goodman, 2008). Goodman adopted aspects of this early cover design for the DCC series, including the crossbar, logo, module descriptions, back cover artwork, and product listings, to retroscape the modules and ensure a connection to TSR’s legacy in manner that carried cultural meaning for retrogamers.

Art and the Nostalgic Aesthetic of the Dungeon Crawl Classics

The *Dungeon Crawl Classics* reference iconic AD&D module and rulebook cover art from the early 1980s. The first printing of the AD&D Player’s Handbook published in 1978 featured cover art by Dave Trampier. The cover depicted a large, crossed-legged demon idol statue in the background with a group of rough-looking low fantasy adventurers engaged in numerous activities including looting the gem-eyes of the idol, cleaning weapons, and perusing a map (Gygax, 1978). Although the illustration seems rather mundane, Trampier’s art on the cover of the Player’s Handbook came to epitomize *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* for generations of gamers. This image continues to symbolize D&D today. Wizards of the Coast uses the image in promotions and advertisements for *Fourth Edition Dungeons and Dragons*. The image is also referenced in fan-made publications and a version has been recreated in 28mm scale by Otherworld Miniatures, a company that produces retro metal miniatures (www.otherworldminiatures.co.uk). Trampier’s iconic demon idol imagery from the late 1970s provided inspiration for two DCC module covers. Instead of a demon idol, Figure 3, DCC#27 *Revenge of the Rat King* (Stroh, 2006), depicts a large rat-idol with numerous adventurers engaged in looting and prying the gems from the statue’s eye-sockets. The homage in the DCC module cover is an overt attempt to construct an idealized retroscape for nostalgia gamers by referencing Trampier’s famous cover illustration from the 1970s.

Alongside homage cover art, Goodman sought out iconic TSR illustrators from the 1970s and 1980s, in some cases long-removed from RPG industry, to contribute to the *Dungeon Crawl Classics*. Erol Otus, alongside David Sutherland III, David Trampier, Jeff Dee, Bill Willingham, and Darlene Pekul, are considered among the first generation of D&D artists. Otus’ body of work, in particular, epitomizes the D&D game from the late 1970s and early 1980s. Many retrogamers began playing D&D with Otus’ ubiquitous drawings as a backdrop. Seminal TSR box sets, manuals, and pre-packaged adventures incorporated Otus’ psychedelic palette and equally colorful adventurers such as D3 *Vault of the Drow* (Gygax, 1978), S3 *Expedition to the Barrier Peaks* (Gygax, 1980), A4 *In the Dungeons of the Slave Lords* (Schick, 1981), and I1 *Dwellers of the Forbidden City* (Cook, 1981). Otus’ artwork graced the front cover of the 1981 Basic D&D Boxed Set - one of the most popular and financially successful introductory sets in the history of the game. Otus emphasized the weird, strange, and the bizarre in fantasy art. He highlighted the frighteningly monstrous and otherworldly and this gives his work a hallucinatory and

phantasmagorical quality. His art appeared as a window into a fantastical fever-dream. Gamers consider Otus' style unique as his art highlights the otherworldly alongside self-reflexive humour understood by retrogamers. For example, Otus was one of few early TSR artists to portray left-handed adventurers. He depicted weak thin-armed adventurers with fantastic helmets and headgear, and routinely portrayed adventurers surrounded with at least one being slain or eaten by monster. His adventurers wore eccentric armor that served more of an ornamental than functional purpose. Otus depicted ordinary people in extraordinary situations, and, in doing so, invited gamers to see themselves in his art. Locked in a life and death struggle with bizarre alien-like monsters, his absurdly dressed adventurers highlighted the dark humor of old-school D&D.

Otus alone contributed over twelve cover illustrations for the DCC Series. They include DCC#3 *The Mysterious Tower* (Goodman, 2003) shown in *Figure 4*. This cover depicts a strange blue ghost elevated above several fleeing adventurers. Their bug-eyed visage communicates the terror and the sheer panic they feel in the face of the ghostly apparition. *Figure 5*, DCC#4 *Bloody Jack's Gold* (Crow, 2004) depicts two adventures climbing a wall being attacked from below by an unseen tentacle monster. Meanwhile, a giant spider waits to surprise the unwitting duo from above. *Figure 6*, DCC#25 *The Dread Crypt of Srihoz* (Simmons, 2006) portrays the aboleth, a weird Lovecraftian aberration. The Aboleth occupies the majority of the visual space and appears in control of an engagement with several adventurers. DCC#50 *Vault of the Iron Overlord* (Cook, 2007), shown in *Figure 7*, portrays an Iron Golem, an iconic early D&D monster. Here again the golem appears in control of an engagement with four hapless adventurers. DCC#13 *Crypt of the Devil Lich* (Doyle et al., 2004). *Figure 8* illustrates a female Lich, a powerful, undead magic-user, disintegrating three adventurers with a spell that symbolically emanates from her vagina.

In addition to Otus, Goodman recruited former TSR artists Jim Roslof, Jim Holloway, and Jeff Dee to contribute material to the DCC series. To gamers the highly stylized work of these artists embodies the old school dungeon crawl experience from the early 1980s. Their combined work on early boxed sets, hardback books like the Player's Handbook, Dungeon Master's Guide, and Monster Manual, as well as the iconic first series of modules, provided a foundational aesthetic for D&D and the fantasy role-playing genre. Roslof, the Art Director at TSR in the early 1980s, contributed cover art for TSR modules such as B2 *Keep on the Borderlands* (Carr, 1981), A2 *Secret of the Slavers Stockade* (Johnson and Moldvay, 1981), C2 *Ghost Tower of Inverness* (Hammack, 1980), among others. His DCC credits include DCC#28 *Into the Wilds* (Stroh, 2006) (*Figure 9*), DCC#43 *Curse of the Barrens* (Oppedisano, 2007). Dee provided the cover art for original D&D modules like S1 *Tomb of Horrors* (Gygax, 1978), S2 *White Plume Mountain* (Schick, 1979), and A1 *Slave Pits of the Undercity* (Cook, 1980), and the DCC series with DCC#19 *The Volcano Caves* (Johnson, 2005), DCC#24 *Legend of the Ripper* (Hind, 2005), DCC#36 *Talons of the Horned King* (Ferguson, 2006) shown in *Figure 10*, as well as DCC#44 *Dreaming Caverns of the Duergar* (Ferguson, 2007). Holloway, shortly after these artists, created the covers for TSR modules like EX1 *Dungeonland* (Gygax, 1983), EX2 *The Land Beyond the Magic Mirror* (Gygax, 1983), and the Desert of Desolation trilogy including I3 *Pharaoh* (Tracy and Laura Hickman, 1983), I4 *Oasis of the White Palm* (Meyers and Hickman, 1983), and I5 *The Lost Tomb of Martek* (Hickman, 1983). His DCC credits include DCC#1 *Idylls of the Rat King* (Third Printing) (Quinn, 2003), DCC#2 *Lost Vault*



Figure 3: Stroh, H. (2006). DCC#27 *Revenge of the Rat King*. Chicago: Goodman Games.



Figure 4: Goodman, Joseph. (2003). DCC#3 *The Mysterious Tower*. Chicago: Goodman Games.



Figure 5: Crow, J. (2004). DCC#4 *Bloody Jack's Gold*. Chicago: Goodman Games.



Figure 6: Simmons, J. (2006). DCC#25 *The Dread Crypt of Srihoz*. Chicago: Goodman Games.

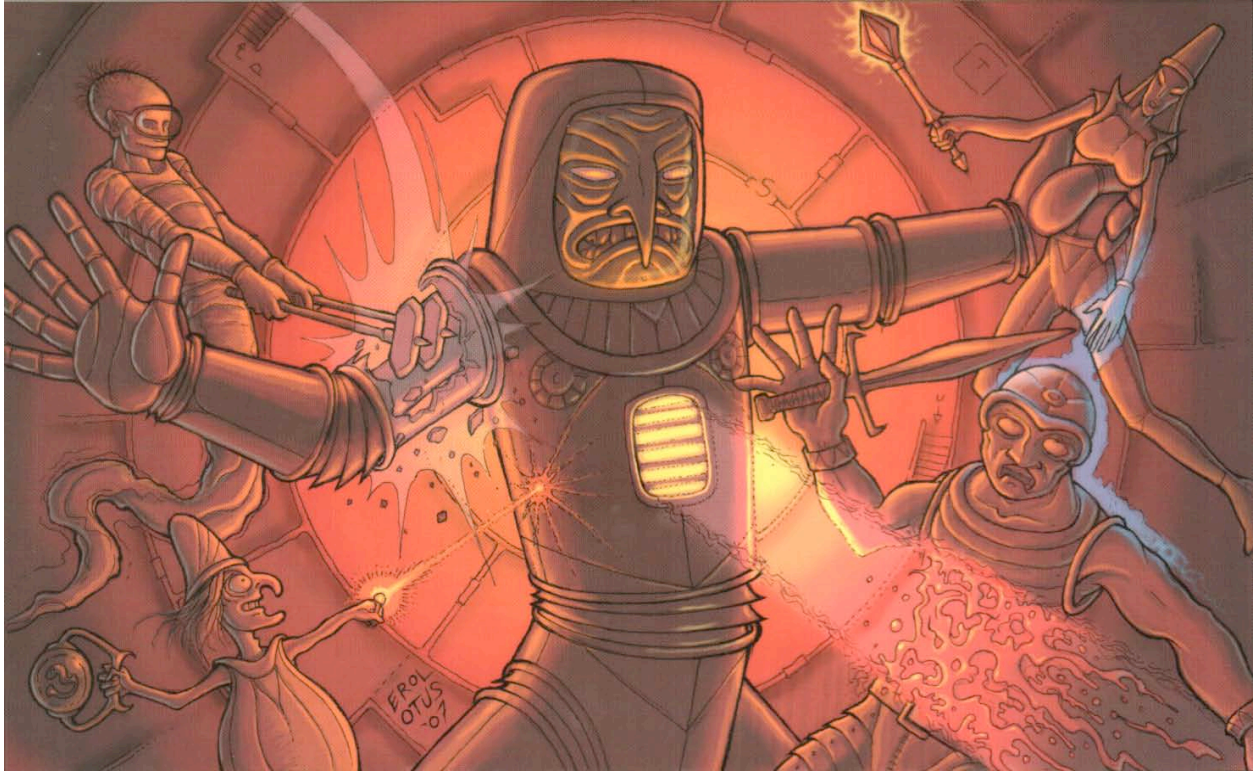


Figure 7: Cook, M. (2007). DCC#50 *Vault of the Iron Overlord*. Chicago: Goodman Games.



Figure 8: Doyle, C., et al. DCC#13 *Crypt of the Devil Lich*. Chicago: Goodman Games.



Figure 9: Stroh, H. (2006). DCC #28 *Into the Wilds*. Chicago: Goodman Games.

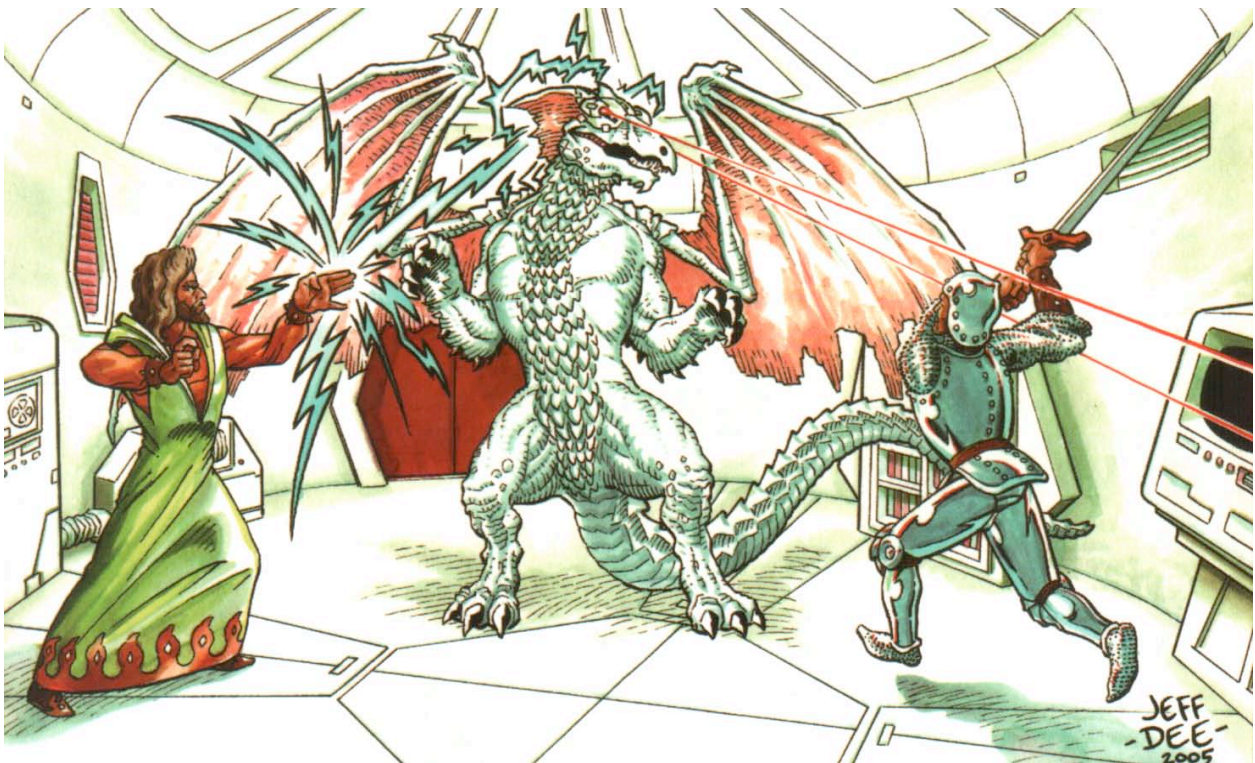


Figure 10: Ferguson, M. (2006). DCC #36 *Talons of the Horned King*. Chicago: Goodman Games.



Figure 11: Stiles, C. (2004). DCC#21 Assault on Stormbringer Castle. Chicago: Goodman Games.



Figure 12: Hind, A. (2004). Aerie of the Crow God. Chicago: Goodman Games.



Figure 13: Stroh, H. (2006). DCC#35A *Halls of the Minotaur*. Chicago: Goodman Games.



Figure 14: Oppedisano, G. (2006). DCC#32 *The Golden Palace of Zahadran*. Chicago: Goodman Games.

of *Tsathzar Rho* (Second Printing) (Mearls, 2003), and the back cover of DCC#21 *Assault on Stormbringer Castle* (Stiles, 2005) shown in *Figure 11*. In addition to front and back cover art, these artists provided interior black and white line art illustrations for the DCCs. The work of artists like Otus, Roslof, Dee, and Holloway is well-known with D&D subculture, and, in some cases, gamers and collectors have bought DCC modules strictly for the art. Goodman stated, “I think the art definitely does matter, and, over time, there has definitely appeared a group of interested people who collect them for the art.” The inclusion of the original *Dungeons and Dragons* illustrators from the late 1970s adds an immediate legitimacy and authority of the module series as classic dungeon crawls.

As gamers themselves, these iconic artists illustrate examples of early D&D gameplay. Rather than depicting confident, muscle-bound heroes destroying evil monsters, they portrayed monsters overpowering and outwitting adventurers. This approach is consistent with the emerging fantasy aesthetic of TSR D&D from the late 1970s and the early 1980s - that they helped define - and also expresses the roots of the game in Low Fantasy fiction. As illustrators and gamers, Otus, Roslof, Holloway and Dee conveyed the meanings of early gameplay using specific artistic techniques that often included a self-reflexive humorous subtext. For example, in cover illustrations these artists depicted monsters overshadowing adventurers - literally. They illustrated monsters as larger than player characters. Monsters also possessed the majority of the visual space. To further accentuate their position and superiority, these artists positioned monsters in the foreground or in an elevated position above the adventurers such as the aforementioned examples of DCC cover art illustrated by Otus (*Figures 4-8*). In addition to these representations, cover images like *Figure 12*, DCC#5 *Aerie of the Crow God*, would portray monsters surprising, ambushing, or surrounding adventurers.

The cover images of DCC#35A *Halls of the Minotaur* (Stroh, 2006) by Doug Kovacs and DCC#32 *The Golden Palace of Zahadran* (Oppedisano, 2006) by Michael Erikson (*Figures 13 and 14* respectively) carry forward the themes and motifs of TSR’s early artists. The cover of DCC#35A, for example, depicts the climactic scene of the adventure. A thin-armed elf warrior with a mace in the left foreground dodges a blow from the mighty minotaur Toth-Ror. The minotaur occupies the majority of the visual space and is also positioned higher than the adventurer. The evil Toth-Ror, wielding a great sword, set the area ablaze with a torch. This serves to highlight the danger of the scene. DCC#32 *The Golden Palace of Zahadran* illustrates a party of four adventurers in the left foreground. The group is dwarfed by a great hydra in the right midground. The hydra is so huge it makes the surrounding buildings appear small. The creature is positioned higher than the adventurers and appears intent on their destruction. A magic-user (left), with a look that communicates both uncertainty and fear, hastily consults her spellbook. The depiction of weak-armed adventurers, alongside these large fearsome monsters, serves to accentuate the lethality of early D&D gameplay and is recognized as a key component of the game’s visual nostalgia. Retrogamers understand the self-reflexive form of humour within these illustrations because they have experienced similar life-and-death situations playing AD&D.

The art of the DCCs highlights examples of dramatic irony, another genre and period specific illustrative technique. Dramatic irony occurs in art or film when the meaning of a situation is understood by the viewer but not by the characters. This places the viewer a step ahead of the

characters portrayed in the scene and is used to create suspense and/or for comedic effect. Early TSR artists used this device regularly in modules and rulebooks.⁸ One of the most famous, illustrated by Dave Trampier in the AD&D Monster Manual (Gygax, 1978), epitomizes the use of dramatic irony in D&D art. In the illustration, a party of five unsuspecting adventurers heads down a dungeon corridor. Unbeknownst to the party, a giant spider hangs above them waiting quietly to pounce. Trampier captures the exact moment before the spider attacks by having one member in the rear of the group point toward the spider. However, the scene makes obvious that it is too late for the oblivious adventurers. The characters in front are completely unaware of their impending doom.

Similar examples of dramatic irony exist in the art of the *Dungeon Crawl Classics*. The aforementioned cover of DCC#4 *Bloody Jack's Gold* (Crow, 2004) illustrated by Otus (*Figure 5*), depicts two unsuspecting adventurers climbing a wall while fleeing a tentacled beast. However, a giant spider waits quietly at the top for its next meal. *Figure 15*, the front cover of DCC#46 *The Book of Treasure Maps* (Rudel, Hart, and Rich, Eds., 2007) depicts a skeletal dragon sneaking up behind a group of adventurers as they greedily examine a huge pile of golden treasure. Shown in *Figure 16*, the cover of book one from the DCC#50 *Castle Whiterock* (Doyle and Pommier, 2007) illustrates a group of four adventurers bashing down a door to attack two orcs, meanwhile a third orc hides behind one of the doors, out of the party's sight, to attack them from behind. The importance of dramatic irony rests with its implied narrative. In these examples, which are legion throughout the history of *Dungeons & Dragons*, the implied narrative is at once dark, dramatic, comedic, and self-reflexive: regardless of what you do, you will die alone in the dark in the claws of a blood-thirsty monster.

Similar to dramatic irony, D&D artists past and present employ a filmic form of direct address. Also referred to as the extra-diegetic-gaze, direct address occurs when an actor or character addresses the audience. This self-reflexive technique has also been referred to as breaking the fourth wall and references the traditional three-walled theatre stage and the imaginary fourth wall between a fictional scene and the audience (Bell, 2008; Abelman (1998); Simpson and Pearson, 2000). Considered a technique of metafiction, addressing an audience directly breaks the suspension of disbelief and thereby deconstructs one of the fundamental constructed boundaries of fiction. TSR module covers like L2 *The Assassin's Knot* (Lakofka, 1983), DL6 *Dragons of Ice* (Niles, 1985), WG6 *Isle of the Ape* (Gygax, 1985), and others employ this technique.

The *Dungeon Crawl Classics* employ direct address in both front and back cover art as well as interior illustration. *Figure 17*, DCC#17 *Legacy of the Savage Kings* (Stroh, 2005), depicts a group of adventurers approaching the entrance to a dungeon. The group examines two large statues at the mouth of the entrance and the withered trees and skulls on both sides of the scene suggest decay and death. The cloaked warrior in the left turns and addresses the viewer directly, wondering if you are still behind him. The back cover of DCC#12.5 *The Iron Crypt of the Heretics* (Stroh, 2005), shown in *Figure 18*, portrays a similar scene. A group of adventurers approach the entrance to the iron crypt. The heavy snowfall, and the skull-like landscape featured in the left midground, suggest desolation and foreshadow death. The helmed warrior in the right foreground addresses the viewer directly and points at the entrance. In these examples, direct address serves several functions. Direct address extends, and thereby blurs, the imaginary boundary between fantasy and the viewer - it both pulls the viewer through the window of

suspended action and into the scene in addition to reading the image from a third person perspective. By acknowledging the multiple roles of the viewer-as-player and the viewer-as-character, these images self-reflexively acknowledge themselves as fictional constructions. The viewer is both watching and being. Artists employ this technique for dramatic effect. In these examples, the DCC cover art breaks the fourth wall to call the viewer to action – in the same way as the original TSR modules called you to adventure. It also suggests that no script immunity exists - not even you are safe from the danger.

The DCCs employ specific signs and motifs to signify otherworldliness that follow the established genre conventions of TSR modules and early fantasy fiction from the late nineteenth-century. Early authors of fantasy fiction, specifically Jules Verne in *A Journey to the Center of the Earth* (1864) and Lewis Carroll in *Alice in Wonderland* (1865), employed giant fungi to signify an alien aesthetic. Verne, in particular, used a forest of giant mushrooms to highlight the weird otherworldly nature of a subterranean environment. Verne wrote, “Here were pale mushrooms, thirty to forty feet high, and crowned with a cap of equal diameter. There they stood in the thousands. No light could penetrate their huge cones, and complete darkness reigned beneath those giants” (Verne, 1864). Gygax, the creator of AD&D and an avid reader of fantasy literature, understood the fungi forest motif and used it regularly in *Dungeons and Dragons* in famous modules like D3 *Vault of the Drow* (Gygax, 1978) and EX1 *Dungeonland* (Gygax, 1983). Other TSR D&D game designers followed suit and included giant mushrooms, or sentient mushrooms, in modules like A4 *In the Dungeons of the Slave Lords* (Schick, 1981), B1 *In Search of the Unknown* (Carr, 1978) and X8 *Drums on Fire Mountain* (Morris and Kirby, 1984).

The DCCs employ and further this motif to signify otherworldliness. *Figure 19*, the back cover of DCC#26 *The Scaly God* (Maffei, 2002), illustrates a key moment in the adventure. The encounter entitled “Area 2-6: The Fungus Forest” depicts Ssustre, the evil troglodyte shaman in the right foreground, with a captured and terrified halfling. The shaman uses his magical viper staff to strangle the halfling and keep the rest of the party at bay. The entire scene is backgrounded by a vast, multi-colored, psychedelic mushroom forest. The long vertical lines of the tall mushrooms, illustrated in a fashion similar to Verne’s novel, serve to diminish the agency of the adventurers in the midground. Even the female warrior in the center midground appears to be waylaid by a violet fungi, a sentient fungus creature. Similarly, *Figure 11*, the back cover of DCC#21 *Assault on Stormbringer Castle* (Stiles, 2004) portrays an important scene in the adventure labeled in the text as “Area 27: Minotaurs’ Mushroom Forest.” The following description establishes the otherworldly scene: “As you enter this cavern, you cannot help but stare at the amazing variety of plant life here. Many huge mushroom-like growths of white, yellow, and green stretch toward the ceiling, some easily as tall as a man. Other strange growths are everywhere: weird puffballs, morels, and lichens in a great multitude of colors, with ochre, black, and brown being predominant” (Stiles, 2004). The back cover image of this module, designed to accompany the text and illustrated by Jim Holloway, depicts a group of three adventurers attacked by the purple tendrils of several violet fungi. The fungi are strangling the adventurer in the left foreground as a dwarven fighter attempts to free his companion by hacking at its tendrils with his axe. While dealing with the mushrooms the group is surprised by a great minotaur who roars and snaps the fungi in half with its great strength. The warrior in the right foreground, bug-eyed and terrified with mouth agape, draws his sword for battle. The entire scene is backgrounded by giant mushrooms that hang overhead of the player characters. The

effect is two-fold: to highlight the environment as weird and otherworldly and to diminish the agency of the adventurers in the face of this strange fantasy world. Through important signs like giant mushrooms, the art of the DCCs connect nostalgically to a genre-based understanding of fantasy art that finds its origins in early nineteenth-century fantasy fiction.

In some cases Goodman constructed specific modules to encourage gamers to recall unique TSR adventures from the 1980s. *Figure 10*, DCC#36 *Talons of the Horned King* (Ferguson, 2006), for example, invokes the look and feel of TSR adventure S3 *Expedition to the Barrier Peaks* (Gygax, 1980). Although the majority of their modules focused on medieval-fantasy, TSR published several unique modules that drew attention to the literary origins of the game including the genres of science fantasy and fairy-tales. In *Expedition to the Barrier Peaks* (Gygax, 1980), a group of medieval adventurers discover and investigate a downed alien spaceship. In the course of this unique dungeon crawl they find laser guns, space suits, and robots - some of which are referenced in the cover art by Erol Otus. This module is reminiscent of the science fantasy genre of literature and served as a tie-in to TSR's *Gamma World* science fiction role-playing game. In addition to this adventure, DCC#36 *Talons of the Horned King* (Ferguson, 2006) follows the general storyline of *Expedition to the Barrier Peaks* insofar as the adventurers come across a downed spacecraft and investigate while being exposed to futuristic technology. On the title page author Mike Ferguson made explicit his homage to early TSR adventures "Special thanks, acknowledgment, and inspiration from the following sci-fi "Dungeon Crawl Classics": "Expedition to the Barrier Peaks" by Gary Gygax; "Metamorphosis Alpha" by James Ward; and "Star Frontiers" by David Cook and Lawrence Schick." The module DCC#33 *Belly of the Beast* (LaSalle, 2006) presents another example of the science fantasy-inspired adventure wherein a group of high-level adventurers travel into space and board the "Great Beast" a creature that floats eternally through the cosmos.

Alongside these futuristic modules, the DCCs also include a unique fairy-tale style adventure reminiscent of two early TSR modules. *Figure 20*, DCC#38 *Escape from the Forest of Lanterns* (Greer, 2006) recreates the fairy-tale of Hansel and Gretel. The Brothers Grimm recorded Hansel and Gretel in 1812, a fairy-tale of German origin based on older folk tales. In the story two children are abandoned by their parents in a dark forest and, while lost, find a cottage made of gingerbread and candy. Inside the cottage lives a witch who cooks and eats children. DCC#38 recreates this scenario. The adventurers read a magic book that turns them into children and transports them to the Forest of Lanterns where they must find the Candy Cottage of the Warty Witch that is decorated with gumdrops and candy-canes. This fairy-tale adventure is reminiscent of the TSR modules EX1 *Dungeonland* (Gygax, 1983) and EX2 *The Land Beyond the Magic Mirror* (Gygax, 1983). These modules placed the player characters in the role of Alice from Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking Glass* (1871). Instead of travelling to Wonderland, the adventurers are transported to Dungeonland by falling down an earthen tunnel. These science fantasy and folk tale-inspired DCC adventures are designed as new retroscaped products with a clear lineage to the unique adventures published by TSR in the 1980s.



Figure 15: Rudel, A., et al., Eds., (2007). DCC#46 *The Book of Treasure Maps*. Chicago: Goodman Games.



Figure 16: Doyle C. and Pommier, A. (2007). DCC#50 *Castle Whiterock*. Chicago: Goodman Games.



Figure 17: Stroh, H. (2005). DCC#17 *Legacy of the Savage Kings*. Chicago: Goodman Games.



Figure 18: Stroh, H. (2005). DCC#12.5 *The Iron Crypt of the Heretics*. Chicago: Goodman Games.



Figure 19: Maffei, R. (2002). DCC#26 *The Scaly God*. Chicago: Goodman Games.



Figure 20: Greer, S. (2006). DCC#38 *Escape from the Forest of Lanterns*. Chicago: Goodman Games.

Conclusion

The *Dungeon Crawl Classics* use branding, design, and cover art to construct idealized nostalgic retrosapes. Their brand name, ethos, and module titles draw inspiration from TSR module titles from the late 1970s and the early 1980s. Their aesthetic and design is informed by early monochrome modules written by Gary Gygax, and the blue maps, originally intended to thwart illegal copying in the late 1970s, now serve only to instill a sense of nostalgia for the halcyon days of D&D gaming. The module design, based on the A or “Slaver Series” of AD&D modules, further retroscape the look of the DCCs and specifically distinguish this series from the *Third Edition* aesthetic forwarded by Wizards of the Coast between 2000-2008. The DCCs also draw inspiration from specific scenes within iconic AD&D artwork such as the demon idol cover of the AD&D Player’s Handbook from 1978 or the science-fantasy TSR module *SI Expedition to the Barrier Peaks*. Most importantly, the recruitment and use of original TSR artists is central to the retroscaping of the *Dungeon Crawl Classics*. The use of artists such as Otus, Dee, Roslof, and Holloway provide a window into the past for retrogamers or those interested in the history of the hobby. These artists, and their use of classic early D&D illustration techniques such as dramatic irony and direct address, or the application of archetypal symbolism within the genre such as giant mushrooms, ensure the DCCs are presented as idealized representations of the past.

As products of contemporary popular culture, Goodman Games’ DCCs serve as powerful nostalgic relics. They possess the look and feel of an earlier time and in the current context of overly-complex rule-sets and *World of Warcraft*-influenced role-playing games, stand as testimony to the “good old days.” Although they provide a seemingly direct link to the past, the DCCs are confounded by a discourse of past and present. At first glance the DCCs appear as modules published in the late 1970s or the early 1980s (and are often mistaken as such). However, the long stat blocks and rules-heaviness of the narrative text makes clear that these are *Third Edition* D&D modules published in the 2000s. The cover art, so crucial to the retroscaping of the modules as nostalgia products, was initially created using computer-generated illustrative techniques instead of traditional acrylic illustration methods used at TSR. Goodman acknowledged, “the first two modules were published with digitally rendered art that didn’t look anything like the old school art. The first printing of DCC#1 and DCC#2, neither one of them bore any resemblance to classic fantasy art. They did have the same proportions, and general feel, and shapes, and so on. The art was completely digital” (Goodman, 2008). The digitally-rendered aesthetic of the early DCCs, and the use of cumbersome rule-sets and play-styles incompatible with the early history of the game, disrupts the extreme measures taken to position them as retro products.

Despite the discourse of past and present at play in the construction of these modules, the DCCs were popular across the length of their *Third Edition* print run (2002-2008). In addition to the well-produced and written nature of the DCC modules, part of their popularity stemmed from a dissatisfaction with the modules produced by WotC and others during the early 2000s. By constructing adventure modules for *Third Edition* with the look and feel of AD&D, Goodman hoped to distinguish his series within the RPG market and through nostalgia target an older generation of gamers. “The DCC series” Goodman noted “has done pretty well by commercial standards for RPGs. But it has only done well in a certain market. That market being gamers 30 and older” (Goodman, 2008). I asked Goodman if, in this context, the DCC series was timely

given the context and the age of gamers who played the original AD&D modules in their youth and were now looking for a similar gaming experience in the early 2000s. Goodman observed, “I think so. If you were in a certain age frame in 1982 you were likely in your 30s around the time that third edition came out...those folks were just the right age around third edition that something like the DCCs would have appealed to them...the nostalgia factor is key among a certain audience” (Goodman, 2008).

Why are the *Dungeon Crawl Classics* so popular? The nostalgic retrosapes of the DCCs are popular because they invoke the *zeitgeist* of early TSR-era *Dungeons & Dragons*. By drawing on the memories of players, the DCCs target a specific group of now adult gamers; those old enough to remember the “good old days” and able to understand the feel and conventions of “classic” dungeon crawls from the 1980s. These gamers now want to buy and play the same style of D&D with their children or play online with friends. The DCC aesthetic, based on a detailed and considered understanding of TSR D&D, captures and idealizes the spirit of classic fantasy - the newness, excitement, and enthusiasm - during the height of the game’s popularity. This excitement came from the birth and experience of a new paradigm - the first fantasy role-playing game. Much of the interest in, and nostalgia for, early *Dungeons & Dragons* stems from a desire to re-experience the liminality of the first play experience with role-playing games - the feeling of being immersed in something completely different. First play experiences are meaningful because they break the mundane repetitiousness of modern life and stand in stark contrast to our sense of the everyday (Featherstone, 1992). For D&D gamers the liminality of first play experiences with D&D in the early 1980s was profound. This experience came in the form of TSR adventure modules like the A Series and hardcover books like the AD&D Player’s Handbook, illustrated by Otus, Trampier, Dee, Holloway, and others. The popularity of the DCCs comes not from individual aspects of their branding, design or cover art, but through their collective ability to invoke the defining spirit of the game during the height of D&D’s popularity during the late 1970s and the early 1980s.

References

- Abelman, R. (1998). *Reaching a Critical Mass: A Critical Analysis of Television Entertainment*. Mahwah, NJ: L. Erlbaum Associates.
- Acaem. (2012). Why Monochrome Covers? Acaem Forum. Retrieved Nov 1, 2012 from <http://www.acaem.com/forum/viewtopic.php?t=6775&postdays=0&postorder=asc&highlight=monochrome&start=0>
- Bell, E. (2008). *Theories of Performance*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Bowman, S. (2010). *The Functions of Role-Playing Games: How Participants Create Community, Solve Problems, and Explore Identity*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland.
- Browne, D. and Turnbull, D. (1981). *U1 Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Bunce, C. (2004). DCC#9 *Dungeon Geomorphs*. Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Carr, M. (1978). *B1 In Search of the Unknown*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Carroll, L. (1865). *Alice in Wonderland*. London: Macmillan.
- Carroll, L. (1871). *Through the Looking Glass*. London: Macmillan.
- Cashman, R. (2006). Critical Nostalgia and Material Culture in Northern Ireland. *Journal of American Folklore*, 119, 137-160.
- Chase, M. & Shaw, C. (1989). The Dimensions of Nostalgia. In M. Chase & C. Shaw (Eds.), *The Imagined Past: History and Nostalgia* (pp. 1-17). Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Chrulaw, M. (2005). The Only Limitation is Your Imagination: Quantifying the Medieval and other Fantasies in Dungeons & Dragons. Trigg, S. (Ed.). *Medievalism and the Gothic in Australian Culture*. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 223-40.
- Cook, D. (1980). *A1 Slave Pits of the Undercity*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Cook, D. (1981). *I1 Dwellers of the Forbidden City*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Cook, M. (2007). DCC#50 *Vault of the Iron Overlord*. Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Cover, J. (2010). *The Creation of Narrative in Tabletop Role-Playing Games*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland.
- Crow, J. (2004). DCC#4 *Bloody Jack's Gold*. Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Doyle, C. (2004). DCC#7 *Secret of Smuggler's Cove*. Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Doyle, C. and Crow, J. (2005). DCC#15 *Lost Tomb of the Spinx Queen*. Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Doyle, C., Doyle, L., Ferguson, M., Goodman, J., Hind, A., Little, J., Pommier, A., Quinn, J., Schnider, W., Smith, A. (2004). DCC#13 *Crypt of the Devil Lich*. Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Doyle C. and Pommier, A. (2007). DCC#50 *Castle Whiterock*. Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Fine, G. (1983). *Shared Fantasy: Role-Playing Games as Social Worlds*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Featherstone, M. (1992). The Heroic Life and the Everyday. *Theory, Culture, and Society*, 9, 159-182.
- Ferguson, M. (2007). DCC #44 *Dreaming Caverns of the Duergar*. Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Ferguson, M. (2006). DCC #36 *Talons of the Horned King*. Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Goodman Games Forum. *Dungeon Crawl Classics #1: Idylls of the Rat King*. Retrieved Nov 1, 2012 from <http://www.goodman-games.com/forums/viewtopic.php?f=20&t=35&hilit=blue+map%2A>
- Goodman, J. (2003). DCC#3 *The Mysterious Tower*. Chicago: Goodman Games.

- Goodman, J. (2008). Interview with the Author.
- Greer, S. (2006). DCC#38 *Escape from the Forest of Lanterns*. Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Gygax, G. (1978). *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons Monster Manual*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Gygax, G. (1978). *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons Players Handbook*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Gygax, G. (1978). B2 *The Keep on the Borderlands*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Gygax, G. (1978). D1 *Descent into the Depths of the Earth*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Gygax, G. (1978). D2 *Shrine of the Kuo-Toa*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Gygax, G. (1978). D3 *Vault of the Drow*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Gygax, G. (1978). EX1 *Dungeonland*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Gygax, G. (1978). EX2 *The Land Beyond the Magic Mirror*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Gygax, G. (1978). G1 *Steading of the Hill Giant Chief*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Gygax, G. (1978). G2 *The Glacial Rift of the Frost Giant Jarl*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Gygax, G. (1978). G3 *The Hall of the Fire Giant King*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Gygax, G. (1978). S1 *Tomb of Horrors*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Gygax, G. (1979). *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons Dungeon Masters Guide*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Gygax, G. (1979). T1 *The Village of Hommlet*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Gygax, G. (1980). S3 *Expedition to the Barrier Peaks*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Gygax, G. (1985). WG6 *Isle of the Ape*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Gygax, G. (2000). Hooray for the Dungeon Crawl! *Dragon Magazine* #272, Volume XXV, No. 1. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Hammack, A. (1980). C2 *Ghost Tower of Inverness*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Hammack, A. (1981). A3 *Assault on the Aerie of the Slave Lords*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Hickman, T. (1983). I5 *Lost Tomb of Martek*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Hickman, T. and Hickman, L. (1983). I3 *Pharaoh*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Hind, A. (2004). DCC#5 *The Aerie of the Crow God*. Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Hind, A. (2005). DCC #24 *Legend of the Ripper*. Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Hind, A. (2007). DCC#45 *The Malice of the Medusa*. Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Hind, A. and Stroh, H. (2008). *The Golden Auroch/Tower of the Black Pearl*. Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Johnson, H. and Leason, J. (1980). C1 *The Hidden Shrine of Tamoachan*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Johnson, H. and Moldvay, T. (1981). A2 *Secret of the Slavers Stockade*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Johnson, L. (2005). DCC#19 *The Volcano Caves*. Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Lakofka, L. (1983). L2 *The Assassin's Knot*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Larwood, P. (2007). DCC#47 *Tears of the Genie*. Chicago: Goodman Games.
- LaSalle, B. (2006). DCC#33 *Belly of the Beast*. Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Lowenthal, D. (1985) *The Past is a Foreign Country*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mackay, D. (2001). *The Fantasy Role-Playing Game: A New Performing Art*. Jefferson: McFarland.
- Maffei, R. (2002). DCC#26 *The Scaly God*. Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Mearls, M. (2003). DCC#2 *Lost Vault of Tsathzar Rho* (Second Printing). Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Meyers, P. (1985). I7 *Baltron's Beacon*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Meyers, P. and Hickman, T. (1983). I4 *Oasis of the White Palm*. Lake Geneva: TSR.

- Mona, E. (2007). From the Basement to the Basic Set: The Early Years of Dungeons and Dragons. Harrigan, P. & Wardrip-Fruin, N. (Eds). *Second Person: Role-Playing and Story in Games and Playable Media*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 25-30.
- Morris, G. and Kirby, T. (1984). *X8 Drums on Fire Mountain*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Munslow, A. (2000). *The Routledge Companion to Historical Studies*. London: Routledge.
- Munslow, A. (1997). *Deconstructing History*. London: Routledge.
- Niles, D. (1985). *DL6 Dragons of Ice*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Oppedisano, G. (2007). DCC#43 *Curse of the Barrens*. Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Oppedisano, G. (2006). DCC#32 *The Golden Palace of Zahadran*. Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Otherworld Miniatures. Retrieved Nov 1, 2012 from <http://www.otherworldminiatures.co.uk>
- Quinn, J. (2003). DCC#1 *The Idylls of the Rat King* (Third Printing). Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Rudel, A., Hart, K., and Rich, L., Eds., (2007). DCC#46 *The Book of Treasure Maps*. Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Schick, L. (1981). A4 *In the Dungeons of the Slave Lords*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Schick, L. (1979). S2 *White Plume Mountain*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Simmons, J. (2006). DCC#25 *The Dread Crypt of Srihoz*. Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Simpson, P. & Pearson, R. (Eds). (2000). *Critical Dictionary of Film and Television Theory*. London, Routledge.
- Smith, C. (1984). N2 *The Forest Oracle*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
- Stiles, C. (2004). DCC#21 *Assault on Stormbringer Castle*. Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Stroh, H. (2005). DCC#12.5 *The Iron Crypt of the Heretics*. Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Stroh, H. (2005). DCC#17 *Legacy of the Savage Kings*. Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Stroh, H. (2006). DCC#27 *Revenge of the Rat King*. Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Stroh, H. (2006). DCC#28 *Into the Wilds*. Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Stroh, H. (2006). DCC#35A *Halls of the Minotaur*. Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Stroh, H. (2007). DCC#49 *The Sinister Secret of Whiterock*. Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Stroh, H. (2007). *Saga of the Witch Queen*. Chicago: Goodman Games.
- Verne, J. (1864). *A Journey to the Center of the Earth*. London: Griffith and Farran.
- Whalen, Z. & Taylor, L. (2008). Playing the Past: An Introduction. In Whalen, Z. & Taylor, L. (Eds.), *Playing the Past: History and Nostalgia in Video Games* (pp. 1-18). Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.

Notes

*The author would like to thank Joseph Goodman for his participation in this research.

1. As of the writing of this article, WotC began play-testing the Fifth Edition of Dungeons and Dragons.
2. Henry Jenkins, on his website Confessions of an Aca-Fan (<http://www.henryjenkins.org>), hosts discussion of the term acafan and the negotiation of its meaning.
3. For an overview of scholarship in cultural history that details the denial of objectivity, truth, and facts in favor of the temporality of knowledge and the emphasis on past and present relationships, see Alan Munslow, *Deconstructing History* (London: Routledge, 1997) and the entries for “deconstructionist History” and “Revisionism” in Alun Munslow, *The Routledge Companion to Historical Studies* (London: Routledge, 2000).

4. Information for this paragraph taken from an interview with Joseph Goodman (2008) and from <http://www.goodman-games.com>.
5. Acaem. (2012). Why Monochrome Covers? Acaem Forum. Retrieved Nov 1, 2012 from <http://www.acaem.com/forum/viewtopic.php?t=6775&postdays=0&postorder=asc&highlight=monochrome&start=0>
6. The Giant Series included Gygax, G. (1978). G1 *Steading of the Hill Giant Chief*. Lake Geneva: TSR, Gygax, G. (1978). G2 *Glacial Rift of the Frost Giant Jarl*. Lake Geneva: TSR, and Gygax, G. (1978). G3 *Hall of the Fire Giant King*. Lake Geneva: TSR. The Drow Series included Gygax, G. (1978). D1 *Descent into the Depths*. Lake Geneva: TSR, Gygax, G. (1978). D2 *Shrine of the Kuo-Toa*. Lake Geneva: TSR, Gygax, G. (1978). D3: *Vault of the Drow*. Lake Geneva: TSR, in addition to Gygax, G. (1978). S1 *Tomb of Horrors*. Lake Geneva: TSR, Schick, L. (1979). S2 *White Plume Mountain*. Lake Geneva: TSR, Gygax, G. (1978). T1 *Village of Hommlet*. Lake Geneva: TSR, Johnson, H. and Leason, J. (1978). C1 *Hidden Shrine of Tamoachan*. Lake Geneva: TSR, and the Basic D&D module, Carr, M. (1978). B1 *In Search of the Unknown*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
7. Cook, D. (1980). A1 *Slave Pits of the Undercity*. Lake Geneva: TSR; Johnson, H. and Moldvay, T. (1981). A2 *Secret of the Slavers Stockade*. Lake Geneva: TSR; Hammack, A. (1981). A3 *Assault on the Aerie of the Slave Lords*. Lake Geneva: TSR; Schick, L. (1981). A4 *In the Dungeons of the Slave Lords*. Lake Geneva: TSR.
8. In the *AD&D Monster Manual* see pages 42, 48, 70, 78, 100, the *AD&D Players Handbook* see pages 102 and 108, and the *AD&D Dungeon Masters Guide* see pages 68, 171, 173.